

Foreword by Tony Horton creator of the bestselling P90X®

THE

*Karma Chow*

# ULTIMATE COOKBOOK



125+ Plant-Based Vegan Recipes for a Fit, Happy, Healthy You



MELISSA COSTELLO  
founder, [KarmaChow.com](http://KarmaChow.com)



# What People Are Saying About *Karma Chow*

---

“Every recipe in this book is the kind I want to feed myself and my family over and over again. Wholesome, creative, delicious, easy, and will lead me to bliss.”

—**Christy Morgan**, “The Blissful Chef,” author of *Blissful Bites: Vegan Meals That Nourish Mind, Body, and Plan*

“Melissa’s orientation towards healthy vegan cooking is user friendly and fun. I highly recommend this delicious and accessible cookbook. *Karma Chow* makes cooking a joy!”

—**Mandy Ingber**, celebrity yoga teacher and creator of Yogalosop

“Melissa Costello brings joy to cooking. The cookbook radiates with happy, healthy, and vibrant dishes that are a clear indication of her love of life and fabulous, healthful food. This is the cookbook for anyone looking to get on a path to wellness without sacrificing flavor and fun!”

—**Carolyn Scott-Hamilton**, holistic nutritionist, plant-based chef, author of *The Healthy Voyager’s Global Kitchen Cookbook*, speaker and creator/host of The Healthy Voyager shows, site, and bra



# ULTIMATE COOKBOOK

125+ Plant-Based Vegan Recipes for a Fit, Happy, Healthy You

MELISSA COSTELLO  
founder, KarmaChow.com



Health Communications, Inc.  
Deerfield Beach, Florida

[www.hcibooks.com](http://www.hcibooks.com)

ISBN-13: 978-0-7573-1633-3 (paperback)

ISBN-10: 0-7573-1633-6 (paperback)

ISBN-13: 978-0-7573-1634-0 (e-book)

ISBN-10: 0-7573-1634-4 (e-book)

©2012 Melissa Costello

All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the written permission of the publisher.

HCI, its logos, and marks are trademarks of Health Communications, Inc.

Publisher:

Health Communications, Inc.

3201 S.W. 15th Street

Deerfield Beach, FL 33442-8190

*Photography by Kelsey Skiver © kelseymariephoto.com*

*Cover design by Larissa Hise Heno*

*Interior design and formatting by Lawna Patterson Oldfield*

# Contents

---

[Foreword](#) by Tony Horton, Creator of P90X®

[Introduction](#): The Journey to Plant-Based Eating, Optimal Health, and Vivacious Vitality • *My Journey to Plant-Based Eating* • *My Food Philosophy* • *The Great Food Disconnect* • *Kitchen & Pantry Essentials* • *Healthy Pantry Must-Haves* • *Beans: Buying in Bulk or in a Can?* • *Spices & Herbs* • *Unusual yet Useful Staples* • *What About Baking?* • *Find Your Fun in the Kitchen*

## **[Chapter 1: Plant-Based Breakfasts and Beverages](#)**

[Quinoa Protein Brekkie Bowl](#)

[Apricot Tea Muffins](#)

[Banana Chocolate Chip Minis](#)

[Veggie Breakfast Scramble](#)

[Karmic Cherry Almond Granola](#)

[Tempeh Sausage Patties](#)

[Buckwheat Corn Cakes with Blueberry Drizzle](#) • *Blueberry Drizzle*

[Rise and Shine Granola Parfaits](#)

[Cold Cinnamon Oaty Cereal](#)

[Cashew Milk](#)

[Banana Chia Pancakes with Coconut Crème Sauce](#) • *Coconut Crème Sauce*

[Da Bomb Fruity Smoothie](#)

[Healer Ginger Tea](#)

[Minty Hot Chocolate](#)

[Cherry Chocolate Smoothie](#)

[Green Heaven Smoothie](#)

[Divine Coconutty Chai \(Caffeine Free\)](#)

[Cherry Pecan Quinoa Muffins](#)

[Pumpkin Pie Waffles](#)

[Gluten-Free Zucchini Bread](#)

## **[Chapter 2: Nosh, Nibble, and Dip Away](#)**

## Thai-Style Tempeh Lettuce Wraps

---

Stuffed Mushroom Poppers

Veggie Seed Roll-Ups

Kickin' Edamame Dip

Garnet Hummus

Green Earth Dip

Heart-Full Bruschetta

Artichoke and White Bean Dip with Rosemary

Arriba Black Bean Dip

Sunflower Seed "Pâté"

Spicy Olive Tapenade

Cheezy Popcorn

Creamy Spinach Artichoke Dip

Roasted and Spiced Mixed Nuts

Peanut Sauce

Chipotle Cashew Cheeze Sauce

Sweet and Savory Kale "Chips"

Charlie's Tomato Sauce Marinara

Savory Golden Mushroom Gravy

Chile Ranchero Sauce

Dreamy Avocado "Mayo"

## **Chapter 3: Hearty One-Pot Soups and Stews**

Lentil Soup

Indian-Spiced Coconut Yam Soup

"Feeling Tropical" Black Bean Soup

Kitchen Sink Veggie Soup

Holy Moly Green Gazpacho

Chowdery Corn Soup

Golden Split Pea Soup

[Cream of Celery Soup](#)

---

[Dreamy Roasted Butternut Squash Soup](#)

[Curried Veggie “Stoup”](#)

[Kinda Like Mom’s Beefy Stew](#)

[Garlicky White Bean and Kale Soup](#)

[Dill-icious Roasted Carrot Cauliflower Soup](#)

[Smoky Tempeh Chili](#)

## **Chapter 4: Succulent Salads and Delicious Dressings**

[Brussels Sprouts Salad](#) • *Lemon Vinaigrette*

[Raw Kale Salad with Creamy Chipotle Dressing](#) • *Creamy Chipotle Dressing*

[Quinoa Tabbouleh](#)

[Wild Rice Salad with Balsamic Maple Dressing](#) • *Balsamic Maple Dressing*

[Dilled Potato Salad](#)

[Herb-Infused Chickpea Salad](#) • *Herbed Lemon Dressing*

[Quinoa and Strawberry Salad with Lime Vinaigrette](#) • *Lime Vinaigrette*

[Raw Thai Slaw](#) • *Thai Dressing*

[Kale Slaw with Creamy Pumpkin Seed Dressing](#) • *Creamy Pumpkin Seed Dressing*

[Spinach Salad with “Bacon” and Creamy Tahini Dressing](#) • *Creamy Tahini Dressing*

[White Bean Zucchini Salad](#)

[Mixed Baby Greens with Walnut, Pear, and Pomegranate Mint Dressing](#) • *Pomegranate Mint Dressing*

[Vegan Caesar Salad](#) • *Caesar Dressing* • *Vegan Parmesan*

## **Chapter 5: Main Dish Favorites: Veganized**

[Pasta and “Meat”balls](#)

[Korean-Style Tempeh Tacos with Coleslaw](#) • *Coleslaw* • *Dijon Dressing*

[Soba Noodle Stir-Fry in Creamy Cashew Sauce](#) • *Cashew Sauce*

[Un-Shepherd’s Pie](#) • *Mashed Topping* • *Tempeh Veggie Filling*

[Pad Thai in Peanut Coconut Sauce](#) • *Peanut Coconut Sauce*

[Greek Tomato Burgers](#)

[Mac and Ch-ch-cheeeze](#)



[Chickpea Fillets](#) • *Lemon Dill Aioli Dipping Sauce*

---

[Veggie Loaf with Tomato Glaze](#)

[Baja-Style Fajitas](#)

[Baked Ziti with Spinach](#) • *Cashew Ricotta Cheeze*

[Suprem-oh Burrito](#)

[Chickpea “Tuna” Salad](#)

[Curried Tempeh Salad](#)

[Fresh Pesto, Tomato, and Zucchini Pasta](#) • *Cilantro Pesto*

[Quinoa and Currant Stuffed Bell Peppers](#)

[Karma Burgers with Chipotle Mayo](#) • *Chipotle Mayo*

[Cha-Cha Enchiladarole](#)

## **Chapter 6: Simply Sublime Sides**

[Wild Mushroom Quinoa Pilaf](#)

[Cranberry Balsamic Green Beans](#)

[Norwegian Sweet and Sour Cabbage](#)

[Apple Cherry Chutney](#)

[Soba Noodle and Pea Pesto](#)

[Maple Miso Brussels Sprouts](#)

[Chili Sweet Potato Batons](#)

[Spaghetti Squash Italiano](#)

[Creamy Tahini Kale](#) • *Tahini Sauce*

[Mashed Coconut Yams with Cardamom](#)

[Blissed-Out Herb-Roasted Taters](#)

[Cilantro Cauliflower Smash](#)

[Hurried Curried Greens](#)

[Spicy Garlic Spinach](#)

[Cumin Cauliflower Roast](#)

## **Chapter 7: Ooey, Goopy, and Delightfully Decadent Desserts**

[Black Bean Brownie Bites](#)

[Choco Chocolate Chip Avo Pudding](#)

---

[Euphoria Nuggets](#)

[Strawberry Crème Mousse with Pistachio Topping](#) • *Pistachio Topping*

[Almond Berry Crème Parfaits](#) • *Raw Almond Frangipane Crème* • *Raspberry Sauce*

[Decadent Banana Carob Bread Pudding](#) • *Cashew/Almond Milk*

[Coconut Anise Almond Cookies](#) • *Chocolate Topping*

[Apple/Pear Crisp](#) • *Crumb Topping*

[Cardamom-Scented Chocolate Chippers](#)

[Divine Chocolate Truffles](#)

[Peanut Butter Cookies](#)

[Chocolaty Rice Krispy Thingies](#)

[Luscious Limey “Cheese”cake](#) • *Crust* • *Filling*

[Lavender Coconut Ice Cream](#)

[Coconut Whipped Cream](#)

[Vanilla Scented Balsamic Figs](#)

[Baked Coconut Ginger Millet Pudding](#)

[Baking Substitutions 101](#)

[Resources and Recommendations](#)

[Books and Films](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[About the Author](#)

# Foreword

---

*Ahhhh, food! I love it.* It makes me happy! But I'm not just an enthusiastic eater; I'm also a smart eater. And if you're reading this now, so are you (or you're about to be).

I'm a fitness guy, and fitness is my life. If anyone understands the importance of eating a healthy diet, it should be me. And what I know for sure is that healthy eating and exercise go hand in hand. You can't be successful with just one or the other. You need both. Exercise is fitness, and food is health. And we all want to be fit and healthy, right? I'm going to say that again: *Exercise is fitness and food is health.* I want you to repeat that over and over until it sticks in your head like a Maroon song that won't go away. It sounds simple, but too many people forget it.

I was always a skinny kid, and like the rest of the country, I lived on the two staples of the American diet. Not meat and potatoes. I'm talking about the 1960s and '70s (and beyond) staples of the American diet: fast food and processed food. Nasty! But once I started to work out and gain muscle, I began to realize the importance of healthy eating. Unfortunately, I never liked—or learned how—to cook. Before I met Melissa Costello, I was eating Amy's frozen dinners or takeout from the closest local "healthy" restaurant—certainly not my best option, but I did it out of convenience. What can I say? I was a bachelor (not "*The Bachelor*," a bachelor). I knew that I needed to change my diet and eat a wider variety of fresh food if I wanted to be the healthiest I could possibly be. I had tried other chefs here and there, but their "healthy" food lacked texture and taste. I was determined to find someone who could make me delicious, scrumptious, healthy food.

I met Melissa, owner of Karma Chow, about four years ago through a mutual friend. This friend kept insisting that I hire Melissa to cook for me. I hemmed and hawed because at the time, I thought hiring a full-time chef was a bit . . . well . . . *decadent*.

One day I was planning a small, intimate dinner party and needed a chef, so I called Melissa and she agreed to cook. Once I tasted her food, I was hooked. The flavors were so rich, yet it was all healthy—nothing processed, no sugar, no gluten, and no tofu. I was immediately blown away and had to hire her on the spot to cook for me every week. I couldn't believe that food could taste so good and actually be good for me, too.

You may know this already, but it turns out that food tastes so much better when it doesn't come from a box, a bag, or the freezer section. Who knew? Melissa's food is so satisfying that I never feel as if I am missing anything from my diet. I exercise hard and I need all that nutrition to recover and build and restore my (rippling) muscles. Yes, I take supplements to help with that, but I know that eating healthy, whole foods is the foundation that provides me with the nutrients and strength I need to stay fit.

Eating a vegetarian/vegan diet for seventeen years provided me with strength and energy, and the clear, focused mind that I needed for a six-day-a-week workout plan. I later chose to shift my diet to a mostly plant-based diet, adding in some wild fish, free-range chicken, and eggs every once in a while due to my wacky travel schedule and not always being able to find high-quality vegan food on the road. I spend hours in the gym every week, and I know that without all the fresh, nutritious food that Melissa makes, I would not be able to exercise as hard as I do and build the muscle I need.

Her recipes are simple, yet *delicioso*! She has so many classic dishes that resemble the “real” (i.e., fattier and higher-calorie) versions that I don’t even miss my grandmother’s meatballs. (Noni, you’re reading this from heaven, I didn’t mean it. I love your meatballs. Please go back to playing bingo and we’ll talk about it when I see you in fifty years.)

Melissa’s food is clean and provides me with the fuel I need to sleep well, heal my body, and perform better every day. She has a true gift in the kitchen and can turn any dish into a delectable vegan creation. Every time she cooks for me, the smells that waft from my kitchen are out of this world. I know it’s no coincidence that friends start popping by the house just as Melissa’s food is ready. And, amazingly, they never seem to have dinner plans. Problem is, I have a hard time sharing my food, as I want it all to myself. Is that selfish? Turns out that saying, “Go home and eat your own food” tends to drive friends away. So now I have to choose which is more important to me: Ed’s Nicoletti or Enchilada Casserole? Scott Fifer or Strawberry Crème Mousse? Pam the Blam or Pam’s Thai? It’s a tough decision, I tell ya, but if you see Scott, Ed, or Pam, tell them I think of them fondly and to come find me at the bingo table with Noni in fifty years. Maybe sixty years if I keep eating Melissa’s healthy food . . .

—Tony Horton

*Creator of P90X®, Power 90®, and Power Half Hour®*

# Introduction

---

## *The Journey to Plant-Based Eating, Optimal Health, and Vivacious Vitality*

*I am quite certain* that if you have picked up this book, you are definitely interested in learning more about eating healthy. If so, I want to congratulate and commend you for your commitment to yourself, your family, and anyone else in your life that will benefit from this positive choice.

As a nutritionist, I have been fortunate to work with hundreds of clients as they embrace a plant-based lifestyle, whether they are doing so to lose weight, boost their performance, gain more energy, or be kinder to the planet. In revamping the pantries of people from all walks of life—from semipro athletes and high-powered executives to budding entrepreneurs and busy moms—there is one commonality: for many of them, the idea of eating healthy can feel overwhelming without having the proper tools or education. Most of my clients have many distractions: extraneously long to-do lists, unanswered texts and e-mails, and many other things that make healthy food preparation a challenge. Many of them feel so inconvenienced by preparing meals that they hit the closest drive-through, and they subsist on the latest diet of packaged foods because they can add up points and it's “easy.”

This is why I created the recipes in this book to be simple and delicious. I want to show you that eating healthy doesn't have to be daunting or time-consuming. Almost all of the ingredients can be found at well-stocked supermarkets, your local health food store, Trader Joe's or Whole Foods, farmers' markets, or even online (see the Resources section). There are ways to eat healthy no matter what your budget or time constraints—and I will show you how!

Although this cookbook does not contain any meat, cheese, dairy, or animal products, I did not create it to turn you into a vegan or vegetarian. I created it to teach you that eating a whole-food, plant-based diet can help you feel healthier, find your natural body weight (if you need to), sleep better, live longer, and give you more energy, just to name a few of the benefits. Most of the recipes in this book are gluten free, refined sugar free, and contain minimally processed foods. I created it this way so that you can see for yourself how easy it is to create delicious dishes without using preseasoned, packaged, and processed foods.

To me, this way of life is about keeping it simple. There are many cookbooks out there that are in line with my philosophy of eating and living, yet the recipes tend to be overly complicated. My intention when I wrote this book was to “keep it simple” and “make it tasty.” Some of the recipes contained here will take more time than others, but I think you will find that most of them are fair

simple to make and very easy to integrate into your busy lifestyle.

---

You will learn about foods you've never heard of and foods that you may have seen in the grocery store but didn't have a clue how to use or how to make them taste good! (Can you say "kale"?) You will start to feel more alive, your vitality will increase, and your body will begin to balance itself out and function properly in the form of effortless digestion, clearer skin, and deeper sleep. It's like resetting your whole system. And if you have high cholesterol, inflammation, and aches and pains, you can say good-bye to those as well!

I also want to remind you that eating clean and living a life of optimal health is about taking the time to plan your food, whether you have a family or are single. Anytime we learn something new, there is always a learning curve, so remember that *planning* and *practice* are the two important keys here. This is not about eating perfectly; this is about taking small steps each and every day for positive, long-lasting change that will result in a life of health, energy, vitality, and wellness! I am excited to begin this journey with you, because I have been there firsthand and I know the difference it has made in my life!

## My Journey to Plant-Based Eating

As a kid growing up, I ate nothing but processed foods that were high in sugar, fat, and salt. The cabinets in my childhood home were stocked with the latest, most colorful, overly sweet, crunchy boxed concoction or salty, greasy, oily chip we could find. My dad worked for a vending machine company, so we had candy at our fingertips 24/7. Pop-Tarts for breakfast, chips and hot dogs for lunch, and dinner was usually cooked by Mom, Dad, or Grandmom, which was my only saving grace, really. In between meals, I ate sugar, sugar, sugar. I would eat it first thing in the morning, in between meals, and before bed. I was addicted to sugar (although I didn't know it at the time).

Eating processed food was all my family knew. With the best of intentions my mom packed my lunch—usually some processed lunch meat on a tasty, white Italian roll made fresh at the local bakery accompanied by some form of crunchy, greasy goodness in a bag.

This was how I was raised. It's interesting to note: I was always *sick*. You name it, I had it: strep throat, pink eye (multiple times per year), asthma, migraines, and digestive issues. I had the whole gamut. Thankfully, I was extremely active as a kid. I played every sport you can imagine, both recreationally and in school: soccer, softball, field hockey, baseball with the boys (yes, I know), and basketball.

As I moved into my late teens and early twenties, I was sick of feeling sick all the time, but no one could connect the dots to the cause of my ailments. Like many young women, I started to struggle with body-image issues as well. I knew I needed to get healthy, but I also had an ulterior motive

having the perfect body. I jumped on the “fat-free” bandwagon, thinking I was doing well for my body. If the box said “lite” or “fat-free” on it, I bought it. This meant that I was ingesting even more processed foods, and little did I know, they were loaded with sugar and chemicals. In the pursuit of being thin, I’d skip meals and eat fat-free foods only. I spent hours at the gym vying to whittle down and sculpt the perfect body that all the *Sports Illustrated* girls had!

This was my struggle for many years, and during this process I realized that I still didn’t feel well or healthy, even though I thought I was eating better. I began to research food and its effects on the body. I learned about processed foods and how harmful they are to the system. So I began to cut back on them, but not in a healthy way: I became a food Nazi! Everything I put into my mouth was scrutinized by my skinny-girl voice inside. At this point, I had a full-blown eating disorder, and every second was obsessed with what I put—or didn’t put—into my mouth. I knew this way of living was not healthy for me, yet I didn’t know how to stop it.

As I neared my thirties, I knew that I needed to make some big changes in my relationship to food. I knew that if I kept going the way I was, I would end up really sick and this would be a lifelong battle. I got tired of the voices in my head telling me I was fat and out of control. I wanted to relate to food differently and in a healthy way. I wanted to feel good from the inside out and praise my body for all that it provided for me. It wasn’t just about looking good anymore, even though that was an added bonus that came from eating healthy; it was about feeling really well, being healthy, and living a long, vital, and energetic life.

I have to say that my knowledge about eating healthily did not always come easy, and yet it was a natural progression, because as I ate healthier foods, I started to feel better. I began studying nutrition which led me to teaching myself healthier ways to cook everyday foods. I knew that putting fresh whole foods into my body would help me with my eating disorder because I would find my natural body weight and stop obsessing over being stick thin. My goal would be to be fit and vibrant for my lifetime. I cut back on white sugar, gluten, and other processed foods. As I learned more and more and felt better and better, I gradually cut out other foods, including chicken and eggs, because I realized that they didn’t feel good in my body anymore. It took a lot of experimenting to find what worked for me. I am not advocating that you cut out all the foods that I did; I am suggesting that you really think about what you put into your body and how it serves you.

Do you make healthy choices for yourself on a daily basis? Do you really know what your body wants and needs? Do you listen to your body and give it what it’s asking for? Eating healthily and being healthy is a lifestyle. It is a *choice* and it takes commitment: a choice to take care of yourself and to feel good; a choice to eat whole, unprocessed, plant-based foods that give you fuel instead of sapping the life out of you; a choice to educate your kids and learn as much as you can so that you

probability of living a long, vital, and energized life is higher.

---

The old adage is true: “You are what you eat.” When we eat crappy food, we feel crappy. When we eat good, healthy food, we feel good. My client and P90X™ creator Tony Horton says that you can control two things in your life: what you put into your mouth and how you move your body. I agree. With this book, I am going to help you with the first one by introducing you to some amazing, delicious yet healthy recipes that will make your taste buds come alive and dispel any misbeliefs about vegan foods being bland or boring.

## My Food Philosophy

I’m sure that many of you can relate to the issues I have talked about regarding food and eating. That is why this book is so important in assisting you with making better choices and changing your relationship to food. It will help you transition into a healthier lifestyle that will provide vitality, energy, natural body weight, and so much more.

### ***Dieting . . . Does It Really Work?***

How many of you have gone on a diet just to realize it doesn’t work? You lose a bunch of weight for a short period of time, only to gain back twice as much within a year or two. There is a high probability that you don’t feel well in the process, and usually after a short period, you revert to unhealthy habits that don’t serve you. There are more diets out there than I care to name, yet *not one of them* educates us on *how* to eat healthily. That’s why I strongly believe that *dieting does not work*. I have coached dozens of clients who have participated in almost every diet known to man at some point in their life, only to come to me defeated and hoping that I can help them change their lifestyle through teaching them how to eat clean and healthily. They are finally ready to *learn* and to *make long-term changes* for optimum vitality, energy, and health.

### ***Stop Counting and Start Listening***

Counting calories is one way that people think they can get healthy, but in fact, the act of counting calories can result in deprivation, overeating, and a misperception about how food metabolizes in our bodies. Yes, calorie counting can be good for people who need to lose a significant amount of weight. They need calorie deprivation *and* exercise to trick their body in the interim, but that effect doesn’t last long. In my opinion, calorie counting turns our food into an object versus what it really is—nourishment, fuel, and life. It disconnects us from our food and the benefit that healthy, whole foods have in our lives. Calorie counting can cause the body to go into starvation mode, which results in slower metabolism and weight holding. Your body will not release weight because it is holding on to every ounce it has as a survival tactic.

When I work with my cleanse clients, many of whom are fitness fanatics, I challenge them to stop



counting calories for thirty days. This is very uncomfortable to some because they feel that the act of counting calories is what has kept them lean, healthy, and in control, and to some extent it probably has. Yet what they discover is that when they let go of counting every morsel they put into their mouth, there is a newfound freedom with food, and they actually find their own natural balance by listening to what their body wants instead of what they think it should have. They also find that eating whole foods fills them up for longer periods of time, and they feel more satisfied, have more energy, and don't need to eat as much because the food is so high in nutrients! WOW . . . all this from eating whole foods! So if you are an obsessive calorie counter, I challenge you to give it up and start listening to your body and what it really needs and wants!

## The Great Food Disconnect

In today's society, most of us get from day to day by rushing from place to place. We eat on the run in our cars, and standing over the kitchen sink (guilty!). We've become disconnected from our food. Many of us don't sit down as families any longer, let alone cook our meals at home, and when we do sit down with our families, there is always a TV running or some other electronic device distracting us from quality time. I've seen so many beautifully crafted kitchens in Los Angeles that go unused day in and day out because people are just simply too busy to cook and sit down with their families for a nourishing meal. When did everything else in our lives become more important than sitting with our families and eating a home-cooked, delicious, whole-food meal? This is an important basis for our children and teaches them that eating nutritious food is the key to a long, happy, and healthy life. The disconnection from our food has led us to obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and many other illnesses that are so prevalent in society today.

If you want to be truly healthy and full of vitality and energy, you must go back to your roots and adopt the attitude of generations that have gone before us. Our grandparents and great-grandparents ate from the land. They grew their own food or got it from the local farm stand on the corner. They ate whole, unprocessed foods that were comprised of one ingredient. There were no boxes, bags, artificial flavorings or colorings to give our food the look and smell of perfection so that we'd buy it. Did you know that there is a certain brand of popular corn chips out there that has *forty-two* ingredients in it? And I can't even pronounce most of the ingredients. When did chemicals and artificial colorings become the norm? When did we let go of caring enough about our bodies and our health to really monitor what we put into them? When did we forget that food is our friend and that it keeps us alive?

Now is the time when we must make different choices regarding what we put into our bodies. We must reconnect to our food and honor it as the source that keeps us alive, along with water, air, and

sleep. It's time to slow down, sit down, and take time out of our busy lives to nourish ourselves so that we can get through each day with energy, vigor, and vitality. It's time to make healthy eating a priority in our lives so that we can be of service to ourselves and others. So to that end, I invite you to really investigate your relationship to food, how you have been feeding yourself and your family, and how you feel when you don't put good stuff into your body. It's time to commit to *you* and to take positive steps to change your health and your life!

## Kitchen & Pantry Essentials

Having the basic essentials on hand in your kitchen is key to enjoying the process of cooking and eating. It is also helpful to purge your kitchen of any appliances that may be broken or that you do not use anymore. Below is a list of my favorite kitchen essentials/tools that will help. You don't need to purchase them all at once; you can buy them in stages. The list starts with the most important tools first.

### ***Basic Kitchen Tools***

**Knives:** If you want your cooking experience to be pleasant and easy, it's important to invest in one or two really good knives. Not only does it make it more pleasurable to chop and dice, it's important for your safety as well. Dull knives cause slippage and dreaded finger cuts. I love to have an eight-inch chef's knife (also known as a French knife or cook's knife) or seven-inch Santoku knife on hand, as well as a really good paring knife for peeling fruits and veggies and cutting small items. A serrated knife is also great to have for cutting breads and softer foods like fruits, tomatoes, avocados, and so on. It's also smart to invest in a good knife sharpener as well. I like to use a whetstone for the best sharpening. The honer that comes in most cutlery sets is not really a sharpener, but is used to keep small nicks off your knife. You should hone your knives every time you use them to keep them in tip-top shape. If you invest in a high quality knife, be sure you take good care of it by cleaning it immediately and storing it properly with a knife cover or in a slotted kitchen drawer. I recommend buying knives separately versus in a set, as most of the knives in a set are not always utilized and could be a waste of money. My favorite brands of knives are Henckels, Wusthof, Miyabi (for Santoku knives), and Shun Ken as they are made from high-quality steel and come with a warranty (see the Resources section on where to buy). I also love a good ceramic paring knife, which you can find easily at Sur La Table or online (Kyocera or Kuhn Rikon are both high-quality brands).

**Cutting Boards:** Cutting boards are another must-have for a pleasant cooking experience. Bamboo cutting boards are the best, as they do not absorb bacteria like plastic cutting boards do. It's good to have various sizes so you don't have to lug out a large cutting board if you only need to chop one sprig of cilantro.

**Cookware & Bakeware:** It's really important to invest in quality cookware when you can. You are on the road to healthy eating, and having proper cookware will support that. Nonstick and aluminum cookware can be toxic due to the release of harmful chemicals when heated, so it's best to get rid of these types of cookware if you have them. Stainless steel is the best, and although it's a bit expensive, it will literally last you a lifetime. All-Clad is my favorite brand, and they guarantee their products for life! Cast-iron pans are really good as well, and there are many brands available. Le Creuset makes great cast-iron pots and pans that are beautiful and will last a lifetime. Last, if you are really attached to your nonstick cookware, there are a few companies that make "green" nonstick cookware that I personally find very useful for browning or cooking certain foods, such as pancakes or veggie burgers, without the worry of them sticking.

Here are some basics to get you started: soup or stock pot, 3-quart saucepan with a lid, 12-inch skillet with a lid, 10-inch sauté pan, and a 10-inch nonstick "green" skillet. It's also good to have a variety of glass or ceramic casserole dishes, especially since there are a lot of casserole-type recipes in this book.

It's also nice to have various types of bakeware in your kitchen so that you can whip up healthy desserts. Here are a few ideal pieces: a loaf pan, a muffin pan, a mini muffin pan (for Banana Chocolate Chip Minis or Black Bean Brownie Bites; see recipes on pages 29 and 195), a springform pan (for Luscious Limey "Cheese" cake; see recipe on page 217), an 8 × 8-inch cake pan, and baking sheets for cookies.

**Peelers, Strainers & Graters:** All of these items are extremely helpful in a kitchen, and you might use them on a daily basis or every time you cook. Having a quality peeler is really important to efficiently peel fresh veggies. Fine-sieve strainers and colanders are lifesavers in my kitchen. It's good to have at least one large colander for draining pasta, potatoes, and larger items. Fine-sieve strainers are essential for rinsing grains and beans. I use a variety of sizes, even a tiny one for straining lemon seeds or tea leaves from my homemade chai (see recipe for Divine Coconutty Chai on page 51). Graters or zesters are also helpful tools in your plant-based kitchen. Microplanes are my favorite as they are simple to use and will zest or grate anything from garlic to nutmeg! A citrus reamer is also great to have for "squeezing" citrus fruits.

**Spatulas, Wooden Spoons & Other Helpful Utensils:** It's wise to have a variety of wooden spoons for mixing and stirring, silicone spatulas that will withstand high heat, tongs for easy grasping, and a flat spatula for turning meatless patties and pancakes.

**Mixing Bowls & Prep Bowls:** There is nothing more satisfying to me than cutting up a bunch of colorful, fresh veggies for a soup, stir-fry, or stew and putting them in glass prep bowls. I then line them up as I'm ready to start cooking, and it's so easy to grab each ingredient as I need it, and it

colorful, too! Buying a variety of prep bowls will be really helpful to you, especially if you are new to the kitchen. I also make sure I have a variety of glass or stainless mixing bowls for baking, tossing salads, or soaking grains and beans.

**Salad Spinner:** This is a must-have in my kitchen since I eat so many greens. I highly recommend that you buy one, too. They are not expensive, and they are so great for soaking and cleaning your greens before storing them.

**Coffee Grinder:** Not just for coffee anymore, this can grind spices, nuts, and seeds in a snap. You can find one for about \$10 at a drugstore.

**Mortar & Pestle:** These are helpful for hand-grinding seeds, herbs, and spices, not to mention how cute they look on the kitchen counter. You can find them cheap at any department store or TJ Maxx type discount store.

### ***Other Helpful Items***

**Food Processor:** This is a really smart investment for a plant-based kitchen, but if you are not ready to purchase a large food processor, go with a mini version or a combination processor/blender. A food processor is great for making dips, spreads, and sauces, so it really is a key kitchen tool. Cuisinart is my favorite brand; it comes with a good warranty and a variety of cup sizes.

**Blender or Vitamix:** Having a good blender in your kitchen is essential. In my opinion, Vitamix is the best and a great investment. You can make soups, nut butters, smoothies, and so much more in a Vitamix. Yes, they are expensive, but they are worth the price when you are ready, and they will last for many years to come!

**Magic Bullet:** This little appliance chops, blends, and mixes. It also comes with a blending attachment, so is very convenient for making smoothies.

**Rice Cooker:** This will definitely simplify the process of cooking your grains. Just measure out the grains and water, pour in the cooker, cover with a lid, turn it on, and walk away. You will have delicious cooked grains in about twenty minutes.

**Pressure Cooker:** This is useful for cooking soups and beans in a flash. I must confess: I've lived without one of these most of my cooking life, but some chefs swear by them. They will cut your bean cooking time in half and help your grains stay moist.

**Glass Jars:** These are handy to use to store grains, nuts, seeds, and legumes, and to keep your kitchen organized. I love seeing lines of jars in my kitchen full of colorful beans, grains, and nuts.

### **Healthy Pantry Must-Haves**

I've included a basic "shopping list" of my favorite grains, legumes, nuts, spices, herbs, condiments, and oils to have on hand. You can always add to this list, but these are the basic staples. I know you

may not be familiar with some of the foods listed below, but it's good to step outside of what you know and try new things. I have never had a client of mine dislike any of my suggestions (okay, maybe once or twice). Most of these items can be found at any natural food store. You can also order things like oils, spices, dried beans, and other items online (see the Resources section). I will also talk more about some of these foods as they are listed in certain recipes.

Grains	Legumes	Nuts/Seeds	Vinegars	Oils
Barley	Adzuki beans	Raw almonds	Apple cider	Almond oil
Brown basmati and jasmine rice	Black beans	Cashews	Balsamic	Avocado oil
Buckwheat	Cannellini beans	Flax, chia, and hemp seeds	Brown rice	Coconut oil
Millet	Great Northern White Beans	Pecans	Champagne	Flaxseed oil
Quinoa	Chickpeas	Pine nuts	Mirin	Grapeseed oil
Short-grain brown rice	Kidney beans	Pumpkin seeds	Raspberry	Extra virgin olive oil
Steel-cut or rolled oats	Lentils: green and red	Sesame seeds	Red wine	Sesame oil
Wheat berries	Split peas	Sunflower seeds	Sherry	Walnut oil
Wild rice		Walnuts	Umeboshi	

### Beans: Buying in Bulk or in a Can?

Buying beans in bulk and cooking them at home will provide these positive results versus buying canned beans:

1. Saves money
  2. Less gas and bloating
  3. More nutritional value
  4. Saves time by bulk cooking and freezing
  5. Less sodium
- 

### ***How Do I Cook My Beans?***

Using a pressure cooker is best, but a regular old pot will do, too. Soak the beans overnight in a pot of cold water with a 1-inch piece of kombu. Kombu is a sea vegetable, also known as kelp, and is found in the international aisle of most markets (see Resources section). Soaking the beans with kombu helps them to become more easily digestible and cuts back on the gas-inducing properties. If you cannot find kombu, just go without; you will still get nearly the same benefit from soaking. In the morning, drain the water and rinse the beans really well. Put back into the pot with the kombu and fill with cold water about 2 inches above the beans. Turn heat to high and bring to a boil. Scrape the foam off the top, and then lower the heat to simmer. Cook for 1 to 3 hours depending on the type of bean. The bigger the bean, the longer it takes to cook. (Also, the bigger the bean, the more gas they provide.) Once tender, drain and store in the refrigerator or freeze for later use; you can keep them frozen for one month in a tightly sealed container or freezer bag.

### **Spices & Herbs**

These are some of my favorite spices and herbs:

#### ***Spices***

Black peppercorns

Cardamom

Chili powder

Chipotle chili powder

Cinnamon

Cloves

Coriander

Cumin

Curry powder

Fennel seeds

Garam masala

Ginger

Mustard seeds

Nutmeg

---

Paprika

Sea salt

Tarragon

***Herbs (You can purchase any of these either dried or fresh.)***

Basil

Bay leaves

Dill

Marjoram

Mint

Oregano

Parsley

Rosemary

Thyme



## Unusual yet Useful Staples

**Agave or fruit-juice sweetened ketchup:** Most brands of ketchup are loaded with sugar, but agave or fruit-juice sweetened ketchup is a really tasty alternative that won't give you the blood sugar spike.

**Bragg's Aminos:** This soy sauce alternative is good to use in place of the high-sodium condiment. It's loaded with amino acids and protein.

**Dairy-free milks:** almond, cashew, coconut, hemp, multigrain, oat, and rice. Nut milks are easy to make on your own, but if you don't have the time, you can easily find them in your grocery store. These are all great alternatives to dairy, but be sure to buy unsweetened, as they can contain a lot of unnecessary sugar.



---

sample content of The Karma Chow Ultimate Cookbook: 125+ Delectable Plant-Based Vegan Recipes for a Fit, Happy, Healthy You

- [The Pritzker Architecture Prize: The First Twenty Years pdf, azw \(kindle\), epub](#)
- [read \*The Transition of H. P. Lovecraft: The Road to Madness\* pdf, azw \(kindle\), epub](#)
- [read online \*Lessons from the Greatest Stock Traders of All Time\* pdf, azw \(kindle\), epub](#)
- [Anna Getty's \*Easy Green Organic\* pdf](#)
- [400 recettes express en moins de 10 min chrono pdf, azw \(kindle\)](#)
- [download online \*Krav Maga for Women: Your Ultimate Program for Self Defense\*](#)
  
- <http://flog.co.id/library/The-Pritzker-Architecture-Prize--The-First-Twenty-Years.pdf>
- <http://okawa-ladies.com/lib/Dirty-Combat--Secret-Wars-and-Serious-Misadventures.pdf>
- <http://fortune-touko.com/library/The-Ayn-Rand-Lexicon--Objectivism-from-A-to-Z--Ayn-Rand-Library-.pdf>
- <http://dpsam.org.my/freebooks/Anna-Getty-s-Easy-Green-Organic.pdf>
- <http://pittiger.com/lib/400-recettes-express-en-moins-de-10-min-chrono.pdf>
- <http://musor.ruspb.info/?library/Invisible.pdf>