

Restocking the Pantry

Easy-to-Make Condiments
to Save Money and Nourish Your Family

Kresha Faber



It's pretty darn difficult these days to find a commercial condiment that doesn't have processed ingredients of some kind, so I set out on a mission to reverse-engineer as many items in my cupboards and refrigerator as I could in order to replace them with wholesome versions I could easily make at home.

Little did I know that my reverse-engineering adventure would take me far beyond the basic ketchups, mustards, and egg roll dipping sauces I had envisioned and would lead me on a year-long culinary adventure through cultural traditions around the globe, increase my love of (and repertoire of) cultured and fermented foods, and convince me once again that simple really truly is best. The collection of recipes you have in front of you now is Part 1 of that adventure - we'll be publishing more at NourishingJoy.com in the upcoming months, so stay tuned.

And **what's with all the fermented foods?** you might ask. Well, squeeze-bottle ketchups and bright yellow mustards might be what we use regularly in North America and other westernized locales, but in many places around the world, hot dogs are served with sauerkraut, tacos are served with curtido, and holiday feasts would be considered remiss without certain fermented foods, such as the Polish Fermented Beets and Horseradish on page 55. Fermented foods are also known for their excellent health benefits, such as improved digestion and increased energy, and thus I've included ways to ferment *some* of the recipes here. Ketchup, for example, is easy to make and can be used right away or it can be

fermented to increase its nutritional value and extend its shelf life. Fermented foods are not for everyone, however, so I've marked the recipes that are *only* lacto-fermented right in the titles.

When it comes right down to it, though, I'm just passionate about fresh foods that taste good. I don't know about you, but when I feed my children good food, it's not just in order to avoid the "bad" stuff, but it's to be proactively nourishing them so that they're filled with the "good" stuff. I've worked and reworked these recipes (and here's my huge shout out to the 114 recipe testers who gave me amazingly helpful feedback through the process!) to make them as close to the originals as possible. Store-bought yellow mustard has that certain - *je ne c'est quoi* - perky tangy zing, and I wanted to make sure these homemade versions captured as much of those unmistakable flavors as possible.

And let me offer one tip for success. There are enough recipes here to replace nearly every condiment on your refrigerator shelves, but choose only 1-2 to make on a regular basis. It can be overwhelming to try to keep up with making everything from scratch all the time, especially at the beginning, so **do however much you're able to do joyfully and be satisfied**. I myself only make a few of these regularly - I love having the collection on hand for when I want to do more, but I have only a couple of favorites that are made every week or two (or less, when life gets extra-busy).

Many blessings to you all as you seek to nourish yourselves and your families in body and in soul!

Kresha

Contents

Easy-Peasy Ketchup	12	Real Ranch Dressing	42
Classic Yellow Mustard.....	13	Caesar Dressing	43
Whole Grain Mustard.....	14	Thousand Island Dressing.....	44
Traditional Honey Mustard.....	15	Green Goddess Dressing.....	45
Bold & Smoky Barbecue Sauce.....	16	Bleu Cheese Dressing	46
Sweet & Tangy Barbecue Sauce.....	17	Asian Sesame Dressing.....	47
Classic Mayonnaise.....	18	Classic Hot Sauce.....	48
Teriyaki Sauce	19	Caribbean Hot Sauce	49
Sour Cream.....	20	Worcestershire Sauce.....	50
Chili Sauce	21	Fish Sauce	51
Sweet Pickle Relish	22	Curtido.....	52
Garlic-Dill Pickle Relish	23	Kimchi.....	53
Guacamole	24	Sauerkraut with Caraway, Juniper, and Dill.....	54
Classic Salsa.....	25	Fermented Beets and Horseradish	55
Roasted Tomato Salsa.....	26	Olive Tapenade	56
Roasted Corn & Black Bean Salsa.....	27	Roasted Pumpkin Seed "Salt".....	57
Rhubarb Salsa.....	28	Kalamata Olive Hummus.....	58
Cranberry & Lime Salsa.....	29	Roasted Red Pepper Hummus.....	59
Asian Dipping Sauce	30	Baba Ghanouj.....	60
Plum Sauce.....	31	Liverwurst Sandwich Spread.....	61
Sweet & Sour Sauce.....	32	Jellied Cranberry Sauce with Rosemary & Honey.....	62
Tzatziki.....	33	Cranberry Sauce	63
Cocktail Sauce	34	Mint Sauce	63
Horseradish Cream.....	35	Salted Maple Whipped Cream.....	64
British A-1 Style Steak Sauce.....	36	Apple Syrup.....	65
Tartar Sauce	37	Orange & Cinnamon Honey Syrup.....	66
Pesto	38	Fig Newton Butter.....	67
Peanut Sauce	39		
Crunchy Garlic-Dill Pickles	40		
Bread & Butter Pickles.....	41		

Easy-Peasy Ketchup

Makes approximately 3 cups

If your kids (or you, for that matter) love the bottled ketchup that comes from the store, then this homemade recipe is for you - it's about as close to the real store-bought thing as you can get. It's best after 2-3 days, but you may certainly serve it immediately if so desired.

I also love this recipe because it's very easy to make with kids - a great way to get them involved in the kitchen!

Method

Place all ingredients in a large saucepan and stir together with a whisk until smooth. Heat over medium heat and bring to a boil, then reduce to medium-low and simmer for 20 minutes, stirring often.

Remove the pan from the heat and let cool. You may serve the ketchup immediately, but the flavor greatly improves after 3-4 days.

To Ferment

Stir together the tomato paste, honey, and molasses (if using) with 1/4 cup sauerkraut brine or fresh whey, then spoon into a mason jar, covering with the additional starter culture to submerge all the ketchup below the brine. Cover loosely and set aside at room temperature for 3-5 days.

After 3-5 days, stir in the onion juice, garlic, apple cider vinegar, and sea salt. Store in the refrigerator for 1-2 months.

1 1/2 cups tomato paste

2/3 cup raw honey

1 teaspoon blackstrap molasses (optional)

1/2 cup water

**1 small onion, juiced OR
1/2 teaspoon onion powder**

1 clove garlic, finely grated

1 cup apple cider vinegar

2 teaspoons sea salt

**1/3 cup sauerkraut brine
OR fresh whey (optional)**

TIME-SAVING TIP:

This ketchup freezes well. Make an extra batch and freeze in small portions, then thaw whenever you need more.

Makes approximately 1/2 cup

Mmmm... the classic yellow mustard that's perfect for slathering on hot dogs, scooping up on freshly baked pretzels, and serving with bratwurst. You'll never know this one didn't come out of a squeeze bottle, except that it's even tastier than its store-bought counterpart.

One of the best parts of this recipe is that its yellow hue comes from a liberal use of ground turmeric. Turmeric has been used in East India and South Asian countries for more than 2500 years to aid digestion and reduce inflammation and it has long been used in Chinese medicine to treat depression. More recently it has also been shown to reduce the risk of Alzheimer's, slow the progression of several cancers, and aid in weight management. Who knew eating mustard was good for your health?!?

Method

Whisk everything except the cornstarch together in a small saucepan until smooth. Place over medium heat and bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 5-10 minutes, stirring often.

About 1 minute before you want to remove the mustard from the heat, stir the cornstarch together with 1 teaspoon of cold water. Then, while whisking, pour the cornstarch into the simmering mustard. Let cook for 1 minute to thicken.

Remove from heat and let stand 1 minute to set. Pour into the serving container to cool.

1/2 cup dry mustard powder

1/2 cup water

1/3 cup white distilled vinegar

**1 teaspoon cornstarch
OR arrowroot powder**

1/2 teaspoon sea salt

1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric

**1/2 clove of garlic,
finely grated**

1 small pinch smoked paprika

Classic Yellow Mustard



Bold & Smoky Barbecue Sauce

Makes approximately 1 1/2 cups

I love bold, smoky barbecue sauces. There's just something finger-lickin' good about the scent of smoke.

In this version, juicing the onion is an essential part of getting a smooth, glossy texture. You can either run the onion through a juicing machine if you have one or blend it in the blender with a bit of water, then squeeze it through a piece of cheesecloth until you have 1/2 cup of onion juice.

Method

1 onion, juiced

1 cup ketchup

2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar

**2 tablespoons
Worcestershire sauce**

2 tablespoons Dijon mustard

1/4 cup blackstrap molasses

**1/4 teaspoon hot sauce
(more to taste)**

1/4 teaspoon black pepper

1 1/2 teaspoons pure liquid smoke

2 tablespoons olive oil or ghee

2 cloves of garlic, minced

1 teaspoon chili powder

1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper

**1/3 cup fresh whey
OR sauerkraut brine
(optional)**

Whisk ketchup, onion juice, and other wet ingredients in a medium bowl, omitting oil and whey. Set aside.

Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add in garlic and spices and cook until fragrant. Whisk in wet ingredient mixture and bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium-low and simmer gently until the mixture thickens, about 20-30 minutes. Cool to room temperature before serving.

To Ferment

To ferment, stir 4 tablespoons of the whey or sauerkraut brine into the cooled barbecue sauce, then spoon the sauce into a mason jar, pour the remaining whey over the top, cover tightly, and set aside at room temperature for 3-5 days. Taste and adjust seasonings if necessary. Store in the refrigerator for several months.

Makes approximately 2 cups

If you like a sweet and tangy barbecue sauce rather than the bold and smoky variety, this one has just the right balance of sweet and tart.

Sweet & Tangy Barbecue Sauce

Method

1 1/2 cups ketchup

1/2 cup apple cider vinegar

3/4 cups water

3 tablespoons maple syrup

**2 tablespoons
Worcestershire sauce**

**1/4 teaspoon ground black
pepper (more to taste)**

1/2 teaspoon sea salt

1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper

dash of hot sauce (optional)

**1/3 cup sauerkraut brine
OR fresh whey
(optional)**

Stir all ingredients together in a large saucepan, then bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until thickened, about 25-30 minutes.

To Ferment

To ferment, combine all ingredients, omitting the vinegar and liquid smoke. Stir in 4 tablespoons of the whey or sauerkraut brine, spoon the sauce into a mason jar, cover loosely with a cloth, and set aside at room temperature for 3-5 days.

After the 3-5 day fermentation, stir in the apple cider vinegar and the liquid smoke, reducing the liquid smoke to 1 teaspoon. Taste and adjust seasonings if necessary. Store in the refrigerator for several months.



Roasted Tomato Salsa

Makes approximately 1 quart

I love the flavor of roasted vegetables, so it's a no-brainer for me to love the roasted flavor in a salsa too. If the smoked paprika doesn't give enough of a smoky flavor for you, add just a few drops of a pure, all natural liquid smoke to give it a bit more heft.

Method

First, roast the vegetables. Preheat oven to 400° and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.

Gently crush the cloves of garlic, leaving the skin on and keeping the clove in one piece. Slice the tomatoes in half lengthwise and place on the baking sheet, cut side up, along with the slabs of onion, garlic cloves, and jalapeño peppers. Place baking sheet in oven and roast for 10 minutes, then turn the vegetables and continue to turn them every 5 minutes. Remove each piece as it is finished – each piece should be lightly charred and softened. When the peppers are finished, do a quick check of the skins – if they come off easily, just set them aside, but if they skins are still fairly attached to the flesh, place them in a small paper bag or plastic baggie to steam for 5-10 minutes.

Peel the garlic, then mince all the vegetables and toss them in a medium-sized bowl. Remember to wear gloves when seeding and chopping the hot peppers, as their oils can severely irritate your skin. Add the lime juice and spices; stir gently to combine.

To serve the salsa fresh, add 1/2 teaspoon sea salt and set aside for at least 1 hour to allow flavors to mingle.

To Ferment

Toss the salsa with the tablespoon of salt and the whey, then spoon the salsa into a quart-sized mason jar, pushing down on the solids as you spoon it in. When all the salsa is in the jar, make sure that all the solids rest below the brine by at least an inch and that there is at least one inch of headspace to allow for expansion. Cover loosely and allow the salsa to ferment at room temperature for 3-4 days.

**2 pounds Roma tomatoes
(about 10 to 12)**

**6 large cloves garlic
(do not peel)**

**1 red onion, sliced into thick
rings but not separated**

2-3 jalapeño peppers, whole

1 small bunch cilantro

**juice of 1/2 a lime,
more to taste**

1/2 teaspoon ground cumin

**1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
OR 2 teaspoons chopped fresh
oregano**

**1/4 teaspoon smoked paprika
(optional)**

**1 tablespoon unrefined sea salt
(optional)**

**1/4 cup fresh whey OR
sauerkraut brine (optional)**

Makes approximately 3 cups

There are as many variations on salsa as there are people who make it. Corn and black bean salsa is a popular one, though, and for good reason. It's extremely tasty and beans provide a surprising amount of protein and minerals.

Plan ahead when making this version, as the beans need nearly a day to soak and the peppers and corn need time for roasting. If you're using the oven or the grill for other purposes, do double duty and roast them simultaneously to save both time and energy.

Method

1 cups black beans

**3 ears corn
still in their husks**

**2-3 hot peppers (jalapeños,
anchos, poblanos, serranos,
scotch bonnet, etc)**

**3 Italian-style tomatoes
(Roma, San Marzano, etc),
peeled and chopped**

**5-6 stems fresh cilantro,
finely chopped**

**2 sprigs fresh oregano,
leaves minced**

**1/2 red onion,
finely chopped**

**2 cloves garlic, minced
juice from 1 lime**

**1 teaspoon
unrefined cane sugar**

Roasted Corn & Black Bean Salsa

First, cook your beans. Place the beans in a large pot and cover with very warm water with at least 2 inches of water above the beans. Set aside and let the beans soak for 12-18 hours. Rinse and drain the beans, then boil them with a steady simmer until tender, about 1 hour. (Please note: cooking time can vary greatly.)

Meanwhile, roast the peppers, then remove the seeds, peel off the skins, and mince them. (See how to roast a pepper on page 59.) Remember to wear gloves, as the oils from hot peppers can severely irritate your skin.

Next, roast the corn. Soak corn in warm water for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 400°F. Place the ears of corn directly on the oven rack and roast until the outer husks turn brown, about 20-25 minutes. Cool corn slightly, then husk and slice the corn kernels from the cobs in long slices.

Toss together all ingredients until well mixed. To serve fresh, let stand at room temperature for 1 hour to allow flavors to mingle.

Sweet & Sour Sauce

Makes approximately 1 cup

Sweet & Sour sauce is another “must have” on Chinese night for our favorite egg rolls and other Chinese dim sum. I find that if I start making the sauce at the same time I start the rest of the meal, it’s usually ready in plenty of time.

Method

1/2 cup pineapple juice

1/2 cup rice vinegar

**1/4 cup sucanat
OR 3 tablespoons honey + 1/2
teaspoon molasses**

1 tablespoon ketchup

1 teaspoon soy sauce

**1/2 of a red bell pepper,
minced fine**

**2 teaspoons cornstarch or
arrowroot powder**

4 teaspoons cool water

Pour the pineapple juice into a small saucepan and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Reduce to 1/4 cup.

Meanwhile, mix the vinegar, sucanat, ketchup, and soy sauce together. Add to the pineapple reduction and return to the simmer. Toss in the minced red pepper.

Mix the cornstarch and water to form a slurry, then pour into the sauce and stir to thicken. Remove from the heat to allow to cool.

Store in the refrigerator for 2-3 weeks.

Makes approximately 2 cups

This traditional Greek condiment is a delicious dipping sauce for pita bread, as well as grilled meats and vegetables. The cultured yogurt and sour cream each provide the benefits of lacto-fermentation while the cucumber provides deep refreshment, especially in the hot summer months.

Method

1 cup very thick yogurt

1/4 cup sour cream

1/2 cucumber, grated

2 cloves garlic, minced

zest of one lemon

generous pinch of sea salt

**2 tablespoons extra-virgin
olive oil (optional)**

Combine all ingredients in a small bowl and stir together. Let sit for at least half-an-hour before serving to meld the flavors.

Tzatziki



Real Ranch Dressing

Makes approximately 1 1/2 cups

This kid-favorite salad dressing and dip features fresh herbs and nutrient-dense eggs. It's a crowd-pleaser whether you're serving it to toddlers at lunch or next to a crudité platter at an all-adult party.

And here's a **time-saving tip**: this recipe starts by making fresh mayonnaise, so if you're in a hurry or would prefer to use your favorite store-bought mayonnaise, just substitute 1 cup of mayonnaise in place of the egg yolk, vinegar, and olive oil.

Method

Combine the egg yolk with the apple cider vinegar, garlic, buttermilk, herbs, black pepper and sea salt in a blender or food processor. You may also whisk this by hand, but it will take the fortitude of an ox.

Pulse one or two times to mix ingredients. Then, with the motor running, slowly pour in the olive oil until the dressing is well-emulsified.

To Ferment

Stir in the fresh whey and let the dressing sit at room temperature for about six hours before moving to the refrigerator.

- 1 pastured egg yolk
- 1 1/2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1/4 cup cultured buttermilk or sour cream
- 1/4 cup (combined) minced fresh herbs (parsley, dill, & chives)
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon unrefined sea salt
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil or sunflower oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh whey OR sauerkraut brine (optional)

Makes approximately 1 cup

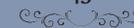
This dressing is typically served on crispy Romaine lettuce with copious amounts of freshly-ground black pepper and salty Parmesan cheese, but I like it slathered on hefty whole-grain bread, as well, when the weather is cold as an accompaniment to a hearty soup.

Method

Combine all ingredients except for the oil in a food processor and process until thoroughly mixed. Then, with the motor running, drizzle in the olive oil as slowly as possible. Store in the refrigerator for up to one week.

- 2 eggs yolks
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon dijon-style mustard
- 5-6 anchovy fillets or 1 tablespoon anchovy paste
- 2 teaspoons red wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil

Caesar Dressing



Classic Hot Sauce (Lacto-Fermented)

Makes approximately 1 pint

This will be only as hot as the peppers you use, so if you like a screamingly hot sauce, use Scotch bonnets or Habañeros and leave the seeds in. If you like something much more demure, choose jalapeños and deseed them. Either way, I think the sauce looks the best when red peppers are used, but flavor-wise, any color pepper will do.

The technique I outline here is a bit different than what other recipes call for - I stumbled upon this method when I was playing around with other hot sauce recipes and it has now become my favorite method for fermenting hot sauce. By leaving the chiles whole as they ferment, I find the flavor deeper and more complex and the final texture smoother.

Method

- 1/2 pound fresh chili peppers**
- 3-4 cloves garlic, minced**
- 2 teaspoons unrefined sea salt**
- 1 cup filtered water,
more as needed**
- 1 tablespoon sauerkraut juice
OR fresh whey**
- 1/4 cup white wine vinegar,
more to taste**

Remove the stems from the chilies but don't remove the cap. Chop them very coarsely and place them in a quart-sized mason jar. (If you're using small red Thai chilies, there is no need to chop them at all.)

Stir the salt into the water, then pour it over the chilies. If the water doesn't cover the chilies completely, add more water until they're submerged.

Cover loosely then set aside at room temperature and allow to ferment for 5-7 days.

After 5-7 days, strain the brine off the chilies and reserve it for other fermentation projects.

Place the fermented chilies in a food processor or blender along with the garlic, the vinegar, and a tablespoon or two of the reserved brine.

The fermented chili paste should keep, refrigerated, for several months while the fermented chili hot sauce can keep, unrefrigerated or refrigerated, for several months.

Makes approximately 1 pint

This sauce is a celebration of extremes - extreme heat and extreme flavor. It is perfect with barbecued meats, fish, and chicken. Scotch bonnet peppers are the most authentic, but feel free to substitute habañeros if Scotch bonnets are difficult to find.

Also, be careful when working with hot peppers - wear gloves or coat your hands with oil, then wash several times before touching anything else.

Method

- 7-8 scotch bonnet peppers**
- juice from 3 large oranges**
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt**
- 2 teaspoons honey**
- 1/2 small pineapple, cut up**
- 1/8 teaspoon ground allspice**

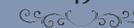
Coarsely chop the peppers, then place them in a food processor or blender and pulse a few times to cut them down a bit.

Add the rest of the ingredients, then pulse continuously to puree. Puree until smooth, but for the best texture, don't let it get frothy.

Pour into a heavy-bottomed saucepan and bring to a boil over medium-high heat, then reduce and simmer until the sauce has reduced and thickened slightly, 10-15 minutes.

Cool completely before serving. The sauce will store in the refrigerator for 6-8 weeks.

Caribbean Hot Sauce



Curtido

(Lacto-Fermented)

El Salvador

Makes approximately 1 quart

Curtido is my absolute favorite shredded vegetable ferment and the one I make most often. It is one of the national foods of El Salvador, where you can find it on the table of every corner pupusería to accompany the thick corn tortilla pupusas stuffed with meat, beans, and cheese.

Don't skimp on the oregano and the onions - they are the ingredients that make curtido so delicious. If you happen to have fresh loroco on hand, an herb native to Central America, you can toss a bit of that in too.

Curtido is excellent as an accompaniment to tacos, burritos, and enchiladas.

Method

1 small head of cabbage (approx. 2 pounds), shredded

1 red or yellow onion, thinly sliced

4 carrots, peeled and shredded

1 chili de árbol, seeded and finely minced

1 teaspoon oregano

1 tablespoon sea salt

Place all the ingredients in a large bowl. With very clean hands, knead and massage the mixture until the vegetables begin to go limp and they release their juices.

Pack the mix into a sterilized mason jar, pushing down on it as you go to release more juice. If the vegetables are not covered in brine once you reach the top, add more salt water to completely submerge them.

Cover with a clean tea towel. Set aside at room temperature for 10-14 days, adding a bit of salt water each day if the top vegetables become dry. Refrigerate when the flavor is to your liking - the flavor will continue to improve for several months.

Makes approximately 2 quarts

There are a few tricks to making a good, authentic kimchi. First, don't do as I first did and shred your vegetables like you do when making a typical sauerkraut. Part of the loveliness of kimchi is its chunky texture. Second, kimchi is supposed to be blisteringly hot: don't skip the chilies (although you can tame them down a bit if you have Scandinavian roots like I do). And third, use Napa cabbage if at all possible. It's not only the most authentic, but it has the highest levels of cancer-fighting phytonutrients.

And here's an idea - if you'd like to play up the Asian flair, make this kimchi with bok choy instead of cabbage. It will be delicious, we assure you.

1 head of Napa cabbage

1/4 cup sea salt

2+ cups warm water

**1/4 cup chili-garlic paste OR
4-5 fresh red chilies, stemmed
and finely minced**

6-8 cloves of garlic, minced

**2-inch nub of ginger,
peeled and sliced into thin
matchsticks**

**3-4 green onions, white and
green parts julienned in 1-inch
pieces**

1 tablespoon fish sauce

**1 medium pear or apple (any
variety), peeled and coarsely
chopped**

**1 small onion (any variety),
coarsely chopped**

**1 tablespoon sea salt OR 1/4
cup sauerkraut brine**

Method

Cut the cabbage into large, bite-sized pieces and place in a large bowl. Stir the salt into the warm water to dissolve, then pour over the reserved cabbage. If the cabbage is not completely submerged, add more warm water until the cabbage is fully covered. Let sit for 3-4 hours until the cabbage is slightly wilted, then drain and rinse.

Return the cabbage to the bowl and add the chili paste, garlic, ginger, green onions, and fish sauce.

Meanwhile, place the additional 1 cup water, pear, onion, and salt in a blender. Puree the mixture until smooth, then pour over the cabbage mixture. Toss everything together (be sure to wear gloves!)

Pack into two quart-sized mason jars, pressing down on the solids as you fill to create a brine. Add either sauerkraut brine or salt plus enough water to completely submerge the vegetables, if necessary, being sure to leave at least 1-inch of headspace in each jar. Cover tightly with lids or cover with a fermentation airlock.

Let sit at room temperature for 2-3 days before moving to the refrigerator. The flavor will continue to develop and in my opinion, is best after an additional 5-6 weeks.

Kimchi

(Lacto-Fermented)

Korea



The Basics

It's immensely satisfying to create nourishing, homemade versions of everyday condiments and part of that satisfaction comes from knowing your ingredients.

...SALT. True salt contains some 87 minerals, which are essential for the proper functioning of our brains and nervous systems. "Regular" table salt is heavily refined so that it doesn't clump up and is free-flowing, but in the process the minerals are stripped out, the salt is bleached, and additives are added. Thus our adrenal glands get the load of sodium chloride without getting the benefit of the trace minerals.

Wise Choice: Choose salt that has been very minimally processed and still has a lovely, mineral-eneduced hue - grey, pink, black, etc.

...SUGAR. Like salt, the purest forms of sugar are chock full of essential minerals and vitamins. However, unlike salt, our bodies don't need added sugar in any form. Thus, we need to exercise extra caution to ensure that any sweetener we use balances the intake of simple sugars with other benefits. For example, raw honey contains vitamins, minerals, and enzymes that help break down other carbohydrates, as well as strong anti-viral, anti-bacterial, and anti-fungal properties due to the presence of propolis and bee pollen remaining in the honey. Also, remember that a sweetener doesn't have to be sugar to be sweet. Using spices such as cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, and ginger or plant extracts such as stevia, mint, and lavender can give the sensation of a sweet treat without the overload of sugar.

Wise Choice: Avoid white refined sugar at all cost. Use minimally refined sugars such as coconut sugar, date sugar, sucanat, evaporated cane sugar, molasses, brown rice syrup, or raw honey. Use sweet and warming herbs and spices liberally.

...FATS. Fats are a critical backbone of our diet. Healthy fats control sugar cravings, allow all those good vitamins from leafy green vegetables to be assimilated, assure proper cell communication, and support mental focus and acuity. Fats can easily be damaging as well, however, if they have turned rancid, are heavily processed, or are consumed in large quantities, which is why they have gained such a poor reputation in our modern society. I over-simplify my decisions about which fats to use according to one simple litmus test: **can I obtain the fat myself easily?**

I believe God has provided all the plants and animals we need to nourish and heal ourselves, as well the ability to sustainably steward and harvest those plants and animals. I am able to churn cream into butter, melt beef fat into tallow, and crack a coconut to squeeze out the coconut oil, but I am unable to take canola stalks or soybeans and extract the oil. Since we haven't had the industrial ability to create fats until just the last century, this also helps convince me that the fats God intended to fuel our bodies are natural, easily obtainable ones, which provide a balance of saturated and unsaturated fats for the various functions for which they are needed in our bodies.

Wise Choice: Opt for butter, olive oil, coconut oil, lard, and tallow, preferably without additives.

...GELATIN. Gelatin is a surprisingly nourishing addition to a diet and since it shows up in a few recipes here, its benefits are worth mentioning. The classic way of extracting gelatin is to cook bones with long, slow, moist heat, such as making stock, but gelatin is also available commercially in dry forms. Gelatin not only assists in easy digestion, but assists in actually healing the colon. It can ease digestive difficulty of certain foods for infants and toddlers, such as milk and yogurt, and there is also increasingly promising research that gelatin can assist in the treatment of other chronic diseases, such as Crohn's disease, diabetes, and cancer.

Wise Choice: Make nutrient-dense stock or use the best quality dry gelatin available.

About the Author

Kresha Faber is the primary author and editor of [Nourishing Joy](#), a website dedicated to real food, sustainable living, natural homemaking, and joyful parenting. She is passionate about sharing ways to make small, simple changes to live more healthily, frugally, and sustainably.

She absolutely loves homeschooling her children (the best days involve curling up to read together with hot cocoa) and she absolutely delights in helping others to think deeply about the things that nourish them in body and soul, as well as that which nourish the larger community.

Kresha is the mother of three young children and the wife of one incredibly good man. She and her husband share a passion for living life thoughtfully and intentionally in response to God's grace in their lives, and she loves to share good meals (and good wine) around a very large table.

