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8 More Real, Clean Eating Foods I Can't Live Without

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Once I started eating clean (for the most part anyways, because who doesn't need a treat once in a while!?), I began feeling better, sleeping better and simply enjoying my health. I can't say I'd ever truly experienced enjoying my health before. Eating was more about looking a certain way or, well, over-indulging. But, when I cleaned things up and revamped my diet with real foods I felt recharged.

Now at age 37, I can honestly say I feel physically better than I did at 21. Yes, sure, I have a few other signs of aging and my mind certainly slows me down a bit. But, my 21 year old body fought for energy and struggled with symptoms of overconsuming processed foods like headaches, bloating, irregularity (if you know what I mean) and even more trouble mustering up the energy for a good workout.

I am so thankful I can play energetically with my little girls, work, keep my house up (uhh…mostly), maintain the busy schedule of an only-parent and even manage to get out and have a little fun once in a while! I do believe taking a new approach to nourishing my body [1], along with surrendering old attitudes to God, made all the difference for me.

That's, why when I started my list of *'Real Foods I Can't Live Without'*, I found it getting so long that I divided the post into two. I simply couldn't stop at seven! As I looked around my kitchen, I realized that there were more I simply had to share. If you missed the first post, start here: **7 Real Foods I Can't Live Without** [2]

Now, here are the next ones on my list!

1. **Chocolate (the REAL dark kind):** Yes. Yes. And yes. If you want to know the how and why of this one, here's the why and how I love my chocolate: **read this post**! [3] All you need to know is written concisely there.
2. **Salmon:** Wild caught salmon is a weekly indulgence here. The good fats and nice, solid protein is truly one of the building blocks I stack my family's nutrition on. While there are other fish that can be consumed, salmon is simply the best option for us. My older daughter loves it simple with pesto sauce or dill, salt and pepper. I eat it any way I can get my hands on it! Here's a great recipe with fresh herbs you can try: Salmon meal with Sprouts on the Side [4]
3. **Eggs:** First, I'll answer your question: YES, we eat the yolks. That's where all the B vitamins and folic acid are found. We eat eggs for breakfast only a couple times a week (hard cooked or a breakfast sandwich most commonly) but I use eggs multiple times a week in my baking. I buy cage free, organic eggs and local whenever possible.
4. **Avocados:** Once again, here we are on the topic of good fats. But, with avocados I have a special affection because they were both of my girls' first food and we have not stopped eating them since! We eat them in salads, chunked up and plain or in guacamole. In fact, recently I've started letting the girls just mash it on their plates then squeeze some lime and sprinkle a touch of salt on it. Delish! Here's a recipe that includes avocados as a spread: Patties with Avocado Spread [5]. Here's a super cleansing salad with avocados: Pumpkin Seed salad [6]
5. **Chick peas:** Surprise! We love these crazy looking little things! Chick peas are filled with plant protein and fiber. They make the perfect snack (here's a recipe for one I make regularly: Chick Pea Snack [7]), work well in soup, are the main ingredient for hummus [8]and even go into a couple of my favorite sweet treats (that's right, here's a dessert you will LOVE!: Chickpea Cupcakes [9])
6. **Medjool Dates:** These are one of my very favorite go-to sweet treats, especially when I don't have anything homemade in the house. They are higher in potassium than bananas and contain lots of vitamin B-6 and magnesium. Plus, their sweetness and decadent texture, make just one or two enough to satisfy a serious craving. I eat them in their natural state or sometimes I use them to make a special treat, like these Decadent Dates [10].
7. **Quinoa:** You may not think quinoa is super special, but it is a true staple in our home. Since we don't eat meat much, this go to pseudo-grain offers a complete protein (meaning it contains ALL the essential amino acids your body needs). I've used it in desserts [11], breakfast bars [12], granola recipes [13], mixed in with oatmeal and most commonly in soups [14](this one [14] is delish!) and savory meals [15].
8. **Ginger Root:** Maybe this one doesn't sound extremely appealing or perhaps you're just not sure what to do with a ginger root. Well, I was in that same boat until I began buying it regularly and forcing myself to experiment. I wanted to benefit from its anti-inflammatory and immune boosting benefits. Now, I use it in stir fry recipes (like THIS ONE [16]) and I put it into my green smoothies every single morning. I also use it to flavor my homemade kombucha.

So there you have it! I'm even having a tough time stopping at fifteen! I guess I just truly enjoy food and genuinely love REAL foods and creating recipes out of them. While I could go on and on, I'll stop here to get you started slowly in case you're just starting of your real-food transition. I suggest choosing a few from the list. If you're the researching type, look into your options and find recipes fitting to your palate. Then, as your body and tastes become accustomed to new real, unprocessed foods, I bet you'll actually begin to PREFER them! Before you know it, you'll naturally want to try more

If you’re already deep into your real food journey, there’s always room for more exploration. I never cease to enjoy trying new foods and combining fun flavors from the earth. Oh, how I do believe food is one of the pleasures God gave us. So, let’s use it to His glory and enjoy His bounty as a blessing to nourish our beautiful bodies!



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