



PRIMAL TIGHTWAD

MAXIMIZING YOUR HEALTH
ON A MINIMAL BUDGET

CAROLYN RUSH

Dedication

This book is dedicated to Helen Rush, a woman who can pinch a penny so tightly that a dime pops out.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to express my most profound gratitude to Nora Gedgudas, for her inspiration, ideas, information and encouragement. This book would quite literally not exist without you. Aciu labai!

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Foreword

by Nora Gedgudas, CNS, CNT

One of the remarks I periodically hear from those who have just read my book, *Primal Body, Primal Mind* is that "eating healthy, organic, sustainable and grass-fed, free-range food seems like it would be just too expensive." Of course, these are invariably the same people who have yet to implement these dietary changes, possibly in fear of unaffordable food bills (or simply due to a fear of change). The idea of eating **real** food is an intimidating and extravagant prospect to some...particularly those who have never known anything beyond the "standard American diet" (S.A.D.). They have just always assumed healthy food is reserved for the wealthy.

The truth is, even many of the wealthiest individuals spend far beyond what is necessary for their optimal well-being, seduced by the same illusory perception and glitzy advertising. Most often, those who have actually taken that life-altering step into the world of Primal eating remark on how very surprisingly affordable it really is and how much they are enjoying this wonderful and delicious way of eating. Often, too, they follow this up in their next breath with stories of dramatically improved health and well-being. Even **if** the diet were a bit more expensive, the savings in health care costs alone could vastly outweigh any grocery bill increases.

I personally started saving hundreds on my own grocery bill each month once I applied the principles I eventually laid out in my book. My own health improved dramatically as well. I knew I had actually stumbled upon potentially the most affordable and the most optimally healthy diet imaginable. I knew the implications of this could be life changing for those who had previously assumed a healthy diet was

well out of their economic reach, yet I never fathomed what really could be possible until I read an early draft of this very book: *Primal Tightwad*. Wow.

Still, the perception of quality nourishment being an exclusively elite privilege oppressively persists, regardless of what can easily be a very different reality for almost everyone. In fact, as it turns out, it is easier than anyone can possibly imagine. It is my passion and my pleasure here to see this offensive myth shattered once and for all.

What you are about to read will revolutionize the way you look at the cost of **real** food forever. I have known, respected and adored Carolyn Rush for many, many years and consider her a close and trusted friend. A woman of considerable wit, talent and intellectual acumen-along with occasional whimsy-she also has impressed me time and time again with her dazzling knowhow when it comes to making the most of every dollar. No one else I know can live on less while enjoying a greater degree of comfort. For her, this is elevated to a High Art.

Mind you, there are many such people in the world for whom thrift is a secret preoccupation, if not an obsessive-compulsive disorder (we've all been annoyed by the coupon-obsessed shoppers in the grocery store line, the money-grubbing stingy types who never pay their share, or the cheapskate relatives who re-gifted everyone they knew at every holiday), but few have this down to a sensible, real and very truly admirable science in the way I have seen with Carolyn. Many is the day I have heard her detail with delightful enthusiasm the remarkable savings strategy she had discovered here or there, or the low cost-described to the penny-of her daily meals. She really has accomplished an awe-inspiring, in-depth, PhD-level mastery of these thrift-based principles.

One thing I have always respected most is the fact that she never compromises quality when it comes to her diet or her health. She always knows what to prioritize and what should be most important in life. Hers is a rare state of balance we can all learn from. As Carolyn herself is fond of saying, she has "never been opposed to spending money, just opposed to *wasting* money." Bravo!

Money, of course (having no inherent value on its own), is little more than a medium of exchange for our precious life force, time and energy, as Carolyn so eloquently points out. This awareness can and must be a starting place in helping us use it more wisely.

I'd be lying if I said I had what is about to be presented to you in the pages of this book fully mastered (I have a lot to learn from my friend), but I guarantee you that the healthiest possible eating is yours and fully affordable if you so much as apply a fraction of the incredible information in these pages. *Primal Tightwad* stands to revolutionize the perceptions of millions in this country who have long believed that a superb diet simply isn't affordable by any but the most affluent. *Au contraire!* In fact, flat out **B.S.!**

Prepare yourself for a serious paradigm shift. Carolyn will prove to you that not only is Primal eating (as outlined in the pages of my book, *Primal Body, Primal Mind*) fully affordable for even those on the most strapped of food budgets, but it is actually MORE affordable than the standard American diet (S.A.D.). How's *that* for a kick in the head? And there's more...much more.

Carolyn Rush should be widely recognized as "Tightwad Royalty" and "the Queen of healthy Primal food budgeting." After hearing about and seeing her first-hand create masterful Primal meals for next to nothing, I literally begged her to write this book. Fortunately for us all, she finally agreed and you will benefit from her brilliance and insight in these very pages.

So get out your notebooks and calculators and start your engines. You are about to take a journey to a place the greed-driven Food Industry, Big Agribiz and Big Pharma would rather you didn't know existed. It is a destination where the **truly overpriced**, toxic, cruelly-raised, chemically laden and genetically mutilated "Franken foods" packaged in plastic bags and cardboard boxes are at long last easily behind you, once and for all ...at a savings.

Optimal Primal health and a longer life for you and your entire family are about to become truly affordable.

Nora T. Gedgaudas, CNS, CNT Author of *Primal Body, Primal Mind: Beyond the Paleo Diet for Total Health and a Longer Life*

Introduction

I was raised by parents who were both born in 1930 and they never lost the mindset that got them and their families through the Great Depression. All of our clothing was second-hand, all spilled milk was slurped off of the table and every trip to the Minnesota State Fair (home to myriad renowned foods-on-a-stick) was accompanied by a bag lunch. It took me about one minute of covering my own expenses to appreciate and emulate their skills. I still wear all second-hand clothes, just yesterday I licked some spilled coconut oil off of the kitchen table and if you could convince me to attend the State Fair, I would most certainly bring a bag lunch.

My mom did the grocery shopping for 8 kids over the course of about 30 years. She always knew who had the best price on whatever she needed, and I learned by watching her. As the youngest, I often tagged along as she made the rounds: to Bill's Railroad Salvage for dented canned goods and crushed boxes of cereal; to the Tastee Bakery Thrift Shop for day-old bread, Banana Flips and Jim Jams bought by the garbage bag-full and stored in the freezer; and to that new store that had the produce all piled up for you to pick what you wanted, not shrink-wrapped onto a styrofoam tray. They even gave a 5 cent discount if you brought your own bag!

To this day, she still enjoys the thrill of the hunt for a bargain. When Trader Joe's opened its first store in the Twin Cities, we made our inaugural trek together, slowly trolling up and down every aisle, looking at every single thing they carried and making notes about what looked worthwhile.

Ninety-five percent of what I know about grocery shopping I learned from my Mom. The other 5% I learned from Amy Dacyzyn, founder and writer of the seminal newsletter (and subsequent set of books) *The Tightwad Gazette*. If you are curious and/or serious about shifting to a thrifty lifestyle, you owe it to yourself to read her books. They address every aspect of life, not just food shopping. Because the newsletter was published in the early 90s, the information about computers is obsolete and there was not much coverage of the internet until the last few issues, but the overall concepts are as timely as the day they were first published. It is especially useful for households with children. Be advised, her food choices do not adhere to the principles described in *Primal Body, Primal Mind!*

I am currently self-employed as a massage therapist with a part time job to provide health insurance. While some years I have hovered just above the federal poverty level, I have always eaten well and have never had to resort to eating ramen and hot dogs. My average food costs are about \$7 per day. Because my income varies from week to week depending on how many clients I have, I keep things pretty close to the bone and never spend more than I need to. Other than a few stupid choices in my

early twenties, I have embraced this approach for my entire life. I always have my tightwad filter on, reading every book, article and blog that I come across whose title includes words like "thrift," "frugal," "tightwad," "cheapskate," and "budget," always looking for that golden nugget of new insight or information. In the last 10 years or so, I haven't found many that could tell me something that I didn't already know, but that won't stop me from continuing to check them out.

Because this frugal perspective comes so naturally to me, I had assumed that everyone thinks this way and "who doesn't know that?". However, it has been pointed out to me by numerous friends that "No, not everyone knows that," and that I should share this knowledge with people who could really benefit from it. Thus, Primal Tightwad was born.

You don't need to have been raised as a tightwad to develop new habits and cultivate a new mindset. Seeing as you are already geared up to improve your health through a better diet, you've already started to change your perspective on cupcakes, right? *Right??*

Chapter 1-The Big Picture

So, you've read *Primal Body, Primal Mind* by Nora Gedgaudas (or other books about eating an ancestral diet) and you're excited to get started on a way of eating that will transform your life, when you run up against the first barrier to your endeavor: the idea that "I don't have enough money to eat like this!" Before assuming that you can't afford it, you need to take an objective look at why you think this way. Perhaps you've always had enough money to buy whatever you want, but recently have suffered a temporary financial setback and don't know how to adapt to your lower income other than buying cheaper versions of the foods to which you have grown accustomed. Maybe you grew up with scarce resources, were always fed whatever could be obtained and can't imagine any other way. Whatever brought you to this point, the first thing that needs to change is your perspective. When you want to improve your health, you need to change the way you eat. When you want to improve your bottom line, you need to change the way you procure food.

In the event that you haven't read *Primal Body, Primal Mind*, a quick synopsis is in order.

The basic premise of the book is that we should eat today the way that humans did for the first 99% of the timeline of our evolution: mainly healthy fats, a little animal protein and some seasonal plants that grew in the wild. The agricultural revolution that introduced a steady diet of cereal grains and legumes happened too recently for our bodies to have effectively adapted to it (hence, you will find no advice in this book on how to find the best deal on whole wheat bread). When I use terms like "Primal Eating" or "Primal Eater", I am referring to the style of eating that follows the advice that Ms. Gedgaudas gives in her book. I will occasionally use the term "ancestral eating" or "ancestral diet" as a way to be more inclusive to those whose style is similar (but not identical) to the one in *Primal Body, Primal Mind*.

While this book will focus on strategies for day-to-day saving on food, it is important to keep the big picture in mind when making those small daily decisions. Imagine that you were issued just one car that was to last you for the rest of your life. Wouldn't you try to do everything in your power to maintain that car and keep it in top running condition? Now, imagine that there was a fuel that cost half as much as regular fuel, but it would make your car run rough, wreck the engine and take years off its life. How eager would you be to fill your gas tank with that fuel?

Now, suppose there was another fuel that cost twice as much than the cheap stuff, but you only needed to use half as much (essentially coming out even) and it made your engine purr like a kitten and last for years (maybe even decades) longer than if you'd used the cheap stuff.

I'd like some of that fuel, please! Many of us treat our cars better than we treat our bodies, so when faced with the choice of cheap, crappy food versus slightly more expensive, but far more nutrient-dense food, keep this analogy in mind.

What Is A Tightwad?

First, a definition of "Tightwad." The image many people have of a tightwad is someone who cuts open a spent tube of toothpaste to get every last bit out (yes, I do that), or a stingy old lady separating two-ply sheets of toilet paper (just buy single-ply in the first place, Duh.) A tightwad isn't against spending money, just against *wasting* money. It is NOT about being miserly. It's about recognizing that because we trade our time and skills for money, money is a tangible representation of our Life Energy. This concept is delineated in the book *Your Money or Your Life* by Vicki Robin, Joe Dominguez and Monique Tilford. Before making any purchase, ask yourself if it is worth forking over your hard-earned Life Energy Units. For example, if you make \$10 an hour and you want to buy an item for \$30, take a moment to decide if you would rather have an additional 3 hours of free time, or if this item will truly bring you fulfillment or provide a useful service. You can expect Laika the Space Dog to drop from the sky and play fetch with me before you can expect me to spend \$30 on a ticket to a major sporting event, but I will gladly hand over \$30 to Fedco for 50 tulip bulbs that will bring me weeks of pleasure every spring for years to come. You may live in an apartment and have no use for tulip bulbs, but could enjoy the memory of a \$30 sporting event for years after experiencing it. It's all relative.

Being a tightwad simply means getting the most out of every penny that you spend. You may have heard the old saw: Make it last, wear it out, make it do or do without. That pretty much sums it up for me!

"Then What?"

The most important question a budding tightwad can learn to ask is, "Then What?" If you are tempted to make a purchase of something that isn't an absolute necessity (and the definition of "necessity" is still a bit subjective, but moving on ...), first ask yourself, "If I buy this, then what?" For example, you see a beautiful gray sweater on the clearance rack for \$25 (marked down from \$100). If you bought it, then what? Possible answers: "Now I have another gray sweater to add to the other 8 in my closet" or "I can wear this with the 5 different-colored cotton turtlenecks that I have in my closet, for a different look every day." Be honest with yourself; only you know the real answer. There is a second narrative in this example, which is that even though the sweater was marked down 75%, if you weren't shopping for a gray sweater in the first place, you didn't really need it. The best bargain is the unneeded sweater that you don't buy.

Sometimes, what one *doesn't* do is more significant than what one *does*. A tightwad may *do* a lot of things to save money, like hanging laundry on a clothesline instead of putting it in a dryer or fixing something instead of replacing it. Quite often, however, it's what you *don't* do that makes a bigger difference, like not wearing expensive clothes, not going out to eat, not making an impulse purchase. It might sound sort of "zen", but it is often more challenging to restrain yourself from engaging in a habitual activity than to actively embark upon participating in something new.

Hourly Wage

A variation of the idea of money being Life Energy Units is what Amy Dacyzyn calls the Hourly Wage: when you do something that saves you money, figure out how much you saved and how long it took you to do it. For example, if it took you 10 seconds to rinse out a zipped freezer bag for re-use, you could theoretically wash 6 bags a minute. If the bag originally cost you 7 cents and you wash 6, you've just saved 42 cents a minute, which amounts to over \$25 per hour. If your job pays you more than \$25 per hour, and you are staying home from work to wash out freezer bags, obviously this is not going to benefit you. However, if you earn less than that or are doing this in your spare time, one bag at a time, you come out ahead.

Tracking Expenses

If you are earning what is generally considered to be an adequate income yet you still find yourself short on cash just before payday, you may want to consider keeping track of all of your spending for a month or two (or more) to see where your money is actually going. Create categories that work for you, whether broad ("Miscellaneous"), narrow ("Entertainment"), or very specific ("Movies"). You can do this on paper in a 3-ring binder notebook, on a spreadsheet, using a smartphone app, using one of the many online budgeting tools available from your bank or household budgeting software like Quicken. Make sure to include cash, even if it is only 25 cents. You might be surprised how quickly little things can add up. Once you have identified spending areas that aren't absolutely necessary for your ultimate well-being, redirect that money toward good food.

If you decide that keeping track of expenses is useful and would like to continue on an ongoing basis, keep in mind that some months, you may spend significantly more on food than others.

Your summer food bill may likely be more than your winter one (from stocking up on storable produce) or you may have a spending spike from buying a couple of 25-pound bags of nuts. It is for this reason that I don't advocate a strict monthly food budget beyond the simple rule of "don't buy crap that you don't need."

For people who earn an adequate income and merely want to devote more of their resources toward quality food and vibrant health, one tactic that can help you along is to Make It a Game.

For example, look at how much you spent on food the previous year. Set a goal of how little you can spend on food this year, and do everything you can to reach that goal. Having a goal can make it a lot easier to resist the temptation to let your guard down and succumb to expensive convenience food. Another way to Make It A Game is to have an easy currency equivalent to deter you from unnecessary purchases: if avocados in your area cost about \$1 each, and you spot a \$15 pair of cute earrings that you don't need, just tell yourself "That's 15 avocados!" or "A \$4 latte is 4 avocados," etc.

If This Is More Than Just A Game

There's nothing fun about involuntary simplicity. If you are truly living paycheck to paycheck, it can be very frustrating to read and get excited about eating like our ancient ancestors only to face the reality of modern food prices and a disconnected society that allows people to fall through the cracks and have to fend for themselves. If you are in this category, you have a greater challenge, but it is not insurmountable. Our ancestors benefited from, and survived by, living in groups that shared resources. If you don't live in a community of people who support each other, the key is to reach out and create

one. This doesn't mean living in a hippie commune in the middle of nowhere (not that there's anything wrong with that!). It could be as simple as connecting with neighbors who grow vegetables. They might share some surplus in exchange for you sharing a skill like dog-walking or helping them haul some yard waste to the county compost site.

Use a search engine to find your local community or neighborhood council, and see if they have a listserv or a discussion board. Use it to connect with other like-minded individuals nearby. You can also do this via the Weston A. Price Foundation's website, <http://www.westonaprice.org/>.

If you are shy, it may require you to step out of your comfort zone. Don't worry: being part of a community doesn't necessarily require you to become pals with each and every member.

It's worth noting that there are health benefits to being part of a community (try googling "the Roseto Effect" for more detail on this). The key is to be creative and look outside the box, and outside yourself. Keep your mind open and don't dismiss any inclination (provided it is legal and ethical) until you have pondered it thoroughly. You can still do these things even if you aren't in dire financial straits.

If you are constantly living on the financial edge, consider living in an intentional community. These range from the quintessential commune-in-the-country, to a house in the city with 3 or 4 people with a common goal. Visit <http://www.ic.org/> for more on this.

If possible, get a part-time job that offers an employee discount at a natural foods grocery, co-op, health food store or produce warehouse. This may sound extreme, but it's worth considering, particularly if you are in a household that consumes a lot of food.

Before you despair that you'll never afford to eat this way, please know that Primal Eating lends itself quite well to a reduced food budget. Not much meat is required and if you can tolerate eggs, they can be counted on as an inexpensive protein source.

If you employ every strategy in this book and you still can't make ends meet, just do the best you can. It doesn't cost anything to avoid sugar and starch. This chart can help you prioritize what types of food you do end up buying: http://www.balancedbites.com/PDFs/BalancedBites_FoodQuality.pdf

Processed Food Is Expensive

One of the great things about eating the Primal Body way is that (other than a few benign things like canned coconut milk and some optional condiments) you'll be cutting out virtually all processed, packaged food, the cost of which is primarily for labor, advertising and transportation. Since you'll be making much of your own food, most of these costs are eliminated. Processed foods (even some alleged "natural" brands) cost exponentially more than the ingredients of which they are composed because of a little something called "Added Value." If you take a commodity like oats (which as of August 16, 2011, costs 16 cents a pound) and grind it, roll it, cut it, steam it, pound it, bake it, extrude it into little "O" shapes and pump it full of maltodextrin and "natural flavors" or bag it into 100-calorie portions, you have just Added Value to it. Yeah, I've got your value right here. To take something that costs 16 cents a pound and sell it for 7 times more (\$1.18 per half-cup serving, as in the form of granola), is "value" I can live without.

I think that a lot of people have gotten the mistaken notion that "healthy food is expensive" from the many boutique brands of natural and organic processed foods. You know what I'm talking about: the \$7 bag of granola, the \$10 six-pack of soda, the \$2 box of macaroni and cheese, the \$5 package of

sandwich cookies, the \$5 tiny bottle of salad dressing. Many people will disagree with me, but I believe that the most expensive way to eat is to buy "healthy" and "natural" versions of the processed foods that are so disdained by "nutritionistas". This is a lateral move at best. If you are eating \$2 macaroni and cheese, your body will still have to release as much insulin as it would if you were eating the 3-for-\$1 stuff. Soda is soda, and cookies are cookies, and processed is processed. It might make a little improvement in the world at large to use organically grown ingredients, but for your individual health, stay away from all processed foods, regardless of their groove appeal and cheeky, ironic, post-modern packaging. There, I said it.

And I'm not sorry.

A concomitant money-saving benefit of eating less processed food is that you will be buying fewer things that come in packages, which means that you'll have less trash. Less trash means that if you contract with your own trash hauler (or if your municipality offers different rates on different sizes of cans), you might be able to switch to a smaller sized trash can, reducing your bill. You may even get to the point where your trash load is small enough that you can share trash hauling charges with a neighbor, or take it yourself to a public pay dump every few weeks.

Do The Math

Before it became slang for "it's pretty obvious" or "figure it out," "Do The Math" literally meant to do the math, and it is that definition that I am using.

"Do The Math" is one of the most important concepts in thinking like a tightwad. This works in a variety of ways. You can calculate the annual cost of something, which can illustrate the cumulative impact of saving small amounts of money here and there. For example, if you drink a cup of green tea every day, the cost of a tea bag versus loose tea may be only 11 cents.

However, if you multiply it by 365 days a year, suddenly that 11 cents becomes \$40. If you saw \$40 dollars lying on the sidewalk, would you pick it up? I would!! Conversely, you can use it to break down the cost of a big ticket item. For example, a basic chest freezer costs around \$250. Let's say the amount of money that you save by buying a half a cow all at once (and keeping it in the chest freezer) rather than one pound at a time, is around \$2.50 a pound. If you eat a pound of beef a week, you are saving \$130 a year. At that rate (not even factoring in the vegetables and other goodies that you are storing in it), you will have broken even on that freezer purchase in just a couple of years.

Another variation of this involves the concept of being "penny wise and pound foolish," which describes a person who makes a choice that saves them a few cents initially, but ends up costing them more money down the road. For example, if every winter you buy a poorly made pair of \$10 boots that falls apart before the season is over, after 7 years, you will have spent more money than if you'd bought a really well-made pair of \$70 boots (which will last a lot longer than 7 years) to begin with. Or if you try to tackle a project that involves heavy lifting (rather than pay a stronger, younger person to do it for you), and end up straining your back, you'll end up paying more for a session with a chiropractor or massage therapist than you would have paid to have someone else do the lifting for you.

Be Prepared

You may have heard the sayings, "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail" or "Chance favors the prepared observer." I'd like to add a new one to that group: "Desperation is expensive." Needing something

immediately leaves you at the mercy of whomever has it readily at hand, and they can charge you accordingly. A big part of being a tightwad is being prepared and planning ahead. It can be as simple as always keeping a stash of non-perishable snacks (nuts, jerky, etc.) in your car, at your desk at work or in your pocket. As a broader lifestyle shift, it will require trading some of your down time for procurement and preparation of food. It needn't be drudgery; while you're cooking and chopping, turn on the radio, listen to a podcast or put on some music, invite some others into the kitchen for some conversation or put on a headset and catch up by phone with a friend. As you become more adept and efficient, this food preparation will take less time.

Portion Control

One basic strategy for saving money on food is this: Don't overeat. We don't often think of overeating in the context of the food budget. It is usually discussed within the topics of weight loss and obesity. Here, it is relevant because if you are paying for your own food, the more you eat, the more you spend. As we learned in *Primal Body, Primal Mind*, even if you are eating quality, nutrient-dense foods, excess calories are unnecessary. While fat is naturally satiating, if you are accustomed to pleasing your palate with mindless eating (especially carbohydrate-based snacks), it may take a while for you to become attuned to the body's signals to stop eating. Similarly, if you are accustomed to using your eyes to assess the amount of food that generally "fills you up," a Primal meal may not look like it will be enough (since fat takes up less space on a plate than a mound of rice or potatoes).

One method to help with this transition is to measure your portions before eating. With proteins for a meal, start with 3-4 ounces (or 2-3 eggs). After eating, wait 20 minutes. If you are still hungry, have a little more of the fat portion of the meal (e.g. more vegetables with lots of butter). Try some of the meal presentation tricks (like using a smaller plate) that Brian Wansink recommends in his fascinating book *Mindless Eating: Why We Eat More Than We Think*.

As an open-ended pursuit, snacking can be trickier. When eating right out of the bag or container, it is hard to keep track. Try eating right out of a measuring cup, or a small container (like a ramekin) that holds an exact amount. For snacks like nuts, start with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup. Wait 20 minutes after eating, and if you are still hungry, have a little more. Avoid "trigger" foods, the ones that are hard to stop eating once you have started (for me it's roasted almonds).

This may seem obvious and a bit of a buzzkill. I'm not advocating eating like an uptight dieter, but unless you raise them yourself, nutrient-dense foods are not free and eating a little more than you need every day can add up to a lot of money. You may only need to measure portions until you become more familiar with what it feels like to be physically satiated, and not take your cues solely from your mouth and your eyes.

Other Ways You May Save Money

While this book is focused on how much you can save directly on food purchases, there is a vast array of other areas where you have the potential to reduce spending, mainly in the health care category. Some health insurers will lower premiums for customers who participate in weight management programs. Though weight loss isn't the prime directive of eating an ancestral diet, it is often a natural consequence. It can't hurt to inquire with your insurer to see if they offer discounts for this pursuit. Incidentally, any excess weight lost will reduce your daily protein requirements, further diminishing your food bill.

Improved health with this approach to eating can potentially result in lowering the dose of, or eliminating entirely, prescription and non-prescription drugs for cholesterol, blood pressure, inflammation, Type 2 diabetes, gastrointestinal complaints and beyond. Statin drugs range from \$11 to \$200 per month. ACE inhibitors, \$10-100. One course of Prilosec is \$10. A month's worth of Type 2 diabetes drugs averages \$76 (\$10-120 for each individual prescription).

While it is impossible to predict which future health crises you may have avoided by changing your diet, the cost of surgery and a hospital stay can be devastating, even if you are insured.

I tried to find on the internet the average list price for open-heart surgery in the U.S., and the prices were all over the map, from \$15,000 to \$130,000. Costs for angioplasty ranged from \$20,000 to \$57,000 and cardiac bypass surgery from \$44,000 to \$100,000. However, you simply cannot put a price on vibrant health. Even if the extra lifetime cost of eating an ancestral diet (as opposed to a cheap, crappy, processed one) was equal to (or even slightly more than) the lifetime cost of chronic disease management, why on earth would you choose the discomfort and limitations of an existence plagued by sub-optimal health?

Chapter 2-The Essentials

Calculator

Two of the keystones of tightwaddery are knowing the price of things from a variety of sources (more on that later) and keeping track of your daily (weekly, monthly, etc.) expenses. For me, this would be nearly impossible without a handy calculator. Despite what you may infer by the contents of this book, I am not a math geek! I simply recognize the importance of numbers as they relate to the task at hand. Please do not be intimidated. Let your calculator do the work for you. It is especially useful for comparing the prices of two items of differing sizes by calculating the cost per ounce. The largest size isn't always the better deal.

Rubber Spatula

Sometimes the best tool is the simplest. This is certainly the case with the humble rubber spatula (though the rubber ones are getting harder to find, being replaced with the silicon variety, which are good, but not as thorough as rubber). A spatula is essential for ensuring that nothing that is being transferred from one container to another is wasted by being left behind.

Nut butter, yogurt and coconut milk all need a little encouragement to let go of their attachment to the insides of jars or cans. A spatula also is needed when using measuring cups for clingy foods. It's good to have a small one for getting into tight places, though in a pinch, your finger can do the job (as in getting every bit of egg white out of an egg shell).

Pressure Cooker and Slow Cooker

For quick meal preparation, learn to embrace the pressure cooker. If all you know about pressure cookers is some apocryphal story about one exploding on your Great Aunt Edna, resulting in split pea soup on the ceiling, it's time for you to get to know the new, high-tech, virtually fool-proof pressure cookers. Pressure cookers work by creating a closed environment that forces steam through foods to effect heat transfer. When the tightly sealed cooker is set over high heat, steam pressure builds and the

internal temperature rises. This environment ranges from 5 to 10psi in low and medium-pressure units to 15psi in standard high-pressure units, which enables cooking at temperatures up to 257 degrees F. Food cooks in a fraction of the time, using less fuel and yielding more tender results. This means that you can cook soup or chili in 20 minutes (only about 8 minutes of which is on high pressure) that tastes like it's been simmering all day. It also means that you can buy the tougher cuts of meat, which are usually significantly less expensive, and with only a short amount of time on the flame, transform them into tender, succulent delicacies. One mainstay in my Mom's repertoire was using the pressure cooker to cook inexpensive turkey legs, which I recall as being so tender that the meat was practically falling off the bone (of course, we then proceeded to drown them in barbecue sauce, but that's another story).

On the opposite side of the time spectrum is the slow cooker. It uses an electric base and cooks at low temperatures over the course of several hours. Some types have a ceramic insert that is surrounded by heat (the most popular brand is the Rival Crock Pot), while others are made of metal and sit on top of the heated base. It is another great way to turn a cheaper cut of meat into something special. Though it requires getting things started in the morning (meaning a slightly earlier wake-up call), most people love having supper hot and ready as soon as they get home from work. You can also start a meal in the evening so it's ready by breakfast time.

Even though they are on all day, they cycle on and off so they use a relatively small amount of electricity (between 80 and 1000 watts). The cost to run it will depend on the model's wattage (it should be listed on the label of the bottom of the unit) and the cost of electricity in your area.

To calculate potential costs, go to

http://www.portlandgeneral.com/residential/energy_savings/getting_started/energy_cost_calculator.aspx and enter the wattage of the model you have, or are considering purchasing.

Another way to save cooking fuel is by eating some of your meals raw (which provides additional health benefits) by making foods like sushi, carpaccio, tuna or steak tartare, ceviche, plus a raw salad at least one or two days a week. No gas or electricity required!

Freezer

If you have the space for it, a freezer is one of the most critical tools of the tightwad trade.

Though some folks may be lucky enough to have the right conditions to create a root cellar, and storing home-canned vegetables requires no electricity, a freezer is the easiest and most convenient way to store vegetables and meats for longer than a week.

Chest freezers use less electricity and have more usable space than upright models, but get the kind that you know you will actually use. Consumer Reports magazine regularly publishes the results of their testing for the most energy efficient and easiest-to-use brands. They also rate the various models on their ability to keep food frozen during a power outage, so if you live in an area that loses electrical service frequently, you'll want to get one that rates highly in this category (or invest in a gas-powered generator). At this writing, their current recommendations range from \$280 to \$750, with annual energy costs of \$46-\$99. You might be tempted to find an old one for cheap or free, but keep in mind that technology has improved exponentially in the past few years and the extra money that you spend on electricity to run an old freezer might just eat up any savings from your food budget.

Before paying full retail price for the freezer of your choice, make sure to check at appliance outlets (like ApplianceSmart) for scratch-and-dent models, which work perfectly and have only minor cosmetic flaws. One nationwide outlet is Sears: www.searsoutlet.com

If there is no outlet in your area, ask at a regular appliance or big box store to see if they have any scratch-and-dent models in stock, or if they could notify you when they do. You can also patiently watch and wait (and start earmarking some savings) for when your dream freezer goes on sale.

Having a freezer means that you can buy half a cow directly from a farmer, paying much less per pound than if you were buying it one piece at a time at the grocery store or farmers' market.

It gives you a place to store an extra turkey purchased at a great price during (or just after) the winter holidays. You can use it to keep scraps of vegetables or meat bones that can be used later to make soup stock, in what I like to call (respectively) the Broth Bucket and the Bone Bucket. Use the freezer to avoid throwing out other food odds-and-ends, which could be incorporated into crustless quiche or soup. If you buy nuts or spices in bulk, a freezer will keep them fresh for months (if not years). Use it to store your own home-made convenience foods, with meal-sized portions of meat or vegetables, clearly dated and labeled.

If you don't currently have the money or the space for a freezer, you still have options. Fully utilize the freezer compartment of your refrigerator. Since it won't be filled with pizza and ice cream, there should be room for some vegetables, meats and soups. This past summer, I was able to fit 25 quarts of home-grown raspberries in the top freezer compartment of my fridge, in addition to all of my other freezer staples.

Use the Weston A. Price Foundation website at <http://www.westonaprice.org/> (click on "get involved," then click on "Local Chapters") to connect with other paleo-eaters in your area, and see if you can arrange with one of them to sell you part of their ½ cow (or lamb, pig, etc.) one cut at a time. Figure out ahead of time which cuts you want, the cost and the approximate times/intervals when you can pick them up. Be prompt about payments and pickups. In exchange for the favor, offer what skills you have (child care, house painting, window washing, etc.) as a goodwill barter. These tasks can also be arranged ahead of time, with a predetermined annual quota of hours.

If you live in an apartment, see if the property owner will allow you to keep a (locked!) freezer in the storage area if you agree to pay for the amount of electricity it consumes (use an appliance energy meter to measure kilowatts). You could also use this approach in a friend's basement.

It's very important to devise a system to keep track of what exactly is in the freezer at any given time. I recommend using a grid-like chart on a white board. If you don't want to spend the money on an "official" white board, you can buy a sheet of shower board (which goes by the name "Solid White Tileboard" or "Melamine tile wall panel") from a building supply store and cut it to size. On the far left, make a column list of every food in the freezer. After each item, use a dry-erase marker to make a colored circle/dot code to mark the number of units. As you remove each unit, erase one of the dots. Also, write the total number that you started with. For example, if you freeze 14 bags of chopped green pepper, write "14" in that row, and draw 14 big green dots. As you use the peppers, erase one dot for each unit.

Here is an example of what the chart might look like at the beginning of the winter, when it is full:

Green Peppers	14	.....
Broccoli	12	.....
Raspberries	25	.....
Green Beans	12	.....
Kale	20	.....

You can also use the chart to plan for next year's food procurement; if you use all of the green peppers by February, make a red dot for every time you made a recipe that would have included a green pepper if you had one, or if you (gasp!) went out and bought one. Let's say that this happened 9 times. When green pepper season rolls around again, you add the number of red dots (9) to the number of peppers that you originally froze (14), to get a good idea of how many green peppers you should freeze this year (23).

Here's what the chart might look like by the end of the winter:

Green Peppers	14	.....	This upcoming growing season, freeze 23
Broccoli	12	....	This upcoming growing season, freeze 16
Raspberries	25	.....
Green Beans	12	...	This upcoming growing season, freeze 15
Kale	20	..	

Be sure to keep the chart out of reach of children! They might find it irresistible to erase your hard work to create their own dry marker masterpiece. You can also do this on regular paper, using green and red dot stickers, butcher/freezer paper with a freezer pencil, or any other method that works for you.

For more on preparing vegetables for the freezer, see Chapter 7, "Storing Food".

Ice Cube Tray

I use an ice cube tray for just about everything but ice cubes: roasted pureed vegetables, tomato paste, herb pestos and juice from lemons or limes when they are on sale. It is a great way to store a surplus of something, as when a recipe calls for only 1 tablespoon of tomato paste. You can store the rest of the can's contents as cubes and thaw them as needed for future recipes. Each cube compartment holds about 2 tablespoons, which tends to be a single portion size of these kinds of foods for most meals or recipes, and this small amount thaws more quickly than food frozen in a larger container. Once the food has frozen into cubes, transfer them to a zippered freezer bag. To freeze foods that are used in larger quantities (like broth), use muffin tins.

Food Processor and Blender

If you are going to be making most of your own food, a food processor is a very valuable tool. It can be used to make nut flour at a fraction of the price that you'd pay for ready-made nut flour.

Use nuts with the skins removed (like blanched, slivered almonds) and pulse until mealy, like flour. Processing nuts for a longer time (a *lot* longer) will create nut butter.

It is also a great way to prepare fresh herbs and grilled vegetables for freezing as "Flavor Cubes." Just puree any herbs or grilled, aromatic vegetables (bell peppers, onions, etc.), singly or in combination, with just enough olive oil to make the processing easy, and freeze the resulting mixture in ice cube trays. When the cubes have frozen solid, store them in freezer bags, clearly labeled and dated. You can use them all winter long to add a blast of the fresh taste of summer to soups, stews and sauces.

A similar tool is an immersion blender, which is very handy for making creamy soups. Many soup recipes direct you to transfer a portion of soup to a blender, puree it and return it to the pot, repeating until the soup is smooth. This is messy, time-consuming and dangerous (hot liquids often create steam, which pops the top off of the blender, which can cause serious burns). Using an immersion blender allows you to do the blending right in the soup pot, getting the texture just the way you want it, either super creamy or with some satisfying chunks remaining.

A traditional blender is still a great way to make smoothies, and sauces like mayonnaise, walnnaise (recipe in Chapter 11) and hollandaise.

If you have the counter space, it's handy to have all of these appliances. If you can't afford new ones, garage sales and thrift stores are a great source, though the new ones tend to go on sale quite regularly at discount and department stores.

Food Scale

This is essential for weighing out meat or vegetables that you will be preparing for a single meal, adding to recipes or freezing in meal-sized or serving-sized portions. At a certain point, you may be able to eyeball what 3 ounces of turkey looks like, but until then, let the scale be your guide. This will prevent you from eating beyond your budget, not to mention beyond your actual nutritional requirements. The digital kind are more precise, but whatever you can get your hands on will work.

Notebook and Self-Stick Notepad

Let's face it, being a tightwad requires a good deal of organization, observation and record-keeping. If my brain could do all of those things on its own, I would be some kind of dynamo and have made my first 10 million dollars by now. I rely on the good old pen and paper method to do my remembering for me. I bring a little notebook with me wherever I go to record prices and jot down ideas. Self-stick notes are handy to place where I will see them to remind me of things that need to be done (bringing something out of the freezer to thaw, picking up something from the store, etc.). Writing things down frees up my brain for more creative pursuits. If you find that a smartphone serves this purpose for you, by all means, make full use of it!

Chapter 3-Comparing Food Expenses: Conventional vs. Primal

Typical Conventional Food Costs

This is a week's worth of typical meals and snacks, a composite of daily food intake as reported to me by some conventionally-eating friends. The prices for the following foods are based on conventional grocery store prices, and the various fast "food" outlets and coffee shops. I calculated using the serving sizes as listed on the package, unless otherwise noted. Amounts do not include sales tax. Obviously, one could save money by buying on sale, not eating fast food and not snacking. Conversely, one could easily spend a lot more by buying snacks and soda from a vending machine, rather than bringing a single serving from a larger package from home, as illustrated here.

Day 1

Breakfast

Honey Nut Cheerios .28
Milk .18
Banana .25
Coffee .12
Flavored non-dairy creamer .04
Total \$0.87

Snack

Doughnut .85
Coffee 2.12
Total \$2.97

Lunch

Turkey .81
Bread .17
Mayo .13
Iceberg Lettuce .17
Potato chips .44
Diet Coke .45
Total \$2.17

Snack

M&Ms .42
Total \$0.42

Supper

Rice-a-Roni .68
Chicken tenders .79
Canned green beans .44
Milk .18
Total \$2.09

Dessert/evening snack

1 cup ice cream 2.49
Total \$2.49

Daily total \$11.01

Day 2

Breakfast

Bagel .38
Cream cheese .32
Coffee .12
Flavored non-dairy creamer .04
Orange 1.69
Total \$2.55

Snack

Coffee 2.12
Fiber bar .80
Total \$2.92

Lunch

Pizza slice 3.25
Diet coke .45
Total \$3.70

Snack

Doritos .36
Diet coke .45
Total \$0.81

Supper

Fish sticks 1.93
Hungry Jack scalloped potatoes .40
Frozen veg medley .52
Milk .18
Total \$3.03

Dessert

1 cup ice cream 2.49
Total \$2.49

Daily total \$15.50

Day 3

Breakfast

Egg McMuffin 2.19
Coffee .95
Total \$3.14

Snack

Danish 1.59
Coffee 2.12
Total \$3.71

Lunch

Microwaved soup 2.79
Crackers .11
Diet Coke .45
Total \$3.35

Snack

M&Ms .42
Total \$0.42

Supper

Spaghetti .20
Sauce .48
Meatballs 1.25
Garlic bread .45
Iceberg lettuce salad .42
Italian dressing .24
Total \$3.04

Dessert

1 cup ice cream 2.49
Total \$2.49

Daily total \$16.15

Day 4

Breakfast

Instant oatmeal .38
Milk (1/2 serving) .09
Orange juice .42
Coffee .12
Flavored non-dairy creamer .04

Total \$1.05

Snack

Twizzlers .27

Total \$0.27

Lunch

Arby's roast beef sandwich 2.79

Curly fries, small 1.69

Diet coke, small 1.59

Total \$6.07

Snack

Honey roasted peanuts .19

Total \$0.19

Supper

Tacos

Ground beef, 6 oz 2.06

Cheese .49

Tomatoes .75

Shells .37

Sauce .15

Iceberg Lettuce .17

Total \$3.99

Dessert

1 cup ice cream 2.49

Total \$2.49

Daily total \$14.06

Day 5

Breakfast

Yogurt .79

Granola .83

Banana .25

Coffee .12

Flavored non-dairy creamer .04

Total \$2.03

Lunch

Peanut butter .17
Jelly .08
Bread .17
Potato chips .44
Diet Coke .45
Total \$1.31

Snack

Latte 3.49
Muffin 1.69
Total \$5.18

Supper

Stouffer's turkey dinner 4.19
Milk .18
Total \$4.37

Snack

Microwave popcorn, 1 bag .76
Total \$0.76

Daily total \$13.65

Day 6

Breakfast

2 eggs .28
Hash browns .40
Bacon .80
Toast .17
Butter .13
Orange juice .42
Coffee .12
Flavored non dairy creamer .04
Total \$2.36

Lunch

Turkey .81
Bread .17
Mayo .13
Lettuce .17
Potato chips .44
Diet coke .45
Total \$2.17

Snack

Honey roasted peanuts .19

Total \$0.19

Supper

½ Frozen pizza 3.99

½ Bagged salad 1.55

Italian dressing .24

Diet coke .45

Total \$6.23

Snack

Microwave popcorn .76

Total \$0.76

Daily total \$11.71

Day 7

Brunch

Pancakes .15

Syrup .32

Butter .13

Sausage .83

Coffee .12

Flavored non-dairy creamer .04

OJ .42

Total \$2.01

Dinner

Pot roast

10 oz meat 3.74

2 carrots .11

1 potato .89

½ Onion .25

Total \$4.99

Dessert

Pie .87

Cool whip .09

Total \$0.96

Daily total \$7.96

Weekly total \$88.02 (daily average \$12.57)

Typical Primal Food Costs

This is a breakdown of seven actual days of actual eating by two actual *Primal Body, Primal Mind*-style eaters (one of them is me, the other shall remain a cypher). Individual dietary needs and results may vary. The prices are based on food purchased from my local farmers' market, Trader Joe's, Aldi, my local natural foods co-op, vitacost.com, grasslandbeef.com and amazon.com. The foods are all store-bought, unless otherwise noted (as with the coconut milk, sometimes using homemade, sometimes not, because sometimes you have the time to make it, and sometimes you just have enough time to open a can). Obviously, the costs could be brought down even lower if expensive meats were avoided, all of the ghee and broths were homemade and all of the vegetables were grown in the backyard, but since this is merely for illustrative purposes, I thought it best to keep it within the realm of most people's current reality.

Day 1

Breakfast

3 eggs .88
1 zucchini 1.00
½ oz Pecorino romano cheese .22
1 Tbs pine nuts .25
½ tsp Italian herb blend .11
2 Tbs olive oil .18
Total \$2.64

Lunch

8 oz whole, grass-fed milk .37
½ tsp vanilla extract .22
6 drops stevia .02
Total \$0.61

Supper

4 oz. salmon 1.13
3 Tbsp. walnnaise (recipe in Chapter 11) .53
Romaine lettuce 1.00
2 Tbs balsamic dressing .33
2 Tbs sunflower seeds .06
Total \$3.05

Snack

2 carrots .40
¼ cup almonds .28
Total \$0.68

Daily total \$6.98

Day 2

Breakfast

8 oz whole, grass-fed milk .37
1 serving whey protein .80
2 frozen sweet potato cubes .33
½ tsp vanilla extract .22
6 drops stevia .02
Total \$1.74

Snack

2 nut ball snackers .64
Total \$0.64

Lunch

½ cup homemade cottage cheese .75
1 small cucumber .50
Home-grown dill .00
Total \$1.25

Supper

3 hard-boiled eggs .88
3 cups blanched green beans 1.25
2 tsp capers .13
2 Tbs balsamic dressing .33
Total \$2.59

Snack

¼ cup hazelnuts .38
Total \$0.38

Daily total \$6.60

Day 3

Breakfast

6 oz. coconut "nogurt" (made with homemade coconut milk, recipe in Chapter 11) .55
Home-grown raspberries .00
Total \$0.55

Lunch

Tuna salad
3.25 oz tuna .75
Celery .20

Carrot .20
2 Tbs walnnaise .35
Total \$1.50

Supper

Chili

1½ lbs full fat ground beef 9.21
1 qt carton (gluten free) chicken broth 2.82
1 large can organic fire roasted chopped tomatoes 3.15
1 medium onion .50
1 cup mushrooms 1.00
1 small can organic tomato paste 1.37
3 garlic cloves .30
1 green jalapeno pepper .05
3 Tbs organic chili powder 2.83
Total \$3.54 per serving (6 servings, \$21.23 recipe total) Daily total \$5.59

Day 4

Breakfast

2 duck eggs 1.33
2 Tbs grass fed ghee .65
2 Tbsp salsa .27
1 clove garlic .10
Celtic Sea salt .02
½ sliced avocado .38
½ onion .25
1 cup of organic green tea .22
Total \$3.22

Lunch

1 roasted chicken thigh 1.93
2 cups red leaf butter lettuce 1.00
Sliced onion .10
5 olives .22
½ avocado .38
4 chopped snap peas .10
Small handful of chopped red cabbage .25
5 chopped hazelnuts .07
A few home-grown sprouts .00
3 Tbs olive oil .27
2 Tbs balsamic vinegar .32
1 Tbs raw apple cider vinegar .07
1 tsp Organic Ville Stone Ground Mustard (gluten free) .03
Total \$4.74

Supper

Burger made with 3 oz full fat ground beef 1.15
1 Tbs minced, sautéed onion .10
2 diced and sautéed shiitake mushrooms .42
A sprinkle of garlic .10
A pinch of Celtic Sea salt .02
1 Tbs of rendered grass-fed beef tallow .18
1 tsp. Organic Ville Stone Ground Mustard (gluten free) .03
½ avocado .38
10-20 stalks (depending on thickness) of fresh asparagus 2.00
2 Tbs of melted grass-fed ghee .65
1 tsp hot pepper sesame oil .23
Total \$5.26

Daily total \$13.22

Day 5

Breakfast

Ricotta pancake
3 eggs .88
1 cup homemade ricotta 1.50
1½ tsp vanilla .30
½ tsp salt .02
3 drops stevia .01
¾ cup blueberries 1.75
2 Tbs butter .35
Total \$4.81

Lunch

1 cup homemade coconut milk .54
1 chai tea bag .18
Total \$0.72

Snack

½ cup blanched sugar snap peas .75
Total \$0.75

Supper

4 oz wild-caught flounder 1.00
1 serving Walnut cilantro sauce .64
Ingredients as follows:
2 oz walnuts .69
Pinch of salt .02
½ tsp. paprika .13

1 clove garlic .10
3 Tbs olive oil .27
1 cup fresh cilantro, packed 1.00
Juice of 1 lemon .33
(total 2.54 per recipe, 4 servings= .64 per serving)
3 cups broccoli 1.00
2 Tbs butter .35
Total 2.99

Daily total \$9.27

Day 6

Breakfast

Red cabbage frittata
3 eggs .88
¼ head red cabbage .50
½ avocado .38
½ tsp Szechuan pepper salt .13
2 Tbs olive oil .18
Total \$2.07

Lunch

Iced chicory latte
Chicory tea .32
8 oz. whole, grass-fed milk .37
½ tsp vanilla .22
6 drops stevia .02
Total \$0.93

Supper

Coconut Thai curry (makes 2 servings)
1 recipe homemade coconut milk .87
2 Tbs curry paste .77
1 bell pepper .50
2 small zucchini 1.00
1 cup green beans 1.00
½ lb chicken 2.00
Total \$3.07 per serving (2 servings, \$6.14 recipe total)

Snack

¼ cup shelled pistachios .50
Total \$0.50

Daily total \$6.57

Day 7

Breakfast

1 can full fat coconut milk 2.07
½ cup frozen blueberries .50
6 drops of stevia .02
A few ice cubes .00
1 scoop Garden of Life "Super Seed" .45
Total \$3.04

Lunch

1 tin of boneless, skinless sardines packed in olive oil 2.55
Total \$2.55

Supper

3 oz seasoned, sliced rare rib-eye steak 4.69
2 cups red cabbage .50
1 Tbs butter .18
2 Tbs balsamic vinegar .32
Total \$5.69

Daily total \$11.28

1 Week Total \$59.51 (average \$8.50 per day)

Saves \$4.36 over conventional x 365 days per year = \$1592 per person, per year in food costs alone

Chapter 4-Shopping Strategies

Price Book

If knowledge is power, then one of the most powerful tools in reducing your food spending is the Price Book, a strategy championed by Über Tightwad, Amy Dacyzyn. Unless you have a mind like my mother's, who could remember the fluctuating prices from 10 different stores (in another era, she probably would have been a stockbroker or commodities trader), you will need to record prices on paper or digitally. Basically, a Price Book is a grid for keeping track of the everyday prices of all of your food staples that remain fairly static. Knowing how much a particular item costs lets you know if that "great deal" that you find is actually a great deal. If you happen to be visiting a store that isn't in your usual shopping circuit, it also allows you to compare prices and figure out if it is worth stocking up on something that you find there.

Use a spiral notebook or 3-ring binder, or create a spreadsheet on your computer or smartphone. There are also price book comparison shopper apps by Aerende and RedBog for smartphone, iphone, ipad touch and ipad, which allow you to enter your own customized information. I wish I could recommend one over the other, but I don't even have an old-school cell phone (too expensive!), let alone a smart one. To create a traditional Price Book, use the left column to list all of the things that are a regular part

of your repertoire. Across the top, put the name of all of the stores where you normally shop, but leave room for stores that you may only stop at occasionally. Fill in the regular price of the item, preferably by the ounce, for easy comparison. Many grocery stores provide the cost per ounce on the shelf tag, but bring a calculator in case they don't. Take the price of the item and divide by the number of ounces. For example, if a 16 oz. jar of almond butter costs \$4.99, divide 4.99 by 16, and you get \$0.31 per ounce.

Another way to format the Price Book is to have one separate page for each item, and list each store name with its lowest price per ounce. This method is helpful if you have a lot of items and you are doing it on paper, but with the dawn of the computer spreadsheet and smartphone apps, the grid is a bit less cumbersome.

As you collect prices, be sure to check the entire store, as some things may be merchandised in more than one spot (for example, in many stores, nuts can be found in the produce department, baking aisle and the snack aisle). To avoid confusion, only include the items that meet your standards (for example, one store may only carry "light" coconut milk or balsamic vinegar with caramel color). It might take a little time at first to fill it in, but after that, you'll have a comprehensive guide that tells you who has the lowest price on all of the things that you normally buy. If you truly don't have time to do it in one trip, fill in what you can when you can, and eventually it will be complete. You can keep your receipts from each trip and fill in the amounts at home. It might be necessary to update it periodically. Seasonal produce is a little tricky, as the price can fluctuate wildly from week to week, so you may wish to include those foods with a price range rather than a single price.

Here is an example to give you an idea of what it might look like. Yours will have a lot more stores and food items.

	Co-op	Trader Joe's	CostCo	Vitacost	Cub Foods	Amazon
Olive oil	.44	.16	.30	.31	.24	.31
Light tuna	.40	.23	.29	.35	.25	.33
Balsamic vinegar	.24	.47	.33	.35	.38	.31
Almond butter	.60	.31	.22	.47	.91	.37
Coconut flour	.50			.36	.44	.36
Coconut milk	.21			.15		.15

If you are an early adapter of high-tech gadgets, there are several apps available (like shopsavvy) that allow you to scan an item's barcode and see where to find the best deal at that moment. This can be handy, but I think that as a way to map out an overall shopping strategy, the grid or spreadsheet is still the most useful. Once you know what the lowest price in town is, you will be able to recognize a good deal when it presents itself and stock up accordingly.

Similarly, it will allow you to walk away from something that is being presented as a great deal, but actually isn't. As the saying goes, "Chance favors the prepared observer." Remember to factor in the cost of fuel (or public transportation fare), as it may be cheaper to buy something for a few cents more at a nearby store than to burn the gasoline to get it from farther away at a lower price. If you are self-propelled, have at it!

The Combined Shopping List

Once you know which stores have the best prices on what you usually buy, it is a good idea to keep a running shopping list with headings for all of the stores. Add things as they start to get low, rather than just looking through the cupboards on shopping day. If you are almost out of something and you aren't going to the cheapest source for awhile, include that item under a different store's heading and buy just enough from them to get you through until you get to the cheap place.

Here is an example from my own current list:

Cub Foods

Mustard

Aldi

Salmon

Co-op

Shredded coconut

2 quarts whole, grass-fed milk

Balsamic vinegar (bring empty bottle)

Cider vinegar (bring empty bottle)

Trader Joe's

Almond butter

3 Kerry Gold butter

Brazil nuts

2 cans tuna

Raw almonds

Olive oil

Vitacost

Cacao nibs

Coconut flour

Toasted sesame oil

Little India

Cumin seeds

Curry leaves

Fenugreek

If you know that you are going to be in the neighborhood of one of the stores, you'll already know what you need to pick up there. You can also add headings for other types of stores (hardware, discount chain, etc.) to make the most of each trip, since many of these stores are clustered together.

A Word On Coupons

Most media coverage of tightwaddery, or saving money on groceries, inevitably includes an image of someone surrounded by stacks of coupons. It's an easy visual. However, most coupons are for processed foods, which you won't be buying much of anyway. Some natural foods groceries have little booklets of coupons for brands owned by the big conglomerates (there are more than you'd think). You may also find thick, community-wide coupon books for sale, with several "green" categories, including groceries. Do The Math to see if you'd recoup the cost of the book with the savings therein, bearing in mind that most store coupons require a minimum purchase. Regardless of where you find coupons, if you occasionally run across one for a favorite condiment, butter or frozen vegetable, by all means use it! You can also find them for zippered freezer bags and (during canning season) for canning jars and lids. Just rest easy knowing that you will not be spending hours (or even minutes) of precious time clipping coupons.

Shopping the Sales

Sign up with every store in your circuit to get their weekly sale flyer delivered via e-mail, "Like" them on Facebook and/or follow them on Twitter. This is a quick, easy way to find out when to stock up on your frequently used items. Also remember to look through the weekly flyers that other local stores send you in the mail. Even if you rarely shop there, you may come across a deal that will make the trip worthwhile.

If something is on sale at "2 for \$5," unless it is explicitly noted that you have to buy two to get the deal, usually the actual price is "1 for \$2.50," which is great if you only need one of them. For Buy One, Get One Free, you do need to buy two. If you can't find a sale item in the department where it is normally stocked, check the end caps (the displays at the ends of the aisles).

Though fruit is not emphasized in Primal Eating, for those times that you want it around, try to find it in bags rather than by the single piece. Large, beautiful, visually pleasing fruit is reserved for the big produce displays. The bagged stuff is usually cheaper, since it comprises fruit that is small, asymmetrical or otherwise aesthetically challenged. If you find an exceptional deal on an amount that you can't consume before it starts to decline, try removing pits, seeds and cores, pureeing it (maybe with a pinch of cinnamon) and cooking it down on low heat (in an uncovered slow cooker, perhaps) until it is thick. Store it in the freezer in small containers, thawing it for use as a topping for such things as almond flour pancakes or coconut yogurt. The "Bagged Is Cheaper" rule tends to hold true for other types of produce (like onions) as well.

That being said, buy only what you will be able to use while it is still viable. Buying in bulk is a great way to save money, but all your savings go into the compost bin along with your discarded food if you don't use every bit of it. For example, if you need one lemon to make a particular recipe, and you see

that a single lemon is 50 cents, but a bag of 8 lemons is \$1.99 (about half the price per lemon), only buy the bag of 8 if you have an immediate plan for the other 7 (like removing the zest and freezing it, then squeezing and freezing the juice in ice cube trays).

Otherwise, those extra lemons will rot in the fridge and you would have been better off just getting the one.

Have A Plan

Being prepared means making a shopping list, with quantities that reflect what you will consume in a timely manner. After a fairly short amount of time, you will get to know how much this is, either by weight or visually. You might have a certain sized produce bag that you bring to the farmers' market that fits just the right quantity of broccoli, for example. Or you can bring just enough big shopping bags to hold what you will need until your next trip. I have discovered that I am usually unable to consume more in a week than my two bike bags can hold, so it's a handy, self-limiting strategy. It's important to stick to your list, *unless* you come across a deal that is too good to pass up, in which case, think first and determine what exactly you are going to do with it (freeze it, can it, or eat it every day until it is gone).

Develop a way to deal with individual foods that pose a challenge. For example, if you can't seem to use up a whole head of celery before it gets limp, buy it at a store that charges by the pound, and break off and buy only what you need.

Herbs and Spices

Organically grown dried herbs and spices can be bought from natural foods groceries and co-ops by the ounce, so you can buy as little or as much as you need. Smell them before scooping them into the bag to make sure that they are fresh. For conventionally grown ones that are pre-packaged, ethnic grocery stores and Ebay usually have the lowest prices, with the larger sizes (8 or 16 ounce) offering the best price per ounce; buying this way can result in significant savings for frequently used spices (which for me are cumin seed and turmeric). You can also store extra spices (well-wrapped) in the freezer, or portion them out to share with others. Try to buy from a source that has good turnover. Pay attention to sales from year to year; for example, cinnamon often goes on sale around the winter holidays. Whole spices keep longer than pre-ground ones, so buy them when possible and grind as needed.

Shopping for Meat and Fish

The standard, grocery store price for quality, grass-fed meat is perhaps the biggest initial stumbling block for people considering a shift to Primal eating. It's important to remember that you'll only be eating a few ounces a day and not a big, Fred Flintstone-sized slab of dinosaur ribs. If you eat 7 ounces of meat per day, that equals about 160 pounds per year. If you multiply that by the price per pound, the annual cost doesn't seem quite so daunting. For example, the average price in my area for grass-fed beef bought by the half-cow (after taking into account the weight of the bones, plus processing costs) is around \$5 per pound, making the annual expense around \$800 (or \$67 a month, or \$2.19 per day). That's less than the average cost of prescription drugs for Type 2 diabetes. To find a local source of quality, pastured meat, try your farmers' market, <http://eatwild.com/>, or try asking the head of the local chapter of the Weston A. Price Foundation for suggestions. For other quality meat-related information and products that you might not be able to find locally, check out <http://www.grasslandbeef.com/StoreFront.bok>.

Most meats contain around 7 grams of protein per ounce, so you needn't concern yourself with which source is "best"; focus on which grass-fed meat is the least expensive.

Since the price of bone-in meat is usually lower than that of the boneless cuts, you might wonder whether it is actually a better deal. Even factoring in the weight of the bone, the bone-in cut is usually equal to or cheaper than the boneless cut. Additionally, bones add flavor to cooked meat and you can use them later to make soup stock. Keep a designated, covered container in the freezer to collect bones (you remember the Bone Bucket, don't you?), and when you have enough to fill your stock pot or slow cooker to about 3 inches from the top, it's broth time!

Get to know your friendly neighborhood meat cutter. A small butcher shop or meat processor may have end cuts of bacon or other meats that are sold at a lower price than a full cut. In a stew or soup, trimmings work the same as a large piece of meat that you cut yourself.

A meat cutter can also clue you in on which alternative cuts of beef or pork will work well for less money. For example, boneless chuck steaks, though less tender than other cuts, can be very good. In addition to the classic pot roast or stew, they can be marinated for 12 to 72 hours and then grilled between low and medium heat for about 10 minutes per side for medium to medium rare. Another less expensive cut is the flat iron, sometimes called top blade steaks—the piece that is cut off the cross rib and is usually used to make boneless country style ribs or stew meat.

If you ask for flat iron, your meat cutter should know what you mean. Ask for a few half-inch slices off the narrow end that has the thin layer of gelatin (as opposed to the large end that has a large seam of gristle), and then cut to your desired thickness. Look for a good price on cross ribs, and ask to have them cut in this manner. Also worth looking at are shoulder and shank cuts, or boneless round roasts.

See if the meat cutter can point you toward cuts that are (or about to be) marked down because they are nearing their expiration dates. Make sure to cook or freeze the meat right away.

Primal Eaters are at an advantage when it comes to buying grass-fed meat, since the fattier stuff is usually cheaper than the lean (which is favored by those who still believe the conventional wisdom about saturated fats). Also, don't get too attached to the form of meat and keep your gaze broad enough to consider whatever is cheapest, not just what you have in mind for a particular meal. For example, there is no reason why you can't use ground meat in recipes that generally call for cuts, as in stir fries. In addition to being cheaper, dark meat poultry is more moist, nutritionally dense and flavorful than light.

For more great meat cutter wisdom, this is an informative website of an experienced butcher with a frugal outlook:

<http://www.all-about-meat.com/>

For the landlocked fish-eater, frozen is the way to go. The cheapest price that I have found for frozen, wild-caught salmon is at a national discount grocery chain. Canned tuna is handy to have around, but be sure to read the label to avoid the kind with soybean oil. According to Consumer Reports, the white variety has more than twice the mercury of the light kind. Canned sardines are another affordable way to get some protein and omega-3 fatty acids. Beyond that, all I can tell you is that when you find a good price, stock up and fill the freezer!

While you don't need to adopt every single shopping strategy immediately, the sooner you start to incorporate them into your routine, the sooner you'll start saving money.

Chapter 5-Where to Get Your Food

What was once a simple decision has become riddled with a minefield of political and ethical choices. If you believe that every dollar is a vote, you'll want to make sure that the vendors from whom you buy your food are conducting business in a way that aligns with your values. It is worth a little bit of research. Are the employees members of a union, or does the employer provide the union's equivalent wages and benefits? Are the employees happy and well-treated? Do the owners donate to politicians and/or organizations that you support? Finding the answers is sometimes as easy as asking the employees directly.

Quite often, the low prices at a food store are the result of exploitive employment policies.

Though a Very Large Retailer carries a wide selection of organic produce, it has also been taken to task (and to court) for a number of questionable business practices. It is up to each individual whether or not they want to support that business. If it is the only store in town, you might not have much of a choice.

Other stores have low prices because of smart, volume purchasing practices, private labels and no/low advertising costs.

Whether you're a free-market capitalist or you believe that all businesses should be worker-owned, there is at least one store out there that is calling your name. As your financial situation improves, please consider spending more of your money at stores that are locally owned, as those dollars tend to stay in (and benefit) the local community.

Because every area of the country (and the world) is different, I'm not going to recommend too many specific stores. I *will* recommend going and taking a look at every store that is within the radius in which you typically travel on a monthly basis. Don't assume anything! You may be very surprised to find certain items available for a great price at an unexpected source.

The discount store with a wall of mass-produced, sugary breakfast cereal and white bread may also have frozen, wild-caught Alaskan salmon for \$4.49 a pound. The little store that sells nutritional supplements may also have free-range eggs for \$3.15 a dozen. The liquor store with an Italian deli may have excellent mozzarella at a good price. The hipster store with overpriced produce may have the best price on our beloved Kerry Gold butter. The Middle Eastern market may have inexpensive extra virgin olive oil in a 3 liter can. The corner bodega that is loaded with canned goods and candy may have really cheap avocados. You get the idea. This is why the Price Book is so important. There is no law against going into a store and only buying the loss leaders, steeply discounted items intended to lure in shoppers who will (they hope) buy a bunch of other, regularly-priced items. You don't need to make a special trip to visit any of these stores. Just stop in when you're in the area and take a look around.

Another important strategy is stocking up when frequently-used items go on sale. As mentioned in Chapter 4, an easy way to keep up with weekly specials is to sign up with all of your usual shopping spots to get their sale flyer delivered via e-mail, or follow them on Twitter or Facebook.

It only takes a couple of minutes to scan the ads for the few things that you might buy there, and it saves lots of transportation time and fuel. That way, you won't miss out on a chance to stock up when your favorite brand of tuna goes on sale or when that upscale grocery store has their annual "40% off all meat" sale, which includes grass-fed beef.

Don't forget to utilize the human resources of your social network. Ask your friends, neighbors, family members, co-workers, Facebook friends, etc. where they have found the best prices on the kinds of foods for which you are looking.

Natural Food Co-ops

Many of today's modern food co-ops evolved during the 1960s and 70s from buying clubs (see below), in which several like-minded individuals pooled their resources to purchase and divide bulk items like dried beans and brown rice. As the number of participants grew, they rented storefronts, added more items and invited the public to shop along with original members. Nowadays, they function much like a regular store, where anyone can shop, but can also become a member/owner by paying a one-time fee. Member benefits vary by store, but generally include a discount (either ongoing or several times a year), weekly and monthly specials, a discount on special-ordered bagged bulk items (e.g. a 25-pound bag of shredded coconut) and an annual dividend based on the store's profits and how much money you spent there. A dwindling number of them offer an additional discount for volunteering for a certain number of work shifts per week (a holdover from the early days, when there were few paid employees). If you have more time than money, this can be a great opportunity to save on groceries.

While you won't be buying dried beans or brown rice, these stores can be a good source of quality grass-fed dairy and meat, and free-range eggs; organic produce; bulk nuts, seeds, olive oil, vinegars, herbs and spices; condiments; seaweed and that Primal superstar, coconut milk.

Their prices vary, and some things are a lot cheaper than their exact equivalent at a conventional grocery store, while others are a bit more expensive. The biggest attraction is that if you have more money than time, it can be a one-stop shop with just about everything you might need. It definitely should be included in your Price Book, especially for the bulk items.

To determine if it is worth becoming a member, you need to Do The Math; if it is your primary source of food, and you are planning on living in your current location for a while, it could be to your advantage. If you've already been shopping there, look back on your checking account or credit card statements to calculate how much you spent there over the course of a year, and see how much a quarterly discount might amount to, bearing in mind that dairy items are generally not discounted.

To find one in your area, go to www.coopdirectory.org

Buying Clubs

As previously mentioned, buying clubs are formed by people who wish to buy directly from the wholesaler in bulk, either 10- or 25-pound bags, or packaged food (frozen, refrigerated or non-perishable) in cases of 6 or 12. It's great for staples like coconut milk, aseptic liters of broth, condiments and large quantities of nuts. Most of them are locally based, though there is a new, national buying club being launched in October, 2011 called Green Polka Dot Box. While best suited for large households, well-organized small households can also benefit. If there is a fee to join (either one-time or annually recurring), ask a current member if you can take a look at the ordering catalog before

joining. You'll want to compare the wholesaler's prices to the ones in your Price Book. Distributors vary widely in the prices that they charge buying clubs, and (other than monthly specials) the ones available for you to join may not offer savings any better than the places where you are already shopping.

To find a buying club in your area, go to: <http://www.assocbuyers.com/ordering.asp?cid=6>

Natural Food Grocery Stores

These are stores like Whole Foods, New Seasons and Bloom. They carry basically the same items as the natural food co-ops, but there is no membership available. They should definitely be in your Price Book, as the prices for some items tend to be a bit higher than other stores, while other items are a bit less. Some carry store brands that are priced lower than their name brand equivalents.

Conventional Grocery Stores

For several years, the fastest-growing category in the grocery business has been Natural and Organic, led by behemoths like Whole Foods. To nab a piece of this growth, conventional grocery stores have increased their offerings of organic produce, dairy, meats and non-perishables. Many have added bulk sections, which include nuts and shredded coconut. Be sure to include them in your Price Book, since they may surprise you with their selection and prices. Also, many of them employ union members, who benefit from higher wages and health insurance. Employees of non-union stores also benefit from the presence of union stores in the area, as the employment standards are raised for everyone. Thus, the entire community benefits.

Costco

Costco is a chain of warehouse stores, which carry a huge variety of items, including food.

While not focused on natural and organic products, Costco does have some organic produce, meat and dairy, and other staples like olive oil, vinegar, nuts and nut butter. At the time of my reconnaissance mission to Costco, they only had organic meat and dairy, not grass-fed. However, the products they have available at any given time can change frequently, so I won't assume that they haven't started carrying it in the meantime.

Unlike the co-op's one-time fee, Costco charges an annual fee, which is currently \$50 for a business or household membership.

If you just want to see what they have, you can get a Preview Pass which will not allow you to make a purchase, but will provide you with a looky-loo (remember to bring your Price Book!).

Divide the price of an annual membership by 52 to determine the amount of money per week that you would need to be saving to justify a membership. Remember to factor in the cost of fuel if it is a long drive and not in an area where you have any other business. It might not make as much sense for a single person, but for a hungry family, it could make a lot of sense, as they do have Kerry Gold butter and cheese.

I am specifically mentioning Costco rather than another large chain of warehouse stores because Costco is a generous employer, with benefits that equal (and sometimes surpass) those of grocery unions.

Trader Joe's

While they specialize in groovy, ready-made convenience foods, they tend to have the best price on bags of avocados and lemons, Kerry Gold butter, extra virgin olive oil and packaged (non-organic) almond meal, nuts and seeds. They also have 100% grass-fed ground beef and a decent selection of organic frozen vegetables at a reasonable price. Though their offerings skew toward the "natural" side, you still need to be vigilant about reading labels, as there will be an occasional item that contains high fructose corn syrup or caramel color.

Farmers' Market

The best source for inexpensive fresh produce and sustainably raised meat is your local farmer's market. Food is sold directly from the producer, cutting out any warehousing and distributor costs.

I have found that the first week that a fruit or vegetable shows up at the market, it is usually priced at a premium, since the farmer had to go through some trouble to get an early harvest. If at all possible, avoid buying the "first wave" and wait a week or two until the price comes down a little. The exceptions are foods with a short growing season (like asparagus and strawberries).

Ask the grower when they expect production of a particular vegetable to be at its peak; this is when they usually have a great price on large quantities, suitable for freezing or canning.

To find a farmers' market in your area, go to <http://www.localharvest.org>

Some growers have gone through the process of becoming certified organic. This is an arduous, time-consuming and expensive process, and the growers will justifiably charge accordingly. Other growers may be using organic practices, but haven't jumped through the hoops of certification. They may have a sign at their stall stating "Grown without pesticides," "Herbicide free" or some such thing. Talk to them about their philosophy and how they grow their crops and/or raise their animals. Don't be shy about asking questions. People who grow vegetables and raise livestock for a living are generally doing it because they are passionate about it, and people usually love to talk about their passions. Try to do this when they aren't busy setting up, and there isn't a line of customers behind you.

For the best selection, get there right when the market opens. For the best chance at negotiating a lower price for a large quantity, get there toward the end.

As for meat, my local farmers' market prices on single cuts of beef range from \$2 to \$13.50/lb. For chicken, \$2.99–6.50/lb. Pork ranges from \$3.75 to \$13.50/lb. By far, the best price on grassfed beef is to buy half a cow directly from the farmer and store it in the freezer. The price will vary depending on the size of the animal, which specific cuts you request, and the processing fee. Compared to the price of grocery store grass-fed beef at \$8.99–14.99, it's clearly the way to go.

Produce Outlet

Some cities are lucky to have discount produce outlets, which buy produce that is at its peak of ripeness at a discount from wholesalers. Produce (especially fruit) often looks its worst when it is at its peak of ripeness, so this stuff isn't going to last long enough to look good in a grocer's bin. At some discount produce outlets, the prices are low because of volume buying and/or direct partnerships with growers (rather than wholesalers), and the vegetables are in better shape than what you might find at the grocery store. These stores either cut out the middleman or take advantage of the middleman wanting to get rid

of excess inventory. To find one in your area, google “produce outlet” or “discount produce” and the name of the place you live.

Grow Your Own

Produce

The cheapest source of organic produce is your own garden. If you’ve never done it before, start by focusing on everbearing and/or perennial fruits, vegetables and herbs. Find out which crops grow as perennials in your gardening zone.

Most berries are perennials, as are grapes and fruit trees. Because berries are really the only fruits that are actively recommended for Primal Eating, and their high cost primarily reflects picking and shipping, they deserve serious consideration as a crop to grow yourself.

Because they grow so easily in my (and every member of my family’s) yard, I have never purchased raspberries in my life, and the mere thought of doing so makes me break out in hives. Blueberries require acid soil, so have yours checked by a local extension service before planting and amend the soil if necessary. Once established, strawberries will reward you year after year with an intense flavor that is light-years away from the insipid ones at the grocery store. “Sparkle” variety is especially delicious.

For vegetables, rhubarb and asparagus are the most common perennials.

For herbs, there are chives, sage (allow plenty of room for it to spread; my 9-year-old sage is now the size of a small shrub!), tarragon, sorrel and mint (WARNING: mint can be somewhat invasive, so plant it in a spot where it has room to spread and not encroach upon other desirable plants).

If you have a limited amount of space for gardening, choose “cut-and-come-again” vegetables which are harvested from the outside, allowing the plant to keep producing inner leaves, which then become outer leaves, which you harvest, etc. Kale, chard and beet greens are among these type (just don’t eat mass quantities of them every single day without a break, or the oxalic acid that they contain may accumulate in your system to form kidney stones). Zucchini is also a champion producer, requiring a small amount of actual soil to grow in, plus a little room for creeping. If you don’t have any sunny space in the back yard, grow in the front yard. If you don’t have a yard, try gardening in containers on a balcony or in a sunny window, or become involved in a community garden. If the only sunny space you have is a window sill, you can still grow your favorite herbs (like basil, thyme or parsley), in any little container that has drainage holes at the bottom. You can also grow your own sprouts quite easily with only enough counter space to fit a jar. Some common seeds for sprouting are alfalfa, mung bean, radish, and broccoli (the latter of which are delicious and nutrient-dense, but cost an arm and a leg at the store for reasons I will never begin to fathom).

I don’t have enough expertise to elaborate on specific gardening techniques. The best book I have ever found on growing vegetables is *The Garden Primer* by Barbara Damrosch. Get it (or other gardening books) from the public library for your first read-through, but it’s definitely worth owning. The library and internet are also great sources for instructions on seed sprouting.

Livestock

For folks who are ready to make the leap to raising their own livestock, there are plenty of helpful resources. The first step is to read books by Joel Salatin, who writes about sustainable agriculture and

has been one of the leading voices in the local food movement. After that, connect with your local chapter of the Weston A. Price Foundation, where many people are already doing things like raising their own chickens and other livestock. These folks are usually eager to share their knowledge and help out newbies. Even if you aren't looking to raise your own livestock, getting involved with a local chapter of the Weston A. Price Foundation is a great way to connect to other individuals and families sharing a dietary philosophy close to yours. In these groups, families often band together to go in on a whole grass-fed, humanely raised cow (or portion thereof) and split all the costs to make it more affordable. Online WAPF forums tend to be pretty active and helpful. There are many opportunities to get useful do-it-yourself tips, attend potlucks where you can try out new recipes and find out where to get all the best deals on sometimes hard-to-find, quality, nutrient-dense food. It's a terrific resource.

Also, you don't need to live in the country to raise your own animals. Many municipalities are updating ordinances to allow for raising chickens in the backyard. Even if you can't have enough chickens to provide you with a meat-based meal every week, you can at least raise enough to keep you supplied with daily eggs. I spend about \$319 per year on chicken eggs. I haven't yet Done The Math on how much I would have to spend on chicken feed, but it's a moot point, as my backyard is very exposed to the public, and my neighbor's cats are intrepid hunters, so for now I am content to stimulate the local farm economy. However, lots of folks have found it to be a cost effective and enjoyable way to have a direct connection to their food.

U-Pick

If you don't have the space or the time to grow your own vegetables and berries, many growers offer a "U-Pick" option that is a happy medium for many bargain hunters; it's not as cheap as what you could grow yourself, but because you provide the labor and transportation, the cost is much lower than what you'd pay at a farmers' market. Before you pick, assess what you have room for in the freezer, or get your canning supplies ready! To find U-Pick growers in your area, go to <http://www.pickyourown.org/>

Gleaning

Gleaning is the centuries-old practice of folks sweeping through the produce fields after the grower has done the final harvest. They collect the produce that has been left behind, either for being misshapen, too big or too small. If you are unfamiliar with gleaning (or even if you aren't), I highly recommend the Agnes Varda film *The Gleaners and I*. Though much of what is available by gleaning is unsuitable for a Primal diet (potatoes, for one), it is still worthy of consideration. Connect with a local gleaners network or start your own. Use search engine keywords like "produce gleaners network community," plus your town, county, city, etc. It is also worth a quick e-mail to your local organic farms to see if they are open to this. Never, under any circumstances, pick food from someone else's property without their permission!

CSAs

Farm shares (aka Community Supported Agriculture or CSAs) have become very popular in the past few years. This is where a consumer buys a share, or half-share, of a grower's seasonal produce crop, which is delivered weekly to a central pick-up location. Do The Math and some research to see if it is a good fit for your household. Most farms will list the crops that they intend to include in your share. CSAs can be educational for those who are new to eating locally and seasonally, as they may find foods in their weekly box that they might not have tried otherwise, and may even discover some new

favorites. Many growers include a newsletter with the delivery, including recipes. Some also sell separate meat shares. To find CSAs in your area, go to <http://www.localharvest.org/csa/>

Be advised that lots of CSA growers suffer from an incurable case of solanophilia (love of potatoes) and really like to grow them and other starchy root vegetables that you won't be eating. Also, you need to make time on pick-up day to plan your meals for the week, and freeze or can what you know you won't be able to finish before the next pick-up day. I have Done The Math and figured out that it is not a good option for me, as I am A) shopping for one and B) a picky eater. I know what I like and how much I am able to eat in a week, so I prefer going to the farmers' market, where I can buy exactly what I want in the quantities that I can realistically consume.

Dairies and Cheesemakers

If you can tolerate cow's milk, more and more small dairies are popping up, offering milk (and sometimes other products like yogurt and cheese) from grass-fed cows. If there is one near you, see if it is cheaper to buy it directly from them, rather than the grocery store. To make it worth the trip, buy extra milk and make a couple of batches of yogurt.

If you do find someone locally selling cheese from grass-fed cow's milk, ask if they sell cheese trim at a reduced price. These are the pieces left over from a cheesemaker cutting a large block of cheese into smaller, consumer-sized portions. If you can't find someone locally, you can order online from <http://www.williamscheese.com/>. To defray the shipping cost, you'll probably want to order at least 10 pounds; Do The Math to see how much it takes to come out ahead.

The Great Outdoors

I haven't forgotten the "hunter" part of Hunter-Gatherer. For many people, fishing and wild game hunting provide the bulk of their annual protein needs. Except for the cost of ammunition/bait, license and gear, you could theoretically keep your household fed for practically free. There is some skill required, so if it isn't something you have done before try to connect with others who have more experience and see if they will bring you along for some target practice and a hunting trip or two. Have a plan for storing the meat if you are successful, either in a freezer or by processing it into jerky.

You can also check with a local processing plant to see if there is any wild game that has been dropped off for butchering but has not picked up by the hunter. Many states don't allow the sale of deer meat, but the processor may let you have it if you pay the butchering fee. Some states even have a program to give away free wild game to people who fall under certain income requirements.

On a related note, if you live near a coastline with a harbor where boats run charters, check with the crew to see if they ever have passengers who are vacationing from other states and leave their catch behind. Perhaps the captain will let you take some.

The World Wide Web

While it is important to support local businesses, occasionally you can find some irresistible deals on food on the internet. For people who live in areas with few healthy options, it can be even more valuable, and the shipping charges may be equal to or less than what you might pay for gas to get to your closest source. As with bricks-and-mortar shopping, the key is to look at every site that you come across and record the prices of your frequently-purchased items.

There are bound to be surprises. The big sites like Amazon and Ebay are a good place to start.

Many sellers have free shipping on purchases over a certain amount, or a flat fee that is diluted the more you buy. Others like <http://www.nutsonline.com/> calculate shipping costs based on weight, which is nice if you are only buying one or two things. <http://www.vitacost.com/> carries a lot of cooking ingredients (coconut flour and oil, cacao nibs, nut butter, etc.) and frequently offers free shipping for orders over \$49, which doesn't take long to get to, especially if you add a supplement or two to your order.

Smart shopping online can save you lots of money on key pantry staples, especially if you can buy in enough quantity to defray (or in some cases avoid) shipping costs. Nutsonline.com offers organic nuts in 1-, 5- and 25-pound quantities. The larger quantities are a better price per pound. If the quantity is larger than you might likely use within 6 months, find someone with whom you can split it.

The Web is also a great source of information from bloggers about where to shop. Some have a frugal filter, while others focus on dairy- or gluten-free living. While it doesn't espouse the ancestral diet approach, I have found <http://www.healthylifedeals.com/> to be useful.

Chapter 6-Storing and Preserving Food

Tupperware FridgeSmart

Ahhh, FridgeSmart, how do I love thee? Let me count the ways. I'm not generally one to tout a specific brand name of something, but for storing fresh vegetables in the refrigerator, nothing beats FridgeSmart. According to the Tupperware website, "Fruits and vegetables have different airflow needs when stored in the fridge. You can regulate the airflow within the container and maintain peak freshness thanks to a unique venting system and a universal permanent storage chart imprinted on all containers." FridgeSmart is a line of storage containers with adjustable ventilation holes which allows customized ventilation for the vegetables' rate of respiration. It comes with a chart that tells you said rate.

Allowing vegetables to get past their prime and then having to throw them into the compost bin (you *do* compost, right?) is a great way to waste money on food. But sometimes, one just can't get to them all in time, especially when there are only 1 or 2 people in a household, or when things get really busy. And if your farmers' market sells vegetables in a set quantity, rather than by the pound, it's easy to end up with more than you can use in a short amount of time.

FridgeSmart is a little pricey, but mine has paid for itself many times over with the money I have saved by NOT throwing out many halves of green peppers or the enormous bunch of cilantro that I bought for a recipe that called for 2 tablespoons of it. Check the website periodically, as they often have sales on discontinued colors.

FridgeSmart containers are square and stackable, which maximizes fridge space. They also have a corrugated bottom, which keeps food from sitting in liquid, thus retaining its fresh texture.

The corrugation also minimizes the vegetables' contact with the container itself, so I don't have the same concerns that I would have with storing something like soup in a plastic container.

While it slows a vegetable's rate of degradation, it won't keep ones like fresh sugar snap peas from turning starchy, so eat those first!

Produce Bins

If you aren't keen on investing in Tupperware at this time, get to know the proper humidity settings for the produce bins of your refrigerator. Lower humidity is best for vegetables with skins, fruits and onions. Be advised: onions will often impart their flavor to other produce in the bin. Higher humidity is best for fresh, leafy vegetables, brassicas, cucumbers, root vegetables, celery, kohlrabi, zucchini and peppers.

Green Bags

You may have seen a product called Green Bags that claims to prolong the freshness of produce. Depending on your source, these bags are either the Second Coming, or the Biggest Rip-off Ever. Consumer Reports Magazine found them to be ineffective, but my sister Elaine swears by them. If you can find a good deal on them, give them a try. When all of my FridgeSmart containers and produce bins are in use, I just use a regular produce bag, put a dry paper towel in it for moist vegetables (or a slightly damp one for fresh herbs), twist it shut and try to eat the food quickly.

The Upside-down Method

Organic cottage cheese regularly goes on sale, but you can't really stock up on any more than you will use before it reaches its expiration date, right? Wrong! If stored in the refrigerator upside down, unopened cottage cheese will last many weeks (months even) past its expiration date. Apparently, storing it this way prevents air from entering the container, delaying spoilage.

So go ahead and stock up on enough to last until it goes on sale again. I haven't tried this with any other dairy products, but it might work with ones that are thin enough to slide down the inside of the container to create that airtight seal.

Freezing Produce

Freezing is probably the easiest way to store vegetables and berries. Most require only chopping, a brief visit to some boiling water and draining before being stuffed into a zippered freezer bag. Others (like bell peppers or cabbage) only require the chopping part. Tomatoes can be frozen whole with the stem-end core removed. When they thaw they give off most of their water, cutting down cooking time considerably in their final incarnation. Don't toss the tomato water! You can drink it, or add it to broth or a smoothie. For use in recipes, plan on 10-12 whole plum tomatoes to equal one 28-ounce can, or 5-6 for a 14½ -ounce can (fewer for larger-sized tomatoes). Freezing vegetables changes their texture, so once thawed, they are best used in cooked dishes, rather than in salads.

With berries, ignore the advice to first freeze them individually on a baking sheet and then transfer them to a freezer bag. Big berries like strawberries may benefit from this, but with raspberries and blueberries, it is a waste of time. For those berries, just freeze them in bags or shallow containers and when it's time to use them, just whap the bag on the counter or floor, or give the container a gentle squeeze, and that will usually suffice to separate them (unless you've had several power outages, resulting in repeated thawing and refreezing, in which case even the baking sheet pre-freezing won't have helped a bit anyway).

Preparing Vegetables For Freezing

For blanching, I put the vegetables in the water when it is at a rolling boil, and start the timer when the water starts to bubble again (not necessarily boil). I keep a lid on the pot to conserve fuel and keep the kitchen from getting too steamy.

Asparagus

Pick bright-colored, brittle stalks that snap when broken and have tight heads.

Wash and sort medium and large stalks. Discard woody and blemished stalks. Break off fibrous ends. Leave whole or cut in 1- to 2-inch lengths. Blanch medium stalks 3 minutes, large stalks ($\frac{1}{2}$ - to $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch diameter) 4 minutes. Chill in ice water. Asparagus has a shorter storage life than other frozen vegetables. Should be used within 9-10 months.

Beans (Green and Yellow Podded)

Pick young tender beans that snap when broken. Harvest while seeds are small and tender.

Wash, snip off tips and sort for size. Cut or break into suitable pieces or freeze small beans whole. Blanch $3\frac{1}{2}$ minutes. Chill in ice water.

Beans, Snap (Italian)

Wash, snap off ends and cut or break into 1 or $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch lengths. Blanch $3\frac{1}{2}$ minutes. Chill in ice water.

Broccoli

Choose firm, tender stalks with bright green, compact heads.

Discard off-color heads or any that have begun to blossom. Remove tough leaves and woody butt ends. Cut through stalks lengthwise, leaving heads 1 inch in diameter. Soak $\frac{1}{2}$ hour in salt brine ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup salt to 1 quart water) to drive out small insects. Rinse and drain. Blanch 4 minutes or steam 5 minutes. If blanching florets separately from stalks, blanch florets for $1\frac{1}{2}$ minutes and stalks for 4 minutes. Chill in ice water. Pack heads and stalk ends alternately in container.

Broccoli may be cut into chunks or chopped.

Brussels Sprouts

Pick firm, compact heads of good green color.

Wash and trim. Soak $\frac{1}{2}$ hour in salt brine (see broccoli). Rinse and drain. Blanch medium heads 4 minutes; large heads, 5 minutes. Chill in ice water.

Cabbage

Pick young, crisp heads. Discard tough outer leaves, and wash thoroughly. Chop or shred.

Blanch $1\frac{1}{2}$ -2 minutes. Chill in ice water. You can freeze cabbage without blanching it, but the texture will be chewier.

Cauliflower

Use well-formed, compact heads with fresh leaves.

Trim and wash. Split heads into individual pieces 1 inch in diameter. Soak ½ hour in salt brine (see broccoli). Rinse and drain. Blanch 4 minutes. Chill in ice water.

Eggplant

Use garden varieties of good color and quality.

Precooked eggplant is usually more satisfactory for freezing than blanched eggplant. Peel, cut into 1/4 to 1/3 -inch slices or dice. To retain light color, drop pieces immediately into cold water containing 4 tablespoons salt per gallon. Blanch 4½ minutes. Chill and package in layers separated by sheets of freezer paper.

Garden Herbs

Wash and drain, but do not blanch leaves. Wrap a few sprigs or leaves in foil or seal in zippered freezer bags. Store in carton or glass jar. Or puree with a little olive oil and freeze in ice cube trays as described in Chapter 2.

Kohlrabi

Choose young, tender kohlrabi.

Cut tops, wash, peel and dice in ½-inch cubes. Blanch 2½ minutes. Chill in ice water.

Mushrooms

Pick young, firm mushrooms of edible types.

Wash and remove stem base. Freeze small mushrooms whole; cut large ones into 4 or more pieces. When blanching mushrooms, add 1 teaspoon citric acid (or 3 teaspoons lemon juice or ½ teaspoon ascorbic acid) per quart of water to prevent darkening. Blanch medium or small whole mushrooms 4 minutes; cut pieces, 3 minutes. Chill. OR: Slice mushrooms ¼-inch thick. Saute in butter, 2 minutes. Cool.

Onions

Sweet Spanish types preferred. Can use good garden varieties.

Peel onions, wash and cut into quarter sections. Chop. Blanch 1½ minutes. Chill in ice water.

(They will keep 3-6 months.)

Peppers (Green)

Choose crisp, well developed peppers of deep green color.

Wash, cut out stem and remove seeds. Halve, slice or dice. Blanch halved peppers 3 minutes; sliced or diced ones, 2 minutes. Chill in ice water. You can freeze chopped peppers without blanching them.

Peppers (Pimiento)

Choose crisp, well developed peppers of deep red color.

Oven roast at 400° F for 3 to 4 minutes. Cool, remove skin and pack dry without additional heating.

Pumpkin

Select any good pie pumpkin of good color.

Remove seeds. Cut or break into fairly uniform pieces. Bake at 350° F or steam until tender.

Cool, scoop pulp from rind and mash or put through ricer.

Spinach and other Greens

Select young, tender leaves.

Sort and remove tough stems. Wash. Blanch most leafy greens 2 minutes. Blanch collards, kale and stem portions of Swiss chard 3 to 4 minutes. Blanch very tender spinach and leaf portion of Swiss chard 1½ minutes. Chill in ice water.

Sugar Snap Peas or Snow Peas

Select fresh, bright green, unblemished pods. Wash. Remove stems, blossom ends, and any string. Leave whole. Blanch 2½ to 3 minutes. Chill in ice water.

Summer Squash—Zucchini

Select when 5-7 inches long with tender rind and small seeds.

Wash, peel and cut in pieces. Blanch ¼-inch slices 3 minutes; 1½-inch slices, 6 minutes. Chill in ice water. If skin is tender, you do not need to peel.

Winter Squash

Select squash with shells hard enough so you cannot push thumbnail through them. "Dry" types are recommended. Prepare same as pumpkin. You can combine two or more varieties or combine squash with pumpkin.

There are a couple of different strategies that you can use when planning to freeze vegetables for winter consumption. You can estimate how many servings of something you'll need for the non-growing season, and then purchase and process those quantities all at one time, when that vegetable is at peak production (and therefore, lowest price). This is a way to keep expenses down and also get it over with in one fell swoop. The downside is that it can be a crazy (sometimes hot and sweaty) day in the kitchen. A pasta pot with a strainer insert is handy for blanching a large quantity of vegetables at one time. It makes it easy to remove the vegetables from the hot water and plunge them into a sink full of cold water, leaving the bulk of the hot water remaining in the pot, ready for the next batch. When you are

finished blanching multiple batches of vegetables, this water can be used for making soup (either right away or frozen for later) or as a beverage, so as not to waste any of the nutrients that have leached from the vegetables.

Another strategy is to buy twice as much of everything as you can eat in that week when you make your usual farmers' market trip. Cook or blanch it at the same time as you are preparing the vegetables that you'll be eating that day, and freeze half of it. This may feel a little less crazy than doing a winter's worth of vegetables all in one day. If you aren't sure how much of something you'll need to get you through the winter, it's a more incremental way, and may reflect a realistic quantity of what you actually eat in any given week. Obviously, it won't work with things like lettuce that can't be frozen.

Either way, make sure to clearly label and date each bag. Just because you know today that "this is a tomato," doesn't mean that you can differentiate it from a red pepper when they are both encrusted with ice in February. If you already have a vacuum sealer to suck the air out of the packages of vegetables before they go into the freezer, go ahead and use it. I prefer inserting a plastic straw into a zippered freezer bag, closing the seal around it, sucking out as much of the air as I can, and then quickly pulling out the straw and zipping the seal completely.

For more about freezers, see the "Freezer" section in Chapter 2

The Pantry

Though most of what you will be eating is fresh or frozen, it's always good to have a well-stocked pantry of coconut milk, ready-made broth, curry paste, condiments, home-canned vegetables and other goodies.

Keep track of how much you use of each pantry staple (canned tuna, for example) and how often that item goes on sale. If it goes on sale every 6 weeks, you only need to have 6 week's worth on hand at any given time. Try using the same white board (or paper-and-stickers) method as described in the section on "Freezers" in Chapter 2 to keep inventory (and avoid being featured on an episode of *Hoarders*). Remember to rotate your stock by pulling the items with the soonest expiration date toward the front.

If you don't have a pantry, and your cupboard space is maxed out, look for other places to store food that aren't necessarily in the kitchen. Basements, closets, under the bed or other furniture are all fair game. Just remember to include them in your pantry inventory.

Canning and Pickling

Canning is a great way to store any vegetable, particularly the ones that don't lend themselves well to freezing (like cucumbers). Canned vegetables require no electricity to store and aren't vulnerable to power outages. The down side is that the high heat involved in processing destroys some of the nutrients, so try not to rely too heavily on home-canned vegetables for the bulk of your consumption. They are best used as substitutes for whatever commercially canned foods you might otherwise buy (like tomatoes, pickles or other condiments) or to store a garden surplus that won't fit in the freezer.

High-acid foods (like tomatoes or anything in a vinegar brine, aka "pickles") are the simplest, as they can be processed in a standard water bath canner, which is basically a really big stock pot with a rack insert to keep the jars upright. If you can boil water, wipe a jar rim and work a kitchen timer, you will probably be able to handle canning tomatoes or making pickles. Low-acid foods (like green beans or

any prepared food with meat in it) require a pressure canner, which is quite a bit more expensive. The book *Putting Food By* by Ruth Hertzberg and Janet Greene, now in its fifth edition, is the definitive guide to canning and food preserving. You can also get a seemingly limitless and varied array of information and recipes on Ye Olde Internet.

Canning jars can be used repeatedly as long as they don't have any cracks or chips, as can the screw bands/rings. Keep an eye out for these at garage/yard/tag sales, or check Craig's List or Freecycle.com. The metal lids are good for only one use, so try to buy enough for the season when they go on sale (usually in July or August) or when a hardware or discount store has a coupon for a certain percentage off of one item of your choice, or a "12% off of everything you can fit into this bag" sale. This is one of the only coupon items for which I scan the Sunday circulars. Lehman's sells BPA-free plastic reusable lids which might be worth a try.

Fermenting

An even older-school method of preserving vegetables is fermenting. The most widely known example of this is the transformation of cabbage into sauerkraut or kimchi (for recipes, see Chapter 11 "Basic Recipes" for sauerkraut, or <http://www.thecookawakening.com/> for kimchi).

Just about any vegetable can be preserved this way (either singly or in combination), but cucumbers, onions, carrots and beets seem to be popular. Fermenting vegetables not only maximizes their digestibility but adds probiotic organisms, healthy enzymes and more nutrition to the vegetable than it had when it was plucked out of the garden. It's easy to do, and (dare I say) enjoyable. I know of one person who even had a Kraut-Pounding Party, which was (by all accounts) "a blast".

The book (and website) *Wild Fermentation* by Sandor Katz is a good starting point for trying out this method.

Cold Storage

A cool, dry place is good for storing onions and garlic, hanging in a mesh bag. This is also a great way to store shallots, which are ridiculously expensive at the grocery store. I buy enough at the farmers' market in the fall to last all winter and through the following summer. They start to shrivel a bit by August (just in time for the new crop!), but upon peeling them, you'll often find that there is still plenty of viable shallot at the core. For information about long-term storage of other vegetables (like cabbage), consult *Root Cellaring* by Mike and Nancy Bubel.

Dehydrating

Fresh vegetables, herbs and meat all can be successfully preserved by removing their moisture.

The biggest advantages of dehydrated foods are that they require very little storage space, keep for a long time and are not vulnerable to power outages. The biggest disadvantages are that the food dehydrator itself takes up space in the kitchen and can potentially use a lot of electricity.

Depending on wattage (most home-use ones run between 125 and 700 watts), and the price of electricity in your area, the cost to run a food dehydrator is between 1-14 cents per hour. If you are contemplating purchasing a food dehydrator, go to <http://www.food-dehydrator.com/calculator/food-dehydrator-electricity-calculator.aspx> to see how your energy costs may add up.

An oven set at a low temperature can also be used, but it is not very energy efficient. If you live in a climate that provides 3-4 days in a row of sunny, hot weather (over 100 degrees F), you can dry foods outdoors, but there are quite a few more variables.

Because dehydrating vegetables concentrates their sugars, sweeter ones (tomatoes, red bell peppers, carrots, etc.) are best used in soups and stews, rather than eaten as snacks.

If you spend a lot of money on store-bought jerky, and/or have a lot of meat, vegetables and/or herbs to preserve, this may be an option worth considering. As with all stored food, label and date foods, keep an inventory list and use the oldest ones first.

Chapter 7-On the Road

Saving money on food while traveling isn't difficult if you avoid restaurants and prepare all of your food yourself. This requires some planning ahead and a willingness to narrow your repertoire to those items that don't need much altering, or long periods of refrigeration. An additional benefit (unrelated to money) of avoiding restaurants is the removal of any uncertainty about the composition of your food (e.g. whether it is truly gluten-free or merely wheat-free). When one has food sensitivities, eating out can be a dicey proposition, and you can't always rely on a server to provide 100% accurate information about your meal.

If you are able to book accommodations (either at a conventional hotel/motel, youth hostel, or through one of the private home-stay sites like <http://www.couchsurfing.org/> or <http://www.airbnb.com/>) with a kitchenette, most of your problems are solved, and you don't need to bring anything with you except traveling snacks, like hard-boiled eggs, salmon or beef jerky, and nuts. A company called Sophia's Survival Food (www.grassfedjerkychews.com) makes excellent pre-packaged, grass-fed, gluten-free jerky chews, or you can make your own.

If you are taking your own vehicle or checking a bag, bring along a hotpot (make sure it is one that can heat more than just water), an unbreakable bowl (I have a designated ceramic bowl that I use just for traveling. I bought it at a national drugstore chain for 50 cents in 1998, and it has survived numerous trips in my carry-on bag and checked luggage with nary a chip), a can opener, a kitchen sponge, a flexible polypropylene chopping mat/board, empty zippered food storage bags, a knife and eating utensils. You may also want to bring a small container of your favorite seasoned salt or herb blend, to make the plain grocery items more special. If you are really inspired, and the TSA allows it, bring a small, covered, empty jar in which to make salad dressing.

If you are limited to what can fit in a carry-on, just bring what you are able, but try to bring at least the bowl and utensils (make sure the butter knife is non-serrated). If you aren't able to bring utensils, see if you can borrow some from the hotel restaurant or breakfast room, or a grocery store deli. If you are going to be traveling for more than a few days, and you think you'll need one, it might be worth it to buy an inexpensive knife from a grocery store.

If you travel a lot, you may wish to invest in a Portable Berkey Water Filter to provide you with pure water for drinking and cooking.

Find the best-stocked grocery store within a reasonable distance from where you are staying. If you have access to a car, ask the desk clerk or manager at your lodging to recommend the closest grocer that

carries natural and organic items, check the yellow pages of the phone book, or if you have a laptop or smartphone, try <http://www.yelp.com/> for suggestions. If you are on foot, just hit the closest one and do your best. I find that doing a slow perusal of the grocery store aisle in an unfamiliar place provides a valuable and interesting glimpse into the local foodways.

Some easy food choices (organic whenever possible) are pre-washed, bagged salads (or the ones that are sold in a plastic clamshell, providing their own serving dish), baby-cut carrots, frozen vegetables, small bottles of olive oil and balsamic vinegar, soup in aseptic containers, fish in pouches, sardines packed in olive oil, and if you can tolerate dairy, cottage cheese and yogurt (from grass-fed or organically raised cows, if possible). Pre-cut vegetables from the produce department or salad bar are handy if you don't have a knife, but they cost significantly more than whole vegetables, so avoid them if you can. Don't buy anything from the deli except sliced meats; the salads are way overpriced and usually have canola oil.

Before you shop, take a look at your room's mini-fridge (if it has one) to assess approximately how much food you'll be able to fit into it. Also, count your meals and shop accordingly. For example, if you arrive on a Tuesday at 3 PM, and depart on Sunday at 10 AM, you need to buy food for 5 breakfasts, 4 lunches and 5 suppers. Make your list before heading out to avoid impulse purchases; excess food that needs to be discarded is no bargain. If there is no fridge, you'll need to buy only what you can consume within a day or two (so always try to stay someplace with a fridge!).

Make all of your choices smart ones. I am all too aware that something about being away from home makes me want to seek grounding through ill-advised comfort food!

Use a hotpot to heat water or soup, hard-boil eggs and cook fresh and frozen vegetables. If you aren't able to travel with a hotpot, you can still make do if your room has a coffee pot. Since it doesn't reach the boiling point, it's not suitable for cooking raw meat, unless of course, you prefer your meat raw (for more on that, see below). Also, for this reason, it will take longer to heat things than a hotpot, but it will work. Out of courtesy for the next guest, don't use it to heat anything oily, or with a strong flavor, and be sure to wash it thoroughly immediately after each use.

A hotel room coffee pot is also an easy way to cook eggs in the shell. Place eggs in carafe and add enough water to cover them. Remove the eggs and pour water into reservoir of coffee maker. Place eggs back into empty carafe, place carafe on warming plate and turn on the machine. When all of the water has run through the empty filter compartment and into the carafe, start timing. It generally takes about 75-90 minutes to cook the eggs all the way through (depending on the coffee maker). When the time is up, carefully pour out the hot water and place eggs into cold water; an ice bucket works well for this, and you can even add a few ice cubes. The eggs can be eaten right away, or you can keep them (still in the shell) in the fridge for up to a week. Unless you are a very early riser, if you are planning on having these eggs for breakfast, you'll probably want to cook them the night before. Since most coffee makers generally heat and keep the water at a temperature over 140 degrees (the temperature required to kill salmonella), one needn't worry about food safety. If you want to hedge your bets, add an instant-read thermometer to your list of things to bring along (they're small). This method simulates that of the trendy *sous vide* approach, resulting in a texture that is so tender and elegant, you may find yourself cooking eggs this way at home.

Another method of cooking eggs in the shell is to place them in water that has reached the boiling point in the microwave, and then removed. After about 15 minutes of sitting in enough hot water to cover

them, the eggs should be sufficiently cooked. Or you can add a West Bend Automatic Egg Cooker (recommended by *America's Test Kitchen*) to your packing list.

There are a few options for preparing raw meat while traveling. In fact, one can always (assuming a quality source of meat or fish is found) make in-room carpaccio, tartare and/or sushi. Another way is to make your own ceviche, which basically involves marinating meat, fish or seafood in pure lemon or lime juice, which essentially "cooks" it safely on its own without heat.

No matter what type of "cooking" and food preparation you'll be doing in your room, please be kind to the hotel housekeeper and always, ALWAYS clean up immediately afterward. The shampoo in the little bottles in the hotel shower makes a great dish washing liquid.

If you have absolutely no choice but to dine at a restaurant (or you are one of those people for whom sampling the local cuisine is an important part of your cultural experience), there are things you can do to keep the final bill as low as possible. Try to make your meals from appetizer plates (for enough fat you can always ask for a side of butter or olive oil to add) or simple salads with the option of adding a small side portion of fish, chicken or beef, then use lots of olive oil for its satiating effect. This is significantly cheaper than ordering an entree. Or you can split a full entree with another similarly inclined Primal traveling companion to each get your restaurant meal for "half price." Usually protein portion sizes in restaurants are easily double Nora's recommendations anyway. Extra vegetables can always be ordered as a side dish to share (again, smothered in delicious butter or olive oil).

Chapter 8-Dining Out

Would you like to know how to save money dining out? Rule #1: Don't dine out. Seriously.

Dining out is not a birthright and the money spent on one restaurant meal (including beverage, tax and tip) could potentially feed you for a week. If you are on a budget, this belongs squarely in the "Entertainment" category, not the "Food" category. If it is really important to you, divert the costs from other miscellaneous expenses to save for a special occasion. Do not divert funds from your food budget. For me, this puts so much weight on dining out and so many expectations on any restaurant meal that nothing could ever live up to (in addition to the food sensitivity hazards as mentioned in Chapter 7), that I just don't bother.

However, I do realize that sometimes visiting a restaurant is difficult to avoid. Perhaps a group of friends that you'd like to spend time with is meeting up somewhere, or some co-workers are going out for lunch and you feel that you might miss some important, work-related discussion. Maybe you are at a conference or trade show and want to network with new acquaintances.

Here are some strategies on how to not spend a dime.

First off, eat before you go. You are going to a restaurant for social or work reasons only, so there is no need to eat while everyone else is eating. If you are unable to return to your home or hotel room between events, always have some nutrient-dense snacks (nuts, etc.) on hand to munch on privately to keep you from breaking your resolve.

Second, drink only water. Beverages are for suckers. The price mark-up on beverages at restaurants is astronomical and it's where a lot of the restaurant's profits originate. Having said that, don't be tacky by

bringing your own teabag and asking for some hot water; you are going to make the rest of us tightwads look bad.

If you don't want to feel deprived, ask for a lemon with your water or discreetly ask the server to bring it in a cocktail glass if everyone else is drinking cocktails and you don't want to stand out.

If you are out with good friends, just crow it proudly: "I am now a tightwad, and I'm not paying for someone else to cook my food!" If they love, respect and appreciate you, they won't mind. They may even be impressed and want to know more. If they do mind, get some new friends; why would you want to hang around with people who don't support your optimal health and highest aspirations? When the server comes to take your order, simply state, "Nothing for me, thanks. I'm just here for the company." I have never been given a hard time by servers or management when doing this. Be advised that if all of your friends decide to turn tightwad, you may need to find new places to meet up (see "Restaurant Alternatives" below).

If you are with people that you don't know very well, eat before you go and just say that you had a late breakfast or lunch (depending on the meal at hand) or that you're not usually hungry at that time of day. If you are going right from work, make sure to bring some snacks with you that day (raw, cut vegetables, nuts, jerky, etc.). If you absolutely can't avoid ordering, get something small from the appetizer or happy hour menu (and be sure to get a separate check, so you don't get caught in the trap of splitting the bill equally among everyone in your dining party).

If you have a favorite dish at a restaurant that will break your heart to give up, ask the restaurant for the recipe (either directly or via a local newspaper column) and try to reproduce it at home.

Avoid all-you-can-eat buffets. They present quite a conundrum to a Primal Tightwad. Either you are tempted to overeat in order to "get your money's worth" or you'll eat a healthy, sensible portion, thereby guaranteeing that you're definitely not getting your money's worth. Besides that, it is unlikely that you'll find a buffet that doesn't use tons of canola and soybean oil, white flour products, high-fructose corn syrup and other nasties. Do yourself a favor and steer clear of them.

Always keep a stash of less-perishable snacks in your car or at work (nuts, jerky, etc.) to avoid being highly suggestible. If for some reason, purchasing a meal at a restaurant is the only thing standing between you and starvation, follow the guidelines at the very end of chapter 8 ("On The Road").

Restaurant Alternatives

Following the financial downturn and recession of 2008-2009, being frugal no longer has a social stigma. There are lots of ways to enjoy a meal with friends that don't require a big cash outlay. There's the good, old-fashioned potluck, where every guest brings a dish to share. If you are gathering with people who don't share your eating style, bring homemade spiced nuts, or raw or blanched cut vegetables with walnnaise or other homemade dip. They aren't expensive and you'll be sure to have at least one thing that you are able to eat.

For more intimate gatherings, you can alternate hosting and cooking duties with another friend or couple ("Our house this month, your house next month"). On a beautiful day, nothing beats a picnic.

My favorite cheapskate social event is something that my friends and I have been doing for several years. In past decades, it may have been called a "Cocktail Party," but I call it the Home-Based Happy Hour. The host provides clean dishes and glassware, and a plate or two of snacks or appetizers. Each

guest brings his/her own beverage of choice and a snack or appetizer to share. It generally gets rolling around 5:30 or 6 PM and wraps up by 8 or 9. No tipping required.

The key is to make a little bit of effort and use what creativity you have. Why pay someone to provide you with something as intangible as “ambiance?”

Chapter 9-Meal Strategies

Get Cooking

If you want to eat the Primal Body way, and you want to save money, you are going to have to prepare most of your own meals. Don't panic. Take a breath and come down from the ceiling. It doesn't have to be complicated! By mastering a couple of basic sauce recipes, it's less about “cooking” and more about “assembling.”

As an alternative to trying to find Primal re-creations of your old favorites, it might be useful to start by doing a re-boot of sorts in the kitchen, preparing everything in the simplest way possible, with minimal seasonings, as a way to recalibrate your taste buds. It doesn't take long for your palate to become highly discerning and attuned, and foods that used to taste bland without tons of additives now take on a complexity and depth that require very little extra flavorings. Really, the only major taste differences will be in the “sweet” category and soon enough, foods that used to be just right will taste too sweet, and the subtle sweetness in other foods will be so much more noticeable and enjoyable.

If you don't already know the basics of cooking, start with the easy stuff and go from there. If you have a friend who cooks a lot (not necessarily a gourmet, but who knows the ropes) ask if you can sit and watch while they make a few things. Take a community education course.

Cooking shows on TV may be fun for inspiration, but it's best to learn cooking by doing it, feeling it, smelling it, etc. in real life. It's good to have a couple of all-purpose, basic cookbooks on hand, like *The Joy of Cooking* by Irma Rombauer or *How To Cook Everything* by Mark Bittman. You can probably find used copies for much cheaper than new. Beyond the basics, it's best to get cookbooks from the library and try them out for a few weeks to see if they are worth owning.

Read through them from cover to cover (except for the cupcake chapters), as you would a good novel, since you might miss something otherwise. Don't pass by the vegetarian cookbooks, as they often have wonderful recipes for (surprise!) vegetables. If there are only a few recipes that seem worthwhile, make copies and keep them in a binder. Due to the omission of starches and sugars in an ancestral diet, few conventional cookbooks are worth owning, since they will have huge sections in them that you won't be using. Some recipes can be easily tweaked to leave out a little sugar, but it is a waste of money and shelf space to have a bunch of cookbooks that only have a few usable recipes in them. Even a gluten-free cookbook is likely to have a lot of grains and legumes. Try not to buy any cookbook that doesn't contain at least 25% of recipes that you are likely to make.

Keep an eye out at your library for cooking magazines. They often feature seasonally appropriate recipes. An especially good one is *Cook's Illustrated*, which includes a lot of food science explained in layman's terms, so you learn the “whys” of cooking as well as the “hows.” It is good for all levels of cooking skill. There is usually at least one or two “Primal Friendly” recipes in each issue. The food

section of the newspaper (whether from the city or town in which you live or from another city's which you access online) is also a good source for seasonal recipes.

As you get more comfortable around the kitchen, try some books that encourage improvisation with what you have on hand, (thus avoiding special trips to the store or buying ingredients that you won't use for anything else), like *How To Eat Supper* by Lynne Rosetto Casper and Sally Swift, *Ratio: The Simple Codes Behind The Craft of Everyday Cooking* by Michael Ruhlman or *The Improvisational Cook* by Sally Schneider.

The internet is also a good source for recipes, either using a general search engine or at sites like <http://www.epicurious.com/> and <http://allrecipes.com/>. The site <http://www.yummly.com/> has a nice screening feature if you want to avoid certain ingredients and/or filter according to flavor preferences like salty, spicy, sour, etc. Search based on what ingredients you already have, and would like to use. Print copies of your favorites and either put them in a binder, or keep them as Word or Google documents.

When making the recipes, I usually write testing notes directly on the page, or if I am using a cookbook, on a self-stick note. It could be something general like, "This is a good one" or more specific: "use less water next time," "might be good with green olives" or "needs more pepper." I used to think that I would remember all of these modifications, but sadly, that usually doesn't happen, particularly when it is a recipe that I make a lot only during one time of year (say, during tomato season), and then a year goes by before I make it again. After getting a recipe just the way you like it, type it with all of the revisions and save it. If it is something you cook for others, this also makes it easier to share if someone requests a copy of a recipe that wowed them.

With cooking in general, keep in mind the cost of cooking fuel, whether natural gas or electricity. If you are roasting one thing in the oven, double and triple up. See what else you have around that could be cooked in the oven, and do them all at the same time. If you are roasting a chicken, wrap a bulb of garlic in foil and toss it in there, or some sliced onions in a shallow pan with olive oil to give them a head start on caramelizing. Another fuel-saving strategy is to turn off the oven for the last 5 or 10 minutes of roasting; there is usually enough residual heat to keep cooking the food. I call this "coasting." You can also do this when blanching vegetables; cook them in boiling water for the first couple of minutes, then turn off the heat and let it coast for the final minute. Experiment with other foods and see if you can't shave off a few minutes of actively applied fuel time here and there.

Many Ways to Save

There are lots of little ways to save money on food and minimize waste. Don't limit yourself to the ones that follow; use your imagination!

To cut your citrus budget in half (that's right, I said in *half!*), if a recipe calls for the juice of two lemons (or limes or oranges, etc.), use both the juice and the zest from only one lemon. You'll get as much lemon flavor as if you used two, but you only have to buy one. This won't work if the recipe is relying on the acid from the juice for chemistry purposes. In many non-dessert recipes, you can substitute apple cider vinegar for all or part of the lemon or lime juice. This will alter the taste a bit, but it won't be as drastically different if you include some of the zest.

An average sized lemon yields about 2-3 tablespoons of juice and a lime yields around 1½ -2 tablespoons.

Another money-saving substitution is to use sunflower seeds in place of more expensive nuts in recipes where the nuts are there only as a topping or to add crunch and not as the primary flavoring ingredient.

If a recipe calls for cilantro or parsley and the herbs will be chopped in a food processor, or cooked for over 20 minutes in soup, use the stems as well as the leaves, taking a nibble first to make sure that they aren't super woody. If they are woody, parsley stems can go into the Broth Bucket in the freezer. Cilantro doesn't work as well in an all-purpose broth, so I'd leave them out (though their stems are usually more tender than those of parsley, and so can be used in the original dish).

Keep your mind open to new possibilities with foods that you previously might have thrown away. After finishing all of the pickles in a jar, put some raw, cut zucchini or blanched Brussels sprouts into the liquid and put the lid back on. After a couple of days in the refrigerator, you have some tasty "pickles" to enjoy right away. Use olive juice or caper brine to dip raw vegetables in for a snack, or add a splash to some salad dressing or walnnaise.

Dealing With Meat

Meat and poultry are so much cheaper purchased either in large cuts or whole, than in smaller portions such as buying a pound of beef, a boneless breast or wings. Even so, we can reminisce fondly about the glories of a Thanksgiving dinner, until we remember it being followed by days and days filled with turkey-based meals (sandwiches, soup, hash, hot dish, etc.) to the point of diminishing returns. Similarly, I've heard "eternity" defined as "two people and a ham." The key to avoiding culinary ennui is to stow the surplus. Feast on the day that the meat is roasted, enjoy some leftovers the next day, and then take some time to divide the remainder into meal-sized or recipe-sized portions and freeze them (clearly labeled and dated, of course).

When packaging them, be sure to eliminate as much air from the freezer bag as possible and wrap in multiple layers if necessary to avoid freezer burn.

This works for any roasted poultry or large cut of meat. Since it's already cooked, you only need to plan ahead a day or so to thaw it in the fridge. This is just as convenient as any factory-made "value-added" food. Make sure to vary the cuts for each portion so they can be used for different types of recipes: sliced for salads, diced for omelettes, shredded for chili, etc.

Use the bones as the base of a hearty soup, also to be enjoyed for one or two days, then portioned out and frozen. In a few weeks that soup will be a welcome, easy meal that only needs to be thawed and reheated.

A large factor in the price of meat is the labor that went into cutting it. Learning to cut it yourself is practical and empowering. You can easily grind your own meat, either with an attachment for the KitchenAid mixer or with a free-standing, non-electric one from <http://www.lehmans.com/>. Take a community education class in your area, find instructions in a cookbook or peruse the internet and YouTube for guidance. Here are three such resources:

<http://www.thecookawakening.com/chicken-quarters>

<http://italianfood.about.com/od/tipstricks1/ss/aa102605a.htm>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-69-ncK1A68>

Keep in mind that cheaper cuts of meat usually require longer cooking times and moist heat methods of cooking such as boiling, braising and pressure cooker or slow cooker cooking.

Many busy households rely on rotisserie chicken from the grocery store to supply an easy meal. If you find that you are doing this once or twice a week, it might be worthwhile to buy a rotisserie cooker to cook your own. Check online reviews and try to find a good used one.

The Magic of Konjac

While I have stated that it is sometimes easier to discover new favorites rather than try to re-create an old favorite using the Primal parameters, sometimes you just have a hankering for something in particular that you've only ever made the conventional way. Because the biggest change in eating Primally is not so much in flavors but in textures, the foods I miss most tend to be in the creamy category, like pudding. I have experimented with a carbohydrate-free thickener that goes by the names konjac and glucomannan. It is a powder that is available in capsules (from supplement companies like NOW Foods and Nature's Way) or by the pound from konjacfoods.com/. It can be used like cornstarch to thicken liquids like gravies, sauces and puddings, or to thicken coconut yogurt or yogurt from grass-fed cow's milk. Here are some guidelines from konjacfoods.com:

"Konjac flour doesn't thicken very much when mixed with cold water, but quickly thickens when it's heated. This is why you don't add dry konjac flour directly to hot liquids. It will seize and immediately turn into lumps because the konjac flour that contacts the water so quickly and fully absorbs the liquid before the adjacent konjac flour can. Mixing konjac flour with cold water allows it to absorb the water slow enough that it's easily and fully dissolved first. The dissolved konjac flour can then be added to a hot liquid to absorb it without lumping.

Konjac flour is an ingredient to thicken sauces and gravies or any other cooked recipe. To use konjac flour as a thickening agent, first disperse it in a little cold water or other "watery" ingredients, and slowly add it (with constant stirring) to the other ingredients while they are cooking. About 1 teaspoon of konjac flour will gel about one cup of liquid. If you have not used konjac flour as a thickening agent before, it is best to experiment with it by beginning with lesser amounts, and adding as necessary until the desired consistency is reached." It can also be used to make noodles, though I wouldn't recommend making them a dietary staple, as they have no nutritive value and will take up valuable stomach space.

Calculating Food Costs

While you don't necessarily need to calculate the cost of every thing you prepare, it can be an interesting and illuminating exercise, part of the Make It A Game ethos.

Here is an example of how I calculate the cost of a full recipe, then divide it by the number of servings to get the cost per serving:

Nora's Nut Ball Snackers

42 balls

1 jar almond butter 4.99

3 Tbs cacao nibs .65

5 oz Brazil nuts 2.00

¼ cup sesame seeds .25

1 cup shredded coconut .87

½ cup coconut flour 1.44

8 oz Kerry Gold butter 2.79

3 tsp (.5 oz) alcohol-free vanilla extract 1.33

½ tsp coarse Celtic sea salt .02

Total cost \$13.60

Cost per ball \$0.34

If you want to calculate the cost of a single serving of any liquid flavoring (such as vanilla extract), here are some basic conversions:

1 US teaspoon = .166666667 US fluid ounces

1 US tablespoon = .5 US fluid ounces

1 ounce of liquid = about 6 teaspoons, or 2 tablespoons

As another example, Stevita brand stevia juice costs \$9.95 for 3.3 ounces. Each bottle has 160 1/8 tsp. servings, and each serving is about 16 drops, so there are approximately 2560 drops per bottle, making the cost about \$0.004 per drop (or in plain English, much less than one cent per drop).

Utilizing Leftovers

If I learned anything from my Depression-era parents, it's that throwing away food is like throwing away money. While this attitude can result in unhealthy eating habits (are you a reluctant member of the Clean Plate Club?), I prefer to look at using leftovers as a celebration of abundance: "Just look at all of this food!" Below are some strategies for making sure that surplus food doesn't rot in the fridge.

The easiest way to deal with leftovers is to eat them for lunch the next day. In fact, some people purposely prepare extra large portions of supper with the specific intent of bringing the excess to eat at work the next day. Invest in a metal lunch box, bento box, or tiffin pail to transport your leftovers. Using a thermos is a great way to have a hot lunch, and avoid the temptation of the break room microwave.

Some households have a weekly "Clean Out The Fridge Day." You can approach this from many different angles. Make something new out of a couple of different things. Some of my favorite combinations had their origins in what a friend calls a "desperate food moment." Be creative! Leftover cooked/grilled meats and/or vegetables can top a salad, or become ingredients in a crustless quiche (restaurants will often use a quiche as a delicious way to use up yesterday's extras). Chili is a mysterious and effective matrix in which distinct elements lose their former identity and become one with the whole. It's like The Borg for leftovers. If you need some inspiration,

<http://www.epicurious.com/> has a smartphone app that allows you to enter the ingredients that you wish to incorporate, and it will find recipes for you that include these ingredients. You can also do this on their website. Other websites offer a recipe search based on ingredients, but I have found Epicurious to have the vastest database.

The simplest way to Clean Out The Fridge is to have what might be called a Grazing Supper. Just put the various containers of leftovers out on the table with some dips, sauces, dressings and/or condiments, and get grazing.

Similarly, sometimes you may need to have a Clean Out the Freezer Week. Great food doesn't do you any good sitting in the freezer. It's important to take stock every so often to assess the State of the Freezer. If winter is a long way off (or the growing season is drawing near), and space is already getting tight, clear things out by looking at your white board and making a few meals using foods of which you have a surplus.

Reverse Meal Planning

Some books about eating on a budget will advise you to create a week's (or month's) worth of menus, make a shopping list from that and then shop for everything, keeping strictly to your list.

This is the exact opposite of how a tightwad does it. Using what Amy Dacyzyn calls "Reverse Meal Planning," the idea is to take a look at what you've got on hand, and determine what to make based on what there is most of, or what needs to be used first. It's akin to Clean Out The Fridge Day, but includes fresh, frozen and pantry items in addition to leftovers of prepared meals. For example, if it's late August and you have an abundance of eggplant, zucchini and tomatoes, it's time for ratatouille. If there is a big head of romaine that needs to be utilized, and some leftover cooked turkey, make a quick batch of mayonnaise or walnnaise and make some turkey roll-ups, including any other filings that would complement the dish. If you don't yet have a large repertoire of recipes, use the aforementioned websites and apps.

Dinner Co-ops

If you are always scrambling to find the time to prepare dinner on days that you are working, you might consider starting a weeknight dinner co-op with other Primal eaters. While they are easiest to coordinate with people who live nearby, and don't have as high criteria for their food, it is possible that you can find enough Primal eaters within a reasonable distance to make it work. Basically, each weeknight, one person cooks enough food for everyone else in the co-op, then delivers it to their homes, or makes it available for pick-up.

Start with two people and build to five or six (six means that each week, one person gets a week off). Choose people in similar situations (kid-friendly food, singles, etc.), and use recipes that can be doctored up at home with love/hate ingredients (by adding onions, crushed red pepper, extra salt, etc.). Agree upon the size of the meat portions. Keep it fair and equitable, and don't make the same meal every time unless people keep requesting it. Be open to feedback. Invest in quality, stackable, metal to-go containers to bring home your food.

This can be great for people with a flexible work schedule, who don't work 9-5 every day, or who can get off early one afternoon a week. You can also cook on a day off, portion and freeze it until pickup

day. If this sounds overwhelming, start with trading one meal per month, see how that goes, and expand from there.

To get some more specific ideas on how it might work for you, see if your library has the book *Dinner at Your Door: Tips and Recipes For Starting a Neighborhood Cooking Co-op* by Alex Davis, Andy Remeis and Diana Ellis. You can also simply google "Dinner co-op".

Summer Supper

In the summer, fresh, local produce is in great abundance, and requires very little embellishment to taste amazing. Because of this, my summer supper has evolved to a simple formula, saving time and brain power, plus keeps the stove off during the hottest part of the day (which will keep your home cooler, thus saving you money on your electric bill). I call it (cleverly enough) the Summer Supper. It comprises blanched, chilled vegetables, a cooked, chilled protein, a sauce or dressing, and accessory ingredients. Because the vegetable and sauce change throughout the summer, depending on what is in season, it never gets boring.

Cook several day's worth at one time, preferable in the morning while the temperature is still cool. If this is done on a work day, you might need to wake up a little early.

The proteins can be broiled, grilled, hard-boiled or simply thawed from the freezer from your stash of meal-sized, pre-cooked meats. For each serving, 3 ounces of meat, or 2 or 3 eggs should suffice.

The vegetables are cut and blanched or steamed. To blanch is to cook the vegetables in boiling water for just a minute or two until they are barely tender, drain, and plunge them into cold water to halt the cooking process. The timing varies by vegetable, but it is best to err on the under-cooked side, as you can always cook it for a few more seconds, but once something is overdone, there's no bringing it back (though overcooked vegetables can be pureed and frozen for later use in a soup or sauce). See Chapter 7 on Storing and Preserving food for a chart on blanching times for various vegetables. You can also find many timing charts online by entering the search terms "blanch vegetable times" or some such thing. I use the same water for blanching several batches in a row (after first hard-boiling some eggs in it), usually enough to last me for a week's worth of meals. Rather than dump the vegetables and water into a colander to drain, I use a slotted spoon to transfer just the vegetables, keeping the hot water in the pan for the next batch. Once the vegetables are cooled and drained, portion them out into containers and put them in the fridge. If you are short on fridge space, keep each vegetable in one big container.

The dressing can be anything you like. Use the recipe for balsamic vinaigrette (in Chapter 11 "Basic Recipes") as a template, and improvise using any kind of vinegar. Make enough for up to a week at a time, or make two or three that you can rotate throughout the week. Use Epicurious to find an almost infinite variety. You know what you like.

The accessories are anything that adds a little blast of flavor. Use the appropriate amount, as some have more density of flavor, and a little too much is a lot too much (e.g. you can use more fresh parsley than you would fresh thyme).

Here is a sample template. Pick one or more from each column (except sauce/dressing, from which you need only choose one):

Protein	Vegetable	Sauce/Dressing	Accessories
Chicken	Asparagus	Balsamic vinaigrette	Capers
Beef	Broccoli	Walnutaise	Chopped Pickles
Fish	Cauliflower	Sesame ginger	Feta cheese
Hard-boiled egg	Green beans	Mayonnaise	Chopped Olives
Pork	Any Greens	Greek lemon	Seeds or chopped nuts
Turkey	Kohlrabi	Lime cumin	Fresh cilantro
Duck	Okra	Any vinaigrette	Fresh dill weed
	Snap peas	Turkish almond sauce	Arugula
		Romesco Sauce (replace the bread with extra almonds)	Fresh basil
		Pureed avocado	Fresh parsley
		Chimichurri	Fresh tarragon
			Watercress
			Sorrel
			Fresh thyme (a bit)
			Fresh rosemary (a bit)

Obviously, there are many more possibilities than presented here, but this ought to get you started.

Summer Soups

Another simple yet elegant way to eat vegetables in the summer is to make a chilled soup by cooking (either in a little water, or in the case of cabbage, greens, eggplant and zucchini, braising in a little fat and liquid like water or broth) and pureeing them, adding salt, pepper, fresh herbs and whatever other flavor elements you might like. You can also add raw ingredients like cucumber or melon. Add a little protein on the side, a dollop or drizzle from something in the Topping column, and dinner is served. It also freezes well (sans topping), and can be thawed to enjoy in the winter as a light meal, or as a sauce for something else. It's an especially good way to preserve those vegetables (zucchini and eggplant in particular) that don't freeze well. Here is another template. Pick one (or more) from each column:

Vegetable	Seasoning	Zing	Topping
Asparagus	Arugula	Pureed bell pepper	Olive oil
Broccoli	Basil	Lemon juice	Coconut milk
Cabbage	Chives	Lime juice	Coconut oil
Cauliflower	Cilantro	Vinegar	Coconut cream
Celery root	Dill	Diced chile pepper	Sour cream/yogurt
Eggplant	Mint	Horseradish	Queso fresco
Green Beans	Oregano		Sesame seeds
Any greens	Parsley		Toasted sesame oil
Kohlrabi	Sorrel		Toasted cumin seeds
Okra	Tarragon		Feta cheese
Summer squash	Thyme		Chopped Olives
Zucchini	Watercress		

Winter Supper

In the winter, a tightwad's best friends are soups, stews and curries. These are all great ways to take a little protein, a fair amount of vegetables, and a lot of liquid to make something nourishing, delicious and cheap. You can bring the cost down by making your own broth or stock (which is also vastly superior in nutritional value). It is easy to make several meal's worth at one time, and either eat it until it is gone, or eat some right away and freeze the rest to eat in a couple of weeks.

Soup

The basic way to make soup is to saute the chopped aromatics (onion, garlic, celery, carrot), add the other ingredients (chopped vegetables, raw or cooked meat, dried herbs) cook for a couple of minutes, add broth or water and cook until done. Beyond that there are 46,998,325,702 variations. Soups are very forgiving to novice cooks, as the flavors can be adjusted as you go. Some nice additions at the end are coconut milk, fresh herbs, and/or a bit of vinegar or lemon juice to brighten the flavor. A couple of quick bursts with an immersion blender make it easy to create a "creamier," less watery texture.

Stew

Stew is basically a soup with less liquid added, and the ingredients tend to be cut into larger chunks.

Thai Curry

The way that I make a Thai curry in the winter is akin to the 1950s "open a bunch of cans, throw it together, and call it supper" way of cooking, with a can of coconut milk standing in for the canned cream of mushroom soup. With coconut milk (either canned or homemade), a tablespoon or two of jarred Thai curry paste (or your own homemade paste, if you're feeling adventurous), some frozen vegetables and protein of choice, you can have supper ready in about 20 minutes, no pressure cooker or slow cooker required. This is also a great way to impress guests. Thai curry always seems special to people, and doesn't seem like a thrown-together meal. Add cauliflower rice and a napa cabbage salad, and it's a quick and easy dinner party.

Vegetables in Winter

It is an easy thing to eat quality vegetables during the growing season. Eating reasonably priced, organic and/or local vegetables in the winter is another thing entirely. If you have planned ahead and preserved the local harvest throughout the summer, you're all set. If not, you are going to have to learn to embrace cabbage.

The growing season is different in every part of the country, and many temperate regions have local produce available all winter long. I am addressing the not-so-temperate regions, such as the one in which I live. Talk to the produce manager at your primary stores to find out which vegetables are still available from local growers using various methods of extending the season, or see if there is a CSA in your area offering winter shares. Some hardy crops, like kale, can be grown and eaten long past a hard frost. Others are grown in cold frames, or greenhouses.

Others are considered good "keepers", to be harvested in the fall and kept at a cool temperature throughout the winter. The champion of the non-starchy variety of these is cabbage.

I loves me some cabbage, so a meal-sized portion for me is about 12 ounces. While the price fluctuates throughout the year, during peak season, a 5 pound head of cabbage is about \$1.50 at the farmers' market. At approximately 2 cents per ounce, my serving of cabbage comes to 24 cents. I don't expect you to weigh your portions; I have only done it here to be scientifically accurate. I tend to cut my cabbage into quarters, and if it's a big one, eighths. That makes it a little easier to Do The Math. Red cabbage is more dense than green cabbage, and has more nutrients and anthocyanins. It generally costs more per pound, but you get more bang for your buck.

Frozen vegetables from the store are usually more fresh than the "fresh" produce that's available in the produce department. Frozen vegetables are processed as soon as they are picked, while the non-frozen stuff has been harvested days and days before it hits the bins.

If you grow your own food and have an enterprising spirit, you may want to take a look at the book *The Northland Winter Greenhouse Manual* by Carol Ford and Chuck Waibel.

Bonus Feature!

7 Days of Red Cabbage Frittatas

A frittata is an open-faced omelette, generally made with vegetables (instructions in Chapter 11). Here are 7 different ways to enjoy red cabbage for breakfast all week long. If you can tolerate dairy, include those toppings, but the frittatas still taste great without cheese.

- 1) Topped with diced avocado and Szechuan Pepper Salt
- 2) Pizza spices mixed with the eggs, topped with mozzarella cheese, tomato/pasta sauce and your favorite pizza toppings (pepperoni, green olives, etc.)
- 3) Topped with roasted, ground caraway & smoked paprika
- 4) Topped with cheddar cheese and seasoned pepper or Cajun spice blend
- 5) Pine nuts and Italian herbs mixed with the eggs and topped with pecorino romano cheese
- 6) Topped with caramelized onions (the authentic stuff has no added sugar), fresh thyme and gruyere cheese
- 7) Chili powder mixed with the eggs and topped with queso fresco or avocado

Chapter 10-The Kitchen Transition

It's important to keep in mind that tightwaddery is a continuum, with many shades of gray.

To get started, do what comes most easily and intuitively to you. After that, tackle the areas that require a little more work, gradually changing one or two habits at a time. If you have an epiphany, and do a gleeful 180° turn to a completely new lifestyle, great! If it's more of a slog for you, keep at it and don't beat yourself up.

If you have a fully stocked freezer, refrigerator and pantry, the thought of replacing all of your conventional items with Primal food can be pretty overwhelming. While some people might enjoy the adrenaline rush and drama of clearing out everything and starting afresh, that thrill can wear off pretty quickly once they get to the checkout lane on the first big stock-up trip. I recognize the ritualistic value of such an act when one is ready to embark upon a new chapter in one's life, but the practical reality is that it's gonna cost you.

If you are dealing with a debilitating illness, the fact is that a clean sweep approach may be necessary to get you quickly on the path to healing. For those who are not suffering, but want to reap the benefits of Primal eating, a gradual transition may help to prevent a financial bombshell.

Some things really will have to go in the trash; anything with trans fats, canola oil, agave nectar or high-fructose corn syrup are not fit for human consumption, and should be sent to the landfill (I wouldn't spoil the compost bin with it). After that, it's going to be Clean Out The Freezer/Fridge/Pantry Week for as many weeks as it takes to eat up everything non-Primal. If it is summer, it is most important to clear out the freezer to make room for storing locally harvested vegetables. Incorporate the contents of all opened containers and packages into as many meals as you can.

As soon as something is used up, replace it with its closest Primal equivalent. For example, when you use up the soy sauce, replace it with a bottle of Coconut Aminos. When you get to the last of the pasteurized apple cider vinegar, buy a small bottle of unpasteurized apple cider vinegar. Eventually, when that small bottle is gone, replace it with a larger bottle. Limit the acquisition of Primal items that are new to your repertoire to one or two per shopping trip. This will spread out their costs over the span of the transition period.

Some things may not have a Primal equivalent, so when they're gone, they're gone for good.

Other things may remain long after the rest of the kitchen has been cleared out, in which case, they can go, and you can decide if a replacement is even needed. Perhaps the box of cornstarch is still sitting in the pantry because you hardly ever use it, and so can go without fanfare. Or maybe it just wasn't pudding-and-gravy season yet, and it's time to replace it with some konjac.

If you are planning on shifting everyone in your household to Primal eating, but you're the only one who's *really* excited about it, you can start eating Primally right away, and use the transition time to feed the old stuff to the more reluctant converts. This will give you time to experiment with recipes and unfamiliar ingredients, and find out which ones you'll want to buy in larger quantities, and which ones you don't think anyone else will like. As the old food stock starts to dwindle, start increasing the number of shared meals that are prepared according to Primal principles.

Unopened containers can be eaten, taken to a food shelf or given to a conventionally-eating friend or neighbor. Resist the urge to pawn them off on unsuspecting trick-or-treaters.

Chapter 11-Basic Recipes

As previously stated, a few good sauce recipes are all you need to get started on the path to making all of your own delicious Primal Body meals. Check my website <http://www.primaltightwad.com/> for even more recipes. I have included a breakdown of prices for the first few here to give you an idea of the cost savings.

Balsamic Vinaigrette

Most commercial salad dressings (including the ones generally found in natural foods groceries) are made with canola oil. If you find one made with only olive oil, you will be charged dearly for the experience. This is an excellent, all-purpose vinaigrette, adapted from *Vegetarian Cooking For Everyone* by Deborah Madison. It is about half the price of an organic, gluten-free brand of balsamic vinaigrette (the primary oil in which is soybean).

Ingredients:

1 shallot, finely minced .10

4 tsp. balsamic vinegar .21

2 tsp. red wine vinegar .08

Salt & pepper to taste .05

1 Tbsp. Dijon mustard .09

5 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil .45

Directions:

Combine first 4 ingredients and let sit for 15 minutes. Add mustard, and whisk in olive oil until combined.

You can liven up the dressing by substituting fruit vinegar for some or all of the balsamic. Be advised that some flavored vinegar also has caramel color, which some studies have suggested may contribute to insulin resistance.

Makes about 7 tablespoons (3.5 oz.)

Recipe total \$0.98/ \$0.33 per serving (3 servings)

Mayonnaise

Mayonnaise is an essential condiment for certain salads and lettuce wraps, but good luck finding one that doesn't contain canola or soybean oil. If you plan to use a large amount in a short time, try the recipe from <http://www.thecookawakening.com/>. Otherwise, this recipe is enough for a small tuna salad, coleslaw or a few lettuce wraps.

For a small quantity of fresh mayonnaise, ½ cup or so, this is a simple, fast method using an immersion blender, resulting in a very thick mayonnaise. Feel free to play around with the ratio of olive to coconut oil to suit your palate. If you wish to tone down the strong flavor of olive oil, use the light variety. Or add some flax oil into the mix. Just keep the total oil amount to ½ cup.

Ingredients:

1 large egg yolk .29

1 tsp. water

1 tsp. fresh lemon juice .04

¼ teaspoon salt .01

¼ cup olive oil, or more if you need it, adjusting the lemon juice accordingly .64

¼ cup coconut oil, in liquid form .86

Directions:

Combine the yolk, water, lemon juice, and salt in a 2-cup Pyrex measuring glass. Buzz it once with an immersion blender to mix. Add a few drops of oil, holding the blender to the bottom of the cup and blending until an emulsion forms, 2 to 3 seconds. With the blade running, pour the remaining oil slowly into the cup, beginning to lift the immersion blender up and down to incorporate the oil. Once you start blending, the process should take 15 to 20 seconds.

Makes ½ cup.

Recipe total \$1.84 / \$0.23 per tablespoon. Yes, that's twice as much as Hellmann's Mayonnaise with olive oil, but that kind is mostly canola.

Walnnaise

This is a delicious, versatile dressing that works as well on vegetables as it does on eggs, fish and meat. It is infinitely variable, and makes a good substitute for mayonnaise in entree-sized salads like tuna salad.

Ingredients:

½ cup shelled walnuts, or other soft nuts .74

5 Tbsp. olive oil .45

3 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice, lime juice or vinegar of choice .44 (for a mix of red and balsamic)

½ tsp. salt, or to taste .02

¼ cup vegetable or other stock .18 (for Pacific brand chicken broth)

½ to 1 cup packed fresh herbs such as basil, cilantro, dill, arugula, parsley or any combination thereof (optional) 1.00

Directions:

Combine first 5 ingredients in a blender. Blend until you have a smooth paste, adding more liquid if necessary. Add fresh herbs (if using). Blend until herbs are fully incorporated.

Makes about 1 cup.

Total about \$0.18 per tablespoon (recipe total \$2.83)

Variations:

Thai: Macadamia nuts, fresh grated ginger, cilantro and/or Thai basil, lime juice & rice vinegar, and substitute toasted sesame oil for part of the olive oil.

Southwest: Pecans, fresh garlic, dried hot chiles, and lime juice

Eastern Mediterranean: Walnuts, fresh garlic, cilantro, lemon and lots of paprika

Homemade Coconut Milk

One of the staples of the Primal diet is coconut milk. However, the cost of buying it ready-made can really add up quickly. Making it yourself can cut the expense at least in half, if not much more (depending on the best price you can find for coconut milk that doesn't come in cans that have been lined with BPA).

This recipe makes about 13.5 ounces, which is the amount in an average can. 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons of organic shredded coconut, bought in bulk, cost me \$.87, less than half that of the organic brand of ready-made milk, and you don't need to worry about BPA lining the can. It is perfect for smoothies, soups, stews and curries. Sadly, it doesn't seem to work as well in coconut yogurt or nogurt (see below).

Ingredients:

1 cup plus 2 Tbsp. shredded, unsweetened coconut

2¼ cups very hot (not boiling) water

Directions:

Combine the hot water and coconut in the blender jar for about 10 minutes. Blend the coconut and water on High setting (keep the lid slightly ajar to prevent the heat from popping it off) for a minute or two. Let sit for a few minutes.

Put through a strainer, pressing to extract as much liquid as possible.

You may retrieve the shredded coconut for a second pressing that yields a thinner milk, or add it to meatloaf for added texture.

Coconut Yogurt

This recipe is from Durga Fuller, and her fantastic website <http://www.thecookawakening.com/>

Ingredients:

1 can coconut milk of choice - Native Forest brand recommended, no BPAs

Culture of choice - Custom Probiotics, Cultures for Health Vegetal Dairy-Free starter, or HMF Superpowder are all good, available online. Look for dairy free.

Directions:

Pour a little coconut milk into a pint sized mason jar. Mix in culture of choice - a smidgeon of the Custom Probiotic, a quarter tsp of the HMF powder or Cultures for Health Vegetal Dairy-free starter. Add the rest of the coconut milk. Cap tightly. Shake well.

Keep warm in a yogurt warmer, in an oven with the light or pilot on, in a dehydrator set at about 95 - 100 degrees, or wrapped in a heating pad set on low. Shake occasionally. Yogurt will be mild after one day, a little more tart after two.

Alternate method - mix in culture of choice as described above and shake well. Leave at room temperature for 4 days, shaking occasionally. This method will result in a thicker product, with a slightly fizzy flavor.

Coconut Nogurt

If you aren't eating coconut yogurt for the probiotic benefit, and merely want a thick, creamy coconut treat, here is how to make your own coconut "yogurt facsimile" that I like to call Coconut Nogurt. It's actually more like pudding, so if you wish to approximate the tangy flavor of coconut yogurt, add a couple of teaspoons of lemon juice.

Making it with homemade coconut milk is quite a bit less indulgent, but still provides some low-cost nourishment. The chocolate variation tends to fare better, as it hides the homemade milk's limitations better than the simpler flavor variations do.

Ingredients:

1 13.5 oz can full-fat Native Forest brand coconut milk 2.07

4 capsules (or 3/4 tsp.) glucomannan/konjac .24 (less than 5 cents if you buy it by the pound)

Stevia (6 drops or to taste) .02

1 tsp. alcohol-free vanilla extract .22

2tsp. lemon juice (optional, to add tanginess).08

Directions:

Place coconut milk in a bowl with enough room left over to do some mixing. Add glucomannan/konjac and immediately mix it into the coconut milk vigorously with a fork. Add flavorings. Transfer to a container with a lid, and chill in the refrigerator for 2 hours, or until thick.

Makes 13.5 oz.

Recipe total \$2.63 / approx.\$0.19 per ounce, or \$1.17 per 6-ounce serving (\$1.08 with the bulk konjac powder)

Flavor variations:

Citrus zest: add 2 tsp. total of grated zest from lime, lemon and/or orange

Orange zest and vanilla: add 2 tsp. orange zest plus an additional ½ tsp. of vanilla (makes a flavor reminiscent of a certain, trademarked "dreamy" orange frozen novelty)

Chocolate: add 2 Tbsp. cocoa and an additional ¼ tsp. of vanilla and additional 4 drops of stevia. To add an interesting textural element, place the chilled chocolate yogurt in a serving dish and drizzle a teaspoon of coconut oil on top. It will create a hard shell coating like you might find on a dipped ice cream cone.

Coconut: add ¼ shredded coconut and an additional ½ tsp. of vanilla

Homemade Dairy Yogurt

If you can tolerate dairy, making your own yogurt is a real money-saver. This can be done with minimal equipment. You'll need a cooking pot that is large enough to hold the amount of milk that you'll be using, a lidded glass container (or containers) to hold the cultured milk while it is incubating, and something to keep the milk warm during this process. It could be a heating pad, thermos, Crock Pot (I have never used one for making yogurt, so google "crock pot yogurt" for experienced guidance), on top of a refrigerator, or if worst comes to worst, you could buy a yogurt maker, but for heaven's sake don't buy one new; I have never been to a thrift store that didn't have at least one yogurt maker for sale that was donated by someone who had abandoned a short-lived yogurt-making kick. An instant-read thermometer is useful to gauge the temperature of the milk, and may result in more predictable results (though I've never used one and have always had success). For a starter, you can use any store-bought, plain, active-cultured yogurt, or you can experiment with some of the distinctive, heirloom-variety starters that are available from <http://www.culturesforhealth.com/>.

Ingredients:

½ gallon whole, grass-fed milk 2.99

Plain, active cultured yogurt, 4 tablespoons .18

Directions:

Heat milk on medium to just under the boiling point; there will be small bubbles (about 185 F).

Remove from heat and allow to cool to 110 F (if you don't have an instant-read thermometer, you can test the milk on your wrist as folks used to test the temperature of baby formula). Milk that is too hot will kill the yogurt culture!

Add a little bit of milk to the yogurt starter to thin it out, which makes it disperse more easily in the milk. Add yogurt/milk slurry to the pot of milk.

Transfer to glass container(s), add lid(s) and place in warm spot. There are many creative variations to this step. I use a heating pad set on low, with two towels on top, and wide-mouth canning jars. I cover the jars with two tea towels to make a sort of yogurt cozy.

Allow to incubate for at least 7 hours. Check the yogurt, and if it has thickened, it is finished. If it is still too thin, allow to incubate for another hour or two. Allow to cool a bit, then chill in the refrigerator. It will thicken more as it cools.

Makes ½ gallon (8 8-oz. servings)

Recipe total \$3.17 / about \$0.40 per 8 oz. serving

You can save some of your homemade yogurt to use as a starter for the next batch, though I have found that it tends to get weaker with subsequent batches. I buy one quart of yogurt and freeze it in 2 tablespoon amounts in ice cube trays, and keep the cubes in the freezer in a zippered bag for future use. The cubes can thaw while the milk is being heated and cooled.

Homemade yogurt tends to be thinner than commercial yogurt, so you can experiment with thickeners like konjac/glucomannan (I use one teaspoon of bulk konjac or 4 opened capsules of glucomannan per quart of finished yogurt, mixed in rapidly to avoid clumping), or agar. Or you can simply adapt to it; I have grown to appreciate the simpler texture of homemade yogurt. I only use a thickener if I am in the mood for something thicker and more dessert-like.

To make Greek-style yogurt, drain it in a cheese cloth-lined colander over a container. The longer you drain it, the thicker it gets. The liquid that collects in the container can be drunk plain as a beverage or added to a smoothie.

Cultured Vegetables

Buying raw, cultured sauerkraut from a natural foods grocer in my area will set you back \$10.99 for a 15-ounce jar, containing 4 servings. While it is an excellent product, and ready when you are, the cost is almost 17 times what it takes to make your own. For example, a large batch that begins with 25 pounds of cabbage at a farmers' market (at a price of \$6) and 15 tablespoons of Celtic sea salt (using the standard ratio of 3 tablespoons for every 5 pounds of cabbage), at \$1.80, yields at least 12 pint jars (depending on how tightly I can pack it in) at 65 cents each (not counting the cost of the jars). It takes me about 3 hours of preparation time, some of it slicing (I could save some time using a mandoline, but my chef's knife and I are a team), some of it pounding the cabbage, but most of it relaxing while the cabbage wilts and gives off liquid. At that rate, 3 hours of work saves \$124, "earning" me an hourly wage of \$41.36. I'd say it's time well spent. Though I like to make a big batch when cabbage is at its cheapest, you certainly don't need to make 25 pounds at a time. Many people make 5-pound batches, and eat a previously finished batch (kept in the refrigerator) while the current one is fermenting.

A 5-gallon crock is generally used for a recipe this size. Some instructions will tell you to use a food-grade plastic bucket, but it's up to you to decide whether or not you are comfortable with that. Before investing on a crock of your own, ask around and see if someone has one that they aren't planning on using that you can borrow for a one-time use (or if they do plan on using it, perhaps borrow it a couple months before they plan on doing their own batch). If you find that you love the results and plan on doing it again, check garage sales, Ebay, Freecycle and Craig's List to find a good used one (make sure it has no cracks). You can also find new ones at <http://www.lehmans.com/>

If you want to make a smaller batch, use a ratio of 3 Tbsp. pickling salt for every 5 pounds of cabbage.

Ingredients:

25 pounds cabbage

About 1 cup pickling/canning salt or Celtic sea salt

Directions:

Remove outer leaves and any undesirable portions from firm, mature heads of cabbage; wash and drain. Cut into halves or quarters; remove the core. Use a shredder, mandoline or sharp knife to cut the cabbage into thin shreds about 1/16 to 1/8 of an inch.

In a large container, thoroughly mix 3 tablespoons salt with 5 pounds shredded cabbage. Let the salted cabbage stand for 10-15 minutes to wilt slightly and start to give off some liquid.

Pack the salted cabbage firmly and evenly into a large clean crock or jar. Squeeze or pummel it with your hands or pound it with a heavy, clean rock (be careful not to damage the container!) or a wooden sauerkraut stomper, then press down firmly until the juice comes to the surface.

Repeat the shredding, salting, and packing of the cabbage until the crock is filled to within 3 to 4 inches of the top (or you have used up all of your cabbage).

Cover the cabbage with a clean, thin, white cloth (such as muslin) and tuck the edges down against the inside of the container. Cover with an inverted plate that just fits inside the container so that the cabbage is not exposed to the air. Put a weight on top of the plate so the brine comes up to or over it. Some people use a glass jar or a food-safe plastic bag filled with water as a weight. The objective is to keep the cabbage covered completely in brine while it is fermenting.

Formation of gas bubbles indicates fermentation is taking place. A room temperature of 68 to 72 degrees is best for fermenting cabbage. Check the crock every few days and skim off any foam that has collected on the surface of the brine.

Fermentation is usually completed in 2 to 6 weeks, or when bubbling stops. It really depends on the room temperature. If you aren't quite sure, taste some; if it tastes like sauerkraut, it probably is. Recognizing when it's "done" may require the assistance of an experienced krautmaker.

Fully fermented sauerkraut may be kept tightly covered in the refrigerator for a few months, or it can be frozen in sealed freezer bags.

Almond Milk

For smoothies, adding to tea, or drinking warm with some spices, you may wish to have more to choose from than just cow's milk or coconut milk. For this, try making your own almond milk. The commercially available ones tend to be full of additives (though Pacific brand is fairly "clean"), and cost several times more than homemade; using conventionally-grown almonds, this one comes out to \$0.49 per pint.

Ingredients:

1/3 cup raw almonds

2 cups water

Directions:

Bring about 1 cup of water to a boil in a small saucepan. Drop in the almonds. Let them boil for about 3 minutes and then strain through a metal mesh strainer. Drop the almonds onto a plate and let them rest for a few minutes until they are cool enough to touch.

Once the almonds have cooled a bit, rub off their papery skins and discard the skins.

Note: You can make almond milk without this step, but the skins of the nuts can give a slightly bitter, strong taste to the finished almond milk. Blanching only takes a couple of minutes, and the end result will be a very white milk with a pure, sweet taste

Put the blanched nuts and 2 cups of fresh water into an electric blender. Put the lid on. Blend them until you've crushed as many of the nuts as you can and the milk is creamy, white and thick. You may have to stop and start the blender, picking it up off the base and shaking it from time to time, as the nuts can get stuck under the blades.

Hold a metal mesh strainer over a receptacle - a jar, a bowl or wide-mouthed container of some kind, and pour the milk through the strainer. You can give the nut pulp a little squeeze to make sure to get all of the liquid out (as with the homemade coconut milk). Save the nut bits for other uses (like adding to coconut yogurt, meatloaf, casseroles, chili, or quiche to provide texture).

By altering the water to nut ratio, you can control the exact creaminess of the milk. A higher proportion of water produces a thinner milk, and a higher proportion of nuts produces a thicker one. The proportions in this almond milk recipe result in a milk that is all-purpose, but go ahead and experiment.

Makes about 2 cups

Ghee

Whether you are sensitive to casein, need a good high-heat cooking oil, or just love the taste, ghee is so easy to make yourself, there is absolutely no reason to pay almost twice as much for someone else to do it for you.

Place 1 lb. of unsalted, grass-fed butter into a sturdy-bottomed saucepan (preferably not non-stick). Cook at very low heat. The fat will melt, the water will evaporate, and the milk solids will start to sink to the bottom of the pan. After about 30 minutes, start to watch the ghee carefully. When all of the solids have turned a golden brown color (most will have dropped to the bottom of the pan, but some may still be floating on top), remove from heat. Let it cool slightly, then transfer to a wide-mouthed glass container, straining it through a sieve (if desired). That's it. No skimming or stirring required. The only tricky part is getting to know at just what shade of brown to take it off the heat. You can't go too wrong at "golden brown". Some like the nutty flavor that comes with a darker shade of brown, though that puts you at risk of burning it, as the ghee will continue to cook a bit after it's been taken off the heat.

Keeps at room temperature for four to six months, or in the refrigerator for one year (though some would say longer). There is a recipe for a delicious, seasoned variation of ghee called Niter Kibbeh on my website.

Cauliflower "Rice"

If you are preparing a meal that has a lot of sauce or liquid, that is traditionally served with rice (such as Thai curry in coconut milk), this makes a great non-starchy substitute.

Ingredients:

1 head cauliflower, broken into florets

Directions:

Process cauliflower in a food processor, grate with the large holes of a cheese grater or chop with a knife to a fine consistency, about the size of grains of rice.

Steam or saute until al dente (tender but toothsome). Do not overcook.

Soup Stock

A flavorful broth is the foundation of a great soup. The following recipe is yet another from the incomparable Durga Fuller.

Ingredients:

Bones, skin, feet and non-liver organs of chickens or other meat, enough to fill your stock pot or slow cooker to about three inches below the top, or a whole chicken

1/4 - 1/2 cup lemon juice or apple cider vinegar per gallon total volume of bones and water

Directions:

If using bones from a red meat animal, roast the bones at 350 degrees for one hour until browned and caramelized. This is not necessary for poultry.

Crack the bones if you can, using the bottom of a heavy pot (optional). Place bones and lemon juice or vinegar in a pot or slow cooker. Add water just to cover. Soak the bones for at least an hour in the cold acidulated water.

Bring to a boil and skim off any foam that rises to the top. Turn down to a low temperature. Ideally there should be barely any bubbles rising, hardly any movement in the simmer. The slow cooker on low may even be too hot, but I use it anyway, it's so easy.

Cook for 6 - 12 hours for poultry, 24 - 72 hours for larger animals (red meat). If using a whole chicken, remove the chicken after cooking an hour or two and pull the meat from the bones to use in other recipes. Return the bones and skin to the broth and continue cooking. The longer the broth cooks, the more minerals will leach into the broth, making it a rich mineral supplement. Sometimes the gelatin breaks down with the longer cooking with the poultry or with the higher heat, so you might lose that benefit. The bones should be crumbly to the touch, at least at the ends.

Another method is to cook the bones for eight hours. Strain and reserve broth. Add water and acid to the bones again, and cook eight more hours. Repeat, if you have the patience. Each successive batch will be less gelatinous, more neutral in flavor, and rich in minerals.

Optional - Bring finished broth to a boil, simmer, and reduce by half. Cool. Pour into ice cube trays and freeze. Pop the broth cubes into a zip lock bag and store in the freezer. Use in sauteing veggies, in walnnaise, and (of course) dilute a bit for soups. If you've reduced it, remember it's concentrated, especially if you've used a lot of chicken feet! They make a very dense broth.

Turkey Broth

These are my Mom's instructions on how to make broth from a turkey carcass once most of the meat has been picked off of it:

Put the bones in a soup pot with just enough water to cover (Note- though she didn't do this, to draw out calcium from the bones into your broth, add 1 ounce of cider vinegar per quart of water, up to ¼ cup of vinegar no matter how much water you use. Also, you can break up the bones a bit to take up less space in the pot). Include any skin that has been left behind. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce to a simmer, covered with the lid tilted a little so it doesn't boil over. Cook until the meat is loose, at least one hour. Remove from heat and allow the broth to cool. Take out the bones and pick off any meat that is still stuck to them, reserving it for the final soup. Strain the broth through a colander lined with cheesecloth into another large container.

To make turkey soup, clean out the soup pot. With the heat set on low-medium, add some cooking oil, 1 or 2 chopped onions and 2 ribs of celery, chopped. Saute until soft. Add 2 chopped carrots, the turkey broth and meat, salt, pepper and a little bit of Bell's Poultry Seasoning (Note- I haven't been able to find this anywhere lately; it may have been discontinued, in which case, substitute a copycat blend from another brand which includes rosemary, oregano, sage, ginger, marjoram, thyme, and black pepper). If it doesn't look like there's enough celery or carrot, add more. If you have some leftover vegetables, add those, too. Cook until carrots are soft. Taste, and adjust seasonings if necessary.

Thanks, Mom!

Basic Vegetable Stock

Add the contents of your freezer's Broth Bucket (plus any vegetable trimmings from the soup you are about to prepare) to this recipe to make a cheap soup base. You can double the recipe and freeze half for later use. This version is adapted from *Vegetarian Cooking For Everyone* by Deborah Madison.

Ingredients:

1 large onion

2 large carrots

2 celery ribs, including a few leaves

1 bunch scallions, including half the greens

1 Tbsp. olive or coconut oil, ghee or beef tallow

1 Tbsp. nutritional yeast (optional)

8 garlic cloves, peeled and smashed

8 parsley branches

6 thyme sprigs or ½ tsp. dried

2 bay leaves

Salt

Directions:

Scrub the vegetables and chop them roughly into 1-inch cubes. Heat the oil in a soup pot. Add the vegetables, yeast, garlic and herbs and cook over high heat for 5 to 10 minutes, stirring frequently. The more color they get, the richer the flavor of the stock. Add 2 teaspoons salt and 2 quarts of cold water and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer uncovered for 30 minutes. Strain.

Crustless Quiche

Most restaurant cooks know the secret of using a quiche as a fancy delivery system for leftovers. Whether you are using items rummaged from the refrigerator, or specially procured for a gourmet experience, quiche makes a delicious centerpiece to any meal. Cold quiche also travels well, making it a good choice as a workday lunch (either eaten cold, or heated in a toaster oven, not the microwave). These are all-purpose instructions for creating your own recipe.

Prepare the solid ingredients - cook and season any raw meats and vegetables. Aim for about 1½ to 2 cups total solid ingredients (including a little cheese, if you can tolerate dairy) for a 9" pie pan (preferably Pyrex).

Spread the ingredients that you will be using into a deep-dish pie pan. Spread shredded cheese (if using) on top of the other ingredients.

Beat together, using either a bowl with whisk, or a blender, 4 eggs and 1½ cups liquid (cream, milk, coconut milk, unsweetened nut milk, or a combination). Season as you like with salt, pepper, and a couple of herbs, maybe a pinch of nutmeg or dried mustard powder. Use the Flavor Profile chart at the end of this chapter to come up with something delicious.

Pour the egg mix over the solid ingredients, and put onto center rack of 375 F. oven for 30-45 minutes.

Begin checking at half an hour. When the outside is done (when a knife inserted comes out clean,) but the center is still jiggly, remove from the oven. Let it sit for 5-10 minutes (it will continue to cook from the residual heat).

Serve warm, cold, or at room temperature.

Frittata

A frittata is an open-faced omelette, which is finished under a broiler rather than being flipped in the pan (which is so much easier for those of us who are flipping-impaired). It is a great with just about any kind of vegetable, and can be enjoyed any time of day. Here's how I make mine:

Place an oven-safe skillet on medium heat. Add ghee or olive oil and enough chopped vegetables to cover the bottom of the pan. Saute until they reach desired tenderness. While vegetables are cooking, whisk 3 eggs in a small bowl. If you are using dried herbs, whisk them in at this time.

When vegetables are tender, sprinkle any additional ingredients (fresh herbs, pine nuts, etc.) over them, then pour whisked eggs over all, tilting the pan if necessary to even out the eggs. Cook until the bottom is set but the top is still a bit wet. Remove from heat, and place under the broiler, keeping a close eye on it until the top is cooked to your liking (anywhere from just dry to golden brown). Turn off broiler. Top the frittata with cheese (if using) and return it to the oven; the residual heat should be enough to melt the cheese. Remove from oven and add any other toppings (avocado, balsamic vinaigrette, sauerkraut, caramelized onions, more herbs or spices, salt & pepper, etc.), cut into 4 wedges. Serves 1-2.

You can also make a sweet variation of the frittata that is well-suited to brunch or dessert (it's a bit like a souffle's or clafouti's poorer cousin). Use ghee or coconut oil in the skillet, and to the eggs, add ½ tsp. alcohol-free vanilla extract and stevia to taste (I use about 8-10 drops of Stevita brand). Made plain, it can be topped with fresh berries and perhaps some coconut cream or yogurt. It's also good with sauteed zucchini (cooked until tender), with a pinch of cloves, nutmeg and a couple of pinches of cinnamon added to the eggs along with the vanilla and stevia.

Spice Blends

With a few basic herb and spice blends, you can very quickly and easily turn simple foods into something special. There are a huge variety to choose from at every type of store. They might seem a bit expensive at first, but they usually break down to just pennies per serving (unless they contain saffron). A 2-ounce jar of herbs or spices yields about 22 teaspoons, so use that formula to calculate the cost per serving. If you put the blends together yourself (from herbs and spices that you have purchased in bulk, I hope!), the price really plummets, and you can customize them to suit your own taste preferences. It's worth it to keep a variety of them around. Check my website <http://primaltightwad.com/> for more spice blend recipes.

Italian

A good Italian blend can be used on just about anything, from vegetables to poultry, in meatloaf, frittatas and nut-based crackers.

Ingredients:

1 Tbsp. of each of the following:

dried oregano

dried marjoram

dried thyme

dried basil

dried rosemary

dried sage

- 1 tsp. dried onion flakes
- 1 tsp. dried garlic flakes
- 1 tsp. ground black pepper
- ½ tsp. crushed red pepper
- ½ tsp. fennel seeds

Directions:

Grind or crush the dried herbs and mix together. Place into a jar and seal tightly. Store in a cool dark place.

Chili powder

Few spice blends invoke our subjectivity as much as chili powder. There are as many variations as there are families in the Western hemisphere (and over 1600 on Allrecipes.com alone). It can be simple and basic, or fancy and complicated; a friend of mine makes an amazing one with 8 different kinds of dried chiles, plus 10 additional ingredients. Here is just one variation of chili powder.

Ingredients:

- 3 dried ancho chiles, stemmed, seeded and sliced
- 3 dried cascabel chiles, stemmed, seeded and sliced
- 3 dried arbol chiles, stemmed, seeded and sliced
- 2 Tbsp. whole cumin seeds
- 2 Tbsp. garlic powder
- 1 Tbsp. dried oregano
- 1 tsp. black peppercorns
- 1 tsp. smoked paprika
- ¼ tsp. coriander
- ¼ tsp. basil
- 1/8 tsp. cloves

Directions:

Place all of the chiles, black peppercorns and cumin into a medium nonstick saute pan or cast iron skillet over medium-high heat. Cook, moving the pan around constantly, until you begin to smell the cumin toasting, approximately 4 to 5 minutes. Set aside and cool completely.

Once cool, place the chiles, peppercorns and cumin into the carafe of a blender along with the garlic powder, oregano, paprika, coriander, basil and cloves. Process until a fine powder is formed. Allow the powder to settle for at least a minute before removing the lid of the carafe. Store in an airtight container for up to 6 months.

Herbs de Provence

This is a classic French blend used to season chicken, vegetables or meat. It's also great in soup.

Ingredients:

2 Tbsp. dried savory

2 Tbsp. dried marjoram

2 Tbsp. dried thyme

1 Tbsp. dried rosemary

1 Tbsp. dried oregano

1 Tbsp. dried basil

2 tsp. dried fennel seed

Directions:

In a small mixing bowl, combine all the ingredients together. Store in an air-tight container.

Szechuan Pepper Salt

This blend is delicious on all vegetables, especially those in the cabbage family. The recipe is from *Vegetarian Cooking For Everyone* by Deborah Madison

Ingredients:

2 Tbsp. Szechuan peppercorns

1 Tbsp. black peppercorns

¼ cup sea salt or kosher salt

Directions:

Toast the peppercorns in a heavy skillet over medium heat until the peppers are fragrant and the salt has begun to lose its whiteness, about 4 minutes. Grind, pound in a mortar, or whip in a food processor to break up the peppers, then pass through a sieve to separate out the hulls.

Cajun

Good on all meats, and especially good on brassica vegetables (cauliflower, broccoli, brussels sprouts, etc.) and great topping for a red cabbage fritatta with cheddar cheese.

Ingredients:

2 tsp. salt

2 tsp. garlic powder

2½ tsp. paprika

1 tsp. ground black pepper

1 tsp. onion powder

1 tsp. cayenne pepper

1¼ tsp. dried oregano

1¼ tsp. dried thyme

½ tsp. red pepper flakes (optional)

Directions:

Blend all ingredients together in a jar and seal. Keep in a cool, dry place.

Basic Flavor Profiles

The following is a very basic chart for putting together your own flavor combinations for savory meals without using a recipe. It is particularly useful for soups and stews. It is very general, and by no means complete; some things have been left out on purpose for being too expensive (saffron) or too easily overused (cloves, nutmeg), and others have been left out because I have no experience with them. You will inevitably find lots of authentic regional recipes that deviate widely from this chart; I am merely providing the classic, most commonly used combinations. I didn't include salt and black pepper, as they are included in most cuisines around the world.

The first group is aromatics that are generally sauteed in fat before adding the other ingredients. The second is herbs and spices, mainly dried, though some could also be added in their fresh state at any stage, keeping in mind that the longer they cook, the more flavor they lose. You needn't use every one in the column; just a few will do. The third group comprises "finishers", ingredients that are either added and mixed in at the end of cooking or drizzled on top of each individual serving.

The full headings are: Greek, Italian, Mexican, Caribbean, North African (Morocco, Tunisia, etc.), Indian, Eastern European, Western European, East Asian (Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai, Japanese, etc.) and Middle Eastern.

	Gr	It	Mx	Ca	N.A	In	E.E	W.E	E.A	M.E
Onion	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Garlic		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ginger				*		*			*	
Celery		*	*	*			*	*	*	
Hot pepper	*	*	*	*	*	*			*	*
Sweet pepper	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	Gr	It	Mx	Ca	N.A	In	E.E	W.E	E.A	M.E
Allspice			*	*						
Basil		*						*	*	
Bay leaf		*	*	*	*	*	*	*		
Caraway					*	*	*	*		
Cardamom					*	*				*
Cayenne			*	*	*	*			*	*
Cinnamon					*					
Coriander			*	*	*	*				*
Cumin			*	*	*	*				*
	Gr	It	Mx	Ca	N.A	In	E.E	W.E	E.A	M.E
Dill			*			*	*	*		
Fennel		*				*		*		*
Fenugreek						*				
Ginger				*						*
Lemongrass									*	
Marjoram		*	*					*		*
Mint	*				*	*			*	*
Mustard						*				
seed										
Oregano	*	*	*							
	Gr	It	Mx	Ca	N.A	In	E.E	W.E	E.A	M.E
Paprika			*		*		*	*		*
Parsley	*	*			*		*	*		*
Crushed red pepper		*	*	*	*	*			*	*
Rosemary		*						*		
Sage	*	*						*		
Savory							*	*		
Sorrel							*	*		
Tarragon							*			
Thyme				*			*			*
Tumeric					*	*			*	*
	Gr	It	Mx	Ca	N.A	In	E.E	W.E	E.A	M.E
Wine vinegar		*					*	*		

Rice vinegar									*	
Wine							*	*		
Rice wine									*	
Lemon	*	*			*		*			*
Lime			*	*		*			*	
Fish sauce									*	
Toasted sesame oil									*	
Beaten egg	*				*				*	
Cilantro			*	*	*	*			*	
Coconut milk				*		*			*	
Capers	*	*					*	*		
Olives	*	*			*		*	*		
Yogurt/sour cream	*		*			*	*	*		*
Sesame seeds					*				*	*
	Gr	It	Mx	Ca	N.A	In	E.E	W.E	E.A	M.E

Chapter 12-Closing Thoughts

You are what you eat.

You are what you give your attention to.

You are what you spend your money on.

Choose wisely.

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