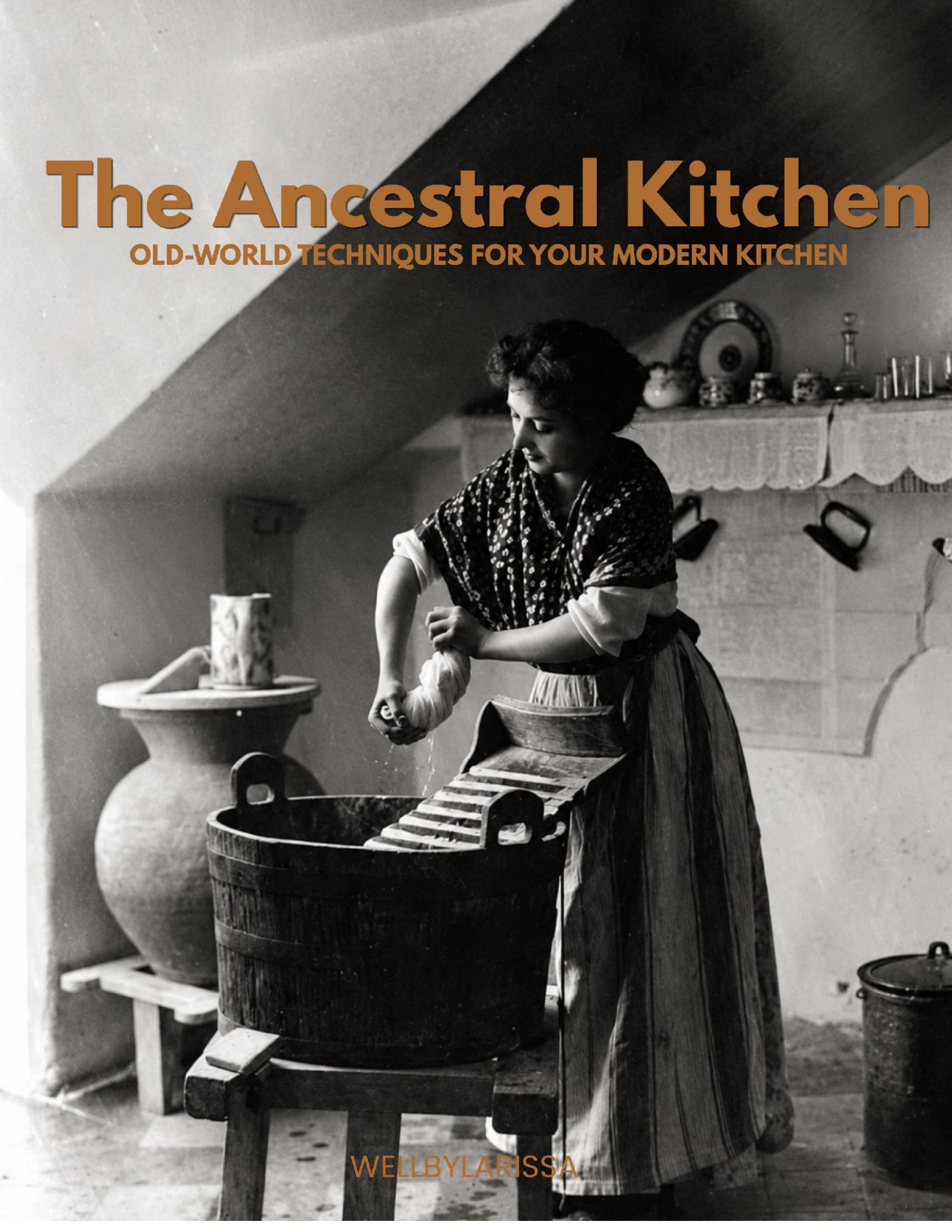


The Ancestral Kitchen

OLD-WORLD TECHNIQUES FOR YOUR MODERN KITCHEN



WELLBYLARISSA

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BEFORE WE BEGIN

This guide is deeply informed by two foundational bodies of work. The research of Weston A. Price, DDS, a dentist and researcher who traveled the world in the 1930s studying the relationship between traditional diets and physical health, and the culinary philosophy of Sally Fallon Morell, whose book *Nourishing Traditions* brought Price's findings into the modern kitchen and into the hands of home cooks worldwide.

If this guide resonates with you, two books belong on your shelf: *Nutrition and Physical Degeneration* by Weston A. Price, and *Nourishing Traditions* by Sally Fallon Morell. This guide is a beginning. Those books are the deep dive.

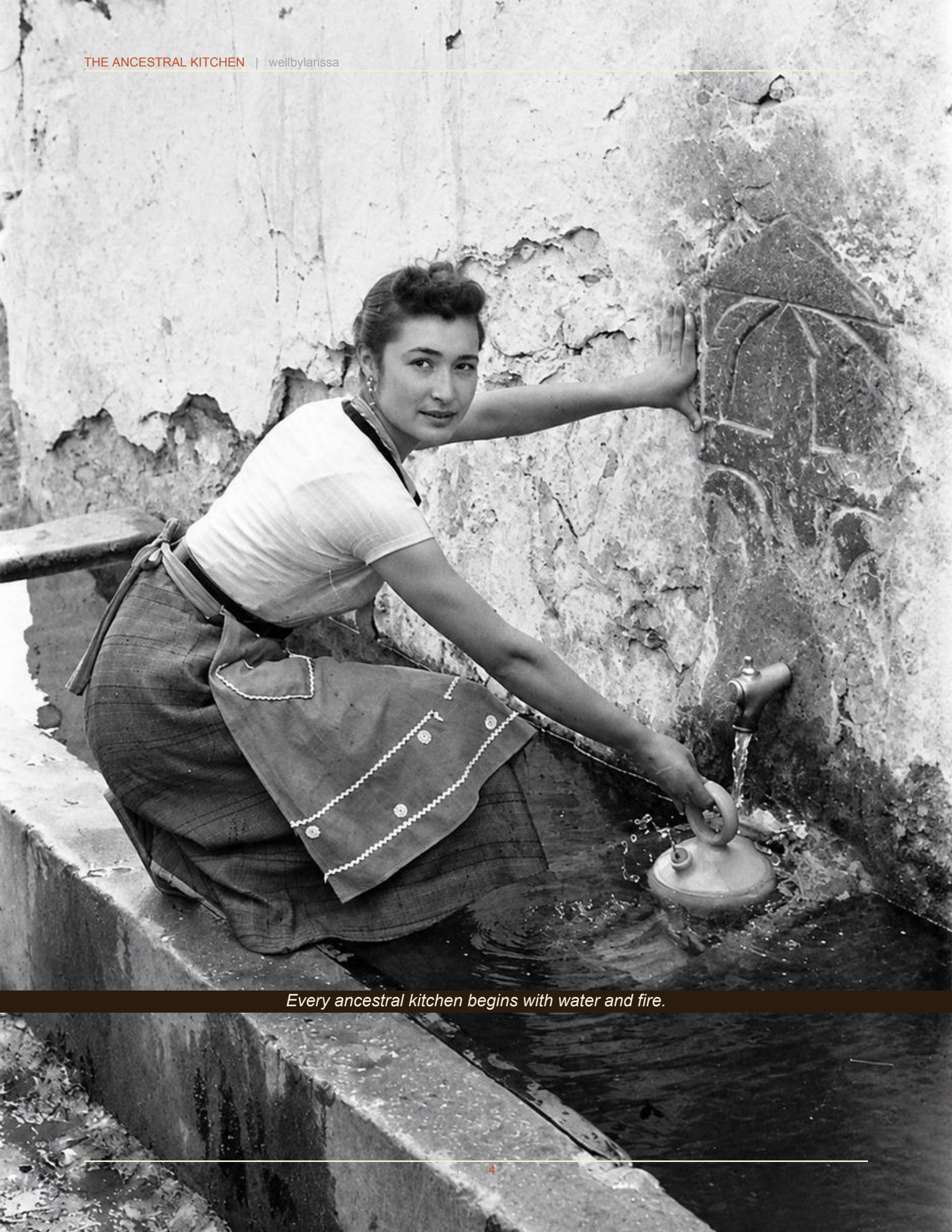
What follows is a practical, beautiful, and deeply grounded guide to cooking the way humans have cooked for thousands of years. Not as a historical exercise. But because the techniques, ingredients, and philosophies of ancestral kitchens produce food that nourishes the body at a level that modern convenience food simply cannot match.

Stock the pantry. Season the cast iron. Start the broth. This is where it begins.

Cook the way your great-grandmother cooked.

Informed by the research of Weston A. Price and the work of Sally Fallon Morell.

The most radical thing you can do for your health is learn to cook.



Every ancestral kitchen begins with water and fire.

IN

THE PRICE PRINCIPLES

What traditional cultures knew about food and health

In the 1930s, a Cleveland dentist named Weston A. Price set out on one of the most remarkable research journeys in the history of nutritional science. Troubled by the epidemic of tooth decay, crooked teeth, and physical degeneration he was observing in his patients, Price wanted to understand what isolated traditional cultures, those not yet touched by Western industrialized food, looked like by comparison.

What he found was extraordinary and profoundly simple. Across 14 cultures on every continent, Price consistently found the same things. Excellent dental health with minimal decay. Broad facial structure with room for all teeth. Physical robustness and resilience. And almost complete absence of the chronic diseases that were already becoming common in Western populations.

The Universal Dietary Principles Price Found

- Across the healthy traditional cultures Price studied, animal foods were a constant. Not one was entirely plant-based. Animal foods, particularly animal fats and organ meats, showed up again and again.
- Many healthy traditional cultures consumed at least some animal foods raw or minimally cooked. Raw dairy, raw fish, fermented meats, raw egg yolks, and raw organ meats appeared across cultures.
- A common thread across healthy traditional cultures was using the whole animal. Organ meats were prioritized over muscle meat. Bones were simmered for broth. Fat was rendered and used for cooking.
- Fermented foods were a fixture across healthy traditional cultures. Whether dairy, grains, vegetables, or fish, fermentation appeared widely as a food preservation and enhancement method.
- Healthy traditional cultures tended to consume fat generously. From the tallow of the Masai to the blubber of the Inuit to the butter of the Swiss to the coconut of the Pacific Islanders, traditional cultures ate fat without restriction.
- Healthy traditional cultures generally prepared grains, legumes, and nuts through soaking, sprouting, or fermentation before consumption, rather than eating them unsoaked and unfermented in quantity.

TRADITIONAL WISDOM VS MODERN EVIDENCE

Traditional wisdom: the deep yellow butter and organ meats of pastured animals were treasured above all other fats.

Modern evidence: that butter is unusually rich in vitamin K2 (MK-4), a nutrient identified decades after Price's death and still being researched for its role in bone and cardiovascular health.

Activator X: The Nutrient Price Discovered

One of Price's most significant discoveries was a fat-soluble activator he called Activator X, found in highest concentrations in the deep yellow butter and organ meats of grass-fed, pastured animals. He found that this nutrient, in combination with vitamins A and D, appeared to be essential for the calcification of bones and teeth and the development of facial structure.

Decades after Price's death, Dr. Kate Rheaume-Bleue identified Activator X as vitamin K2, specifically the MK-4 form. Vitamin K2 directs calcium into bones and teeth (and away from arteries and soft tissue), activates proteins required for bone matrix formation, and works synergistically with vitamins A and D. Its dietary sources are almost entirely animal-based: grass-fed butter and ghee, natto, hard cheeses from grass-fed cows, egg yolks from pastured hens, liver and organ meats, and the fat of grass-fed ruminants.

Every traditional culture that maintained exceptional physical health ate the whole animal including organs and fat, fermented its food, prepared its grains and legumes through traditional methods, and consumed at least some animal foods raw or minimally processed. Modern food has dismantled every single one of these practices simultaneously.

01

THE ANCESTRAL PANTRY

Simple ingredients, traditional techniques

An ancestral pantry is not an exotic pantry. It is a simple one, stocked with the ingredients that traditional kitchens across many cultures have relied on for generations. The complexity is not in the ingredients. It is in the techniques. Start here and the rest of this guide becomes easy.

THE ANCESTRAL KITCHEN PYRAMID

Daily: cook with traditional fats and real ingredients

Weekly: a pot of broth

Weekly: a ferment on the counter

Regularly: whole-animal, nose-to-tail cuts

Seasonally: a new skill or preparation

Start Here: Your First 5 Skills

- Render a fat
- Roast a whole chicken
- Make broth
- Ferment one vegetable
- Bake one sourdough loaf



The ancestral pantry, ready to work.

The Fat Shelf

- **Grass-fed butter:** Grass-fed butter: the most K2-rich dairy fat available. Use for everything from sauteing to finishing to baking. Store on the counter up to two weeks or refrigerate.
- **Ghee:** Ghee: clarified butter with the milk solids removed. Higher smoke point than butter, shelf-stable at room temperature for months, ideal for high-heat cooking.
- **Tallow:** Tallow: rendered beef fat. The most stable cooking fat for high-heat applications. Store in a glass jar in the refrigerator.
- **Lard:** Lard: rendered pork fat. The traditional baking fat of European and American cooking. Makes the most tender pastry of any fat.
- **Olive oil:** Extra virgin olive oil: for low-heat cooking, dressings, and finishing. Do not use for high-heat cooking.
- **Coconut oil:** Coconut oil: for medium-heat cooking and baking, particularly in dishes from tropical culinary traditions.

The Broth Shelf

- Homemade bone broth: the single most important item in the ancestral kitchen. Make weekly and freeze in quart jars. Use as the base for everything.
- Dried mushrooms: shiitake, porcini, and dried kombu for building flavor in vegetable-based stocks.
- Apple cider vinegar: for broth making, lacto-fermentation brines, and as a cooking acid.

The Ferment Shelf

- Raw sauerkraut: make your own or buy unpasteurized from a refrigerated section. Serve with every meal as a condiment.
- Miso paste: unpasteurized, refrigerated. Use in dressings, marinades, soups, and glazes.
- Whole milk kefir: make your own from kefir grains or buy the highest culture-count commercial version available.
- Raw apple cider vinegar with the mother: use in dressings, brines, and as a pre-meal digestive tonic.
- Tamari or traditionally brewed soy sauce: fermented for months in the traditional method.

The Grain and Legume Shelf

- Whole grains for soaking: rolled oats, whole wheat berries, rye berries, and spelt. Always soak before cooking.
- Sourdough starter: live, active, maintained in the refrigerator. The foundation of traditional grain preparation.
- Dried legumes: lentils, chickpeas, and black beans. Always soak 12 to 24 hours before cooking.
- Ancient grains: einkorn, emmer, or spelt flour for baking. Lower gluten and higher nutrient availability than modern wheat.

The Organ Meat Shelf (Freezer)

- Chicken livers: mildest organ meat, most accessible. Make pate, add to ground meat, saute with onions.
- Beef liver: the most nutrient-dense food available. Freeze and grate frozen into ground meat dishes.
- Beef heart: mild flavor, dense protein, extremely economical. Slow cook or slice thin and saute.
- Bone marrow bones: for roasting and for broth. Request from a butcher and freeze until needed.

Remove from the Ancestral Kitchen

- All industrial seed oils: canola, vegetable, soybean, sunflower, safflower, corn, and cottonseed oil
- Refined sugar and high fructose corn syrup, replaced with raw honey, maple syrup, and whole fruit
- Commercial processed bread made from unsoaked, unfermented grain
- Ultra-processed packaged food with synthetic ingredients
- Non-stick cookware with PFAS coatings
- Plastic food storage replaced with glass, stainless, and ceramic

02

ANCESTRAL FATS

The most important nutritional shift you can make

The most consequential nutritional shift in modern food history was not the arrival of sugar or processed food. It was the replacement of traditional animal fats with industrial seed oils. This single change, which occurred primarily between 1920 and 1970 in Western countries, removed the fat-soluble vitamins, the cholesterol, the K2, and the stable saturated and monounsaturated fats that traditional kitchens had relied on for thousands of years, and replaced them with unstable, oxidation-prone polyunsaturated fats that had never been part of the human diet at scale.

Across the traditional cultures Price studied, cooks used the fat of the animals they raised or hunted. The Swiss cooked in butter. The French cooked in lard, duck fat, and butter. The Masai rendered suet. None of the traditional cultures in Price's research used refined polyunsaturated oils for cooking.

The Ancestral Fats and How to Use Them

- **Tallow (Rendered Beef Fat):** Smoke point approximately 400-420F. The most stable cooking fat for high-heat applications including searing, frying, and roasting. Made from the suet around the kidneys and organs of cattle. Source from grass-fed beef for the highest K2 content.
- **Lard (Rendered Pork Fat):** Smoke point approximately 370F. The traditional baking fat of European and American cooking for centuries. Makes the most tender, flaky pie crusts and biscuits of any fat. Leaf lard, from the fat around the kidneys of the pig, has the mildest flavor and is preferred for baking. Source from pastured pigs for the highest vitamin D content.
- **Grass-Fed Butter:** Smoke point approximately 300-350F. The most nutritionally complex of the animal fats, containing over 400 distinct fatty acids, fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K2, conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), and butyrate. The deep yellow color of grass-fed butter reflects its dramatically higher K2 and beta-carotene content. Use at medium heat or lower. Use generously to finish sauces, soups, and vegetables.
- **Ghee (Clarified Butter):** Smoke point approximately 450-485F. Butter with the milk solids and water removed through slow heating. Shelf-stable at room temperature for 2 to 3 months. Retains the fat-soluble vitamins of butter. The traditional cooking fat of South Asian, Middle Eastern, and North African cuisines.
- **Duck Fat and Goose Fat:** Smoke point approximately 375F. The most prized cooking fat in traditional French and Eastern European cuisines. Duck fat potatoes, roasted until golden and crispy, are arguably the finest preparation of potato in the world. Collect and save the fat from every duck or goose you cook.
- **Schmaltz (Rendered Chicken Fat):** Smoke point approximately 375F. The traditional cooking fat of Ashkenazi Jewish cuisine, collected from the fat deposits of chicken and rendered with onion. Rich, savory, and deeply umami. Collect the fat and skin from every chicken you roast.

Traditional cooking fats each bring their own flavor, culinary properties, and cultural history. Rather than relying on one refined cooking oil for everything, an ancestral kitchen makes room for butter, ghee, tallow, lard, schmaltz, olive oil, and other fats according to the dish and tradition.

03

RENDERING YOUR OWN FATS

The most universal ancestral kitchen skill

Rendering fat is one of the most ancestrally widespread kitchen skills. Traditional cultures that used animal fat generally knew how to render and store it. It is simple, inexpensive, produces a superior cooking fat, and creates little waste. Fat you render yourself is fresher and purer than most anything commercially available.

How to Render Tallow

Request beef suet or kidney fat from your butcher. Ask specifically for grass-fed beef suet for highest K2 content. The fat around the kidneys (leaf fat) gives the purest, most neutral-flavored tallow.

1. Cut or grind the suet into small pieces approximately half-inch cubes. Frozen suet is easier to cut.
2. Place in a heavy-bottomed pot or slow cooker. Add a quarter cup of water to prevent scorching at the start.
3. Cook on the lowest possible heat, uncovered, for 3 to 5 hours. The fat will slowly melt and the crackling will separate from the liquid fat.
4. Strain through a fine mesh strainer or cheesecloth into clean glass jars. The liquid will be pale yellow.
5. Allow to cool. Tallow solidifies to a pure white fat at room temperature. Refrigerate for 6 months, or freeze for best quality within about 12 months.

The crackling left in the strainer, the bits of browned fat tissue, are delicious salted and eaten immediately. Traditional cultures prized these as a cook's treat.

How to Render Lard

Request pork back fat or leaf lard from your butcher. Leaf lard, the fat from around the kidneys, makes the purest, mildest lard. Back fat makes a slightly more pork-flavored lard excellent for savory cooking.

6. Cut or grind the fat into small pieces. Grinding produces a smoother, more consistent lard.
7. Place in a heavy pot with a quarter cup of water. Cook on very low heat uncovered.
8. Cook 2 to 4 hours until the crackling is golden and crispy and the fat is liquid and pale.
9. Strain into glass jars. Lard is white and firm when cool. Refrigerate for 6 months, or freeze for best quality within about 12 months.

How to Render Schmaltz

Save the fat and skin from every chicken you buy. Store in a bag in the freezer until you have enough to render.

10. Collect chicken fat, skin, and any jelly from the bottom of the roasting pan.
11. Place in a small saucepan with one sliced onion and a pinch of salt.
12. Cook on low heat 45 minutes to 1 hour until the skin is golden and crispy and the fat is liquid.
13. Strain into a jar. The crispy skin bits (called gribenes in Jewish cooking) are a delicacy. Salt them immediately. Schmaltz keeps 2 weeks refrigerated or 6 months frozen.

How to Collect Duck and Goose Fat

14. When roasting a duck or goose, prick the skin all over before roasting to allow the fat to render out.
15. Elevate the bird on a rack in a roasting pan to collect the fat below.
16. Every 30 to 45 minutes, carefully pour off the accumulated fat into a heatproof container.
17. Strain through a fine mesh strainer into a glass jar when cool. A single duck yields 1 to 2 cups of fat. Refrigerate for up to 1 month, or freeze for best quality within about 12 months.

04

CAST IRON AND TRADITIONAL COOKWARE

The tools of an ancestral kitchen

The ancestral kitchen did not use non-stick coatings, aluminum, or plastic. It used cast iron, carbon steel, clay, ceramic, and stainless steel. These materials have been used for cooking for thousands of years and they all outperform modern non-stick cookware in durability, safety, and the quality of food they produce.

Cast Iron: The Complete Guide

Cast iron is not just a pan. It is an heirloom. A well-maintained cast iron skillet will outlast every non-stick pan you will ever own and improve with use. The seasoning that builds up over years of cooking creates a genuinely non-stick surface that is chemical-free and improves the flavor of everything cooked in it.

How to Season a New Cast Iron Pan

18. Wash the new pan with hot soapy water to remove the factory coating.
19. Dry completely in a warm oven at 200F for 20 minutes.
20. Apply a very thin layer of lard, tallow, or flaxseed oil to every surface including the outside and handle.
21. Place upside down in a 450-500F oven for 1 hour. Place foil on the rack below to catch any drips.
22. Turn off the oven and allow the pan to cool completely inside the oven. Repeat this process 3 to 4 times for the best initial seasoning.

How to Clean Cast Iron After Cooking

23. While the pan is still warm, use a stiff brush or chainmail scrubber with hot water to remove food residue. A small amount of mild dish soap is fine here too, modern dish soap doesn't have the harsh lye that gave rise to the old never-use-soap rule. Just avoid prolonged soaking and dry the pan thoroughly afterward.
24. For stuck-on food: add water and heat on the stove, scraping with a wooden spoon. Never soak in water.
25. Dry immediately and completely. A minute on the stove over low heat ensures complete drying.
26. Apply a tiny amount of fat while still warm. Wipe to a thin, barely visible layer. Store in a dry place. Never put in the dishwasher. Never soak. Never let it air dry with moisture on it.

What to Cook in Cast Iron

- Everything you would cook in a non-stick pan: eggs, fish, pancakes, and delicate proteins all work beautifully in well-seasoned cast iron
- High-heat searing: cast iron holds heat better than any other pan and produces the best crust on steaks, chops, and fish

- Oven-to-stove applications: goes from stovetop to a 500-degree oven without issue
- Bread baking: a preheated cast iron Dutch oven creates the steam environment that produces bakery-quality sourdough crust
- Cornbread, frittatas, and skillet desserts: classic cast iron dishes that benefit from its heat retention

What to Avoid in Cast Iron

- Highly acidic foods for prolonged cooking: tomato sauce, citrus, and wine can strip seasoning if cooked for long periods. Brief contact is fine.
- Soaking in water: destroys the seasoning and causes rust.
- Sudden temperature changes: do not put a hot pan under cold water.

Other Traditional Cookware

- **Carbon Steel:** Carbon steel: lighter than cast iron with similar properties. Seasons and becomes non-stick in the same way. Preferred by professional chefs for its responsiveness to temperature changes. Excellent for eggs, crepes, and fish.
- **Enameled Cast Iron:** Enameled cast iron: cast iron coated with vitrified enamel. Can handle acidic foods without issue and is easier to clean. Excellent for braises, soups, stews, and any long-cooked dish. The Dutch oven is the most essential piece.
- **Clay and Earthenware:** Clay and earthenware pots: some of the oldest cooking vessels in human history. Unglazed clay creates a self-basting humid environment that produces extraordinarily tender braised meats. Must be soaked in water for 30 minutes before each use and started in a cold oven.
- **Stainless Steel:** Stainless steel (18/10): the safest and most durable modern option. Does not react with food and lasts indefinitely. Heat the pan first, then add fat, then add food. Excellent for sauce work and boiling.

05

FOODS FOR LIFE'S IMPORTANT SEASONS

Why certain foods were reserved for pregnancy, childhood, and healing

In many of the traditional cultures Price studied, certain foods were treated with particular reverence. They were given to pregnant women and nursing mothers, to growing children, to the ill and recovering, and to newlyweds preparing for conception. These foods, traditionally reserved for life's important seasons, appeared across cultures that had no contact with each other, which is worth noticing even without drawing firm conclusions from it.

Price identified a commonality: many of these foods were exceptionally rich in the fat-soluble vitamins A, D, and K2, and in minerals in a highly bioavailable form. Modern nutrition research backs the value of many of these individual nutrients, even though it hasn't tested Price's broader theory as a whole.

The Sacred Foods Price Documented

- **Organ Meats, Especially Liver:** Prized across many of the traditional cultures Price studied. Among the Masai, liver was given to women during pregnancy. Among the Native Americans of the Pacific Northwest, the organs of the first salmon catch were given to children. It is easy to see why: four ounces of chicken liver provides over 100% of the RDA for vitamin A, B12, folate, riboflavin, and copper. One nuance if you are pregnant: liver is nutrient-dense, but very high intakes of preformed vitamin A have been linked to concerns in pregnancy research, so enjoy it in modest amounts rather than as a daily staple, and check in with your provider.
- **Fish Eggs and Shellfish:** Fish eggs appear as a traditionally prized food in many coastal cultures around the world. Extraordinarily rich in DHA, vitamin D, vitamin A, iodine, and phospholipids that support brain development. Shellfish, particularly oysters, were prized across coastal cultures for their zinc, copper, iodine, and selenium content.
- **Raw Dairy and Colostrum:** Unheated, unprocessed dairy from grass-fed animals was consumed across Swiss, Masai, Mongolian, and many other traditional cultures. Price found Swiss children with access to raw cream and butter from cows fed on fresh summer grass had dramatically better dental health and physical development. Colostrum, the first milk produced after birth, was revered across cultures as a sacred food. If you are pregnant, note that raw dairy carries an added infection risk that public health guidance generally advises against during pregnancy, this is a good category to favor pasteurized versions of, or to discuss with your provider.
- **Bone Marrow:** Consumed across many cultures with access to large game. Marrow bones were cracked and sucked by hunter-gatherers. The bone marrow of large animals is extraordinarily rich in conjugated linoleic acid, fat-soluble vitamins, and alkylglycerols, compounds that support immune function and are found in high concentrations in breast milk.
- **Fermented Foods as Sacred:** Fermented dairy including kefir among Central Asian nomadic peoples and fermented grain preparations including injera, kvass, and fermented corn masa were foundational rather than supplementary foods in their respective cultures. They were eaten at every meal as a matter of course.

The foods that traditional cultures treated as sacred are the foods that modern wellness culture is only now rediscovering. Liver, bone marrow, raw dairy, fish eggs, fermented foods. This is not a trend. It is a return.

06

BONE BROTH AND STOCK MASTERY

The foundation of cuisines the world over

Sally Fallon Morell opens *Nourishing Traditions* with stocks and broths, and she is right to do so. Many of the world's great cuisines are built on stock. French haute cuisine, Japanese dashi, Chinese long-simmered broths, Jewish chicken soup, Korean gomtang, Vietnamese pho. The foundation is usually the same: animal bones, water, time, and heat.

The difference between stock and bone broth is primarily time and intention. Stock is simmered 4 to 6 hours for flavor. Bone broth is simmered 12 to 48 hours for nutrition, specifically to extract the maximum gelatin, collagen precursors, and minerals from the bones and connective tissue.

Core Technique

- Start with cold water: always start your broth in cold water and bring slowly to temperature. This produces a clearer, more flavorful result.
- Add acid (optional): a small amount of acid, such as a tablespoon of apple cider vinegar per quart of water, is traditional in some broth methods and can add subtle brightness. It is optional. If you use it, add it at the beginning and let sit 30 minutes before heating.
- Skim the foam: in the first 30 to 60 minutes of simmering, a grey foam will rise. Skim it off. This improves clarity and removes impurities.
- Never boil: maintain the barest possible simmer. Boiling creates a cloudy, greasy broth and degrades flavor.
- The gel test: if your broth jiggles when cold, congratulations, you extracted plenty of gelatin. If it does not gel, the broth can still be delicious and useful; try simmering longer or adding more collagen-rich bones such as knuckles, feet, or necks next time.

Classic 24-Hour Grass-Fed Beef Bone Broth

Ingredients

- 3 to 4 lbs mixed grass-fed beef bones: knuckle bones, oxtail, marrow bones, short ribs on the bone
- 2 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 2 carrots, 3 celery stalks, 1 large onion quartered, 1 whole head of garlic halved horizontally
- 2 bay leaves, 1 tbsp peppercorns, fresh thyme and parsley stems
- Filtered cold water to cover by 2 inches, approximately 3 to 4 quarts

Instructions

27. Roast bones at 400F for 40 to 45 minutes until deeply browned. Do not skip this step. Browning produces dramatically more complex flavor.

28. Transfer bones to the largest pot you own. Add apple cider vinegar and cold water. Let sit 30 minutes.
29. Bring to a near-boil over medium-high heat. Reduce to the lowest possible simmer immediately.
30. Skim the grey foam that rises in the first hour. Add vegetables, garlic, and herbs.
31. Simmer uncovered 24 hours, adding water as needed to keep bones submerged.
32. Strain through a fine mesh strainer and divide the broth among smaller containers so it cools quickly rather than sitting as one large pot. An ice bath helps bring the temperature down fast before it goes in the refrigerator. The broth should gel when cold. Refrigerate up to 5 days, or freeze for best quality within 6 months, leaving headspace in the jar if freezing in glass.

A good bone broth is golden, lightly savory, and sets like jello in the refrigerator. If yours does not gel, add more knuckle or foot bones next time. These contain the most collagen.

Golden Chicken Bone Broth with Ginger and Turmeric

Ingredients

- 1 whole chicken carcass with feet if possible, or 3 to 4 lbs chicken backs, necks, and wings
- 2 chicken feet (ask your butcher): highest collagen content of any chicken part
- 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar, 1 onion, 2 carrots, 2 celery stalks
- 1 inch fresh ginger sliced, half tsp turmeric, bay leaves, peppercorns, fresh parsley

Instructions

33. Combine all in a large pot with cold water and apple cider vinegar. Sit 30 minutes.
34. Bring to a near-boil, reduce to the lowest simmer. Skim foam in the first 30 minutes.
35. Add ginger, turmeric, and vegetables. Simmer 12 to 18 hours. Strain, cool, refrigerate.

Classic Kombu and Katsuobushi Dashi

Ingredients

- 1 piece dried kombu seaweed approximately 4 by 4 inches
- 1 cup katsuobushi (dried bonito flakes)
- 4 cups cold filtered water

Instructions

36. Soak kombu in cold water for 30 minutes. Do not discard the soaking water.
37. Bring the kombu and soaking water to just below a simmer over medium heat. Remove kombu just before it boils.
38. Add bonito flakes. Bring to a gentle simmer and immediately remove from heat.
39. Allow flakes to steep 3 to 5 minutes. Strain gently without pressing the flakes.

Dashi is one of the most delicate and essential stocks in the world. It forms the base of miso soup, ramen, and Japanese braising liquids. The kombu provides iodine. The bonito provides glutamates. Together they create the umami foundation of Japanese cuisine.

North African Spiced Lamb Bone Broth

Ingredients

- 3 lbs lamb neck bones or lamb shanks
- 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar, 1 onion, 3 garlic cloves, 2 carrots
- 1 cinnamon stick, 1 tsp cumin seeds, 5 cardamom pods, 1 tsp coriander seeds
- Fresh mint and preserved lemon optional

Instructions

40. Brown lamb bones in tallow in a heavy pot until deeply golden.
41. Add cold water, vinegar, and sit 30 minutes. Add vegetables and whole spices. Simmer 12 to 18 hours.
42. Strain and cool. Season with salt before drinking or using in cooking.

The warming spices make this broth an extraordinary morning drink in the colder months. It forms the base of Moroccan harira soup and Persian slow-cooked lamb dishes.

07

THE ART OF FERMENTATION

The oldest food preservation method in the world

Lacto-fermentation is the oldest food preservation method in the world. Before refrigeration, before canning, before any modern preservation technology, humans preserved food by encouraging beneficial bacteria to produce lactic acid, which creates an acidic environment hostile to pathogens. The result is food that is not merely preserved but transformed, made more nutritious, more digestible, and richly complex in flavor.

The process is simple. Salt draws moisture out of vegetables. The brine that forms creates an anaerobic environment. The naturally present *Lactobacillus* bacteria ferment the sugars into lactic acid. The lactic acid preserves the food and continues to develop flavor over time. No vinegar. No heat. No added cultures. Just salt, vegetables, and time.

Ferment Safely

- **Weigh your salt:** Use weight percentages rather than spoon measurements when you can. For most vegetable ferments, roughly 2% salt by weight of the vegetables is a useful starting point, depending on the recipe.
- **Keep vegetables submerged:** Use a fermentation weight (a rolled outer leaf, a glass weight, or a clean weighted plate) to hold everything under the brine.
- **Use clean jars and utensils:** Wash everything that touches the ferment well. You want the beneficial bacteria to win, not whatever else is on a dirty spoon.
- **Allow gas to escape:** Use an airlock lid designed for fermentation, or burp sealed jars once a day to release pressure.
- **Watch for spoilage:** Fuzzy mold, unusual discoloration, a putrid smell, or anything that concerns you means discard it rather than taste-test it.
- **Refrigerate when the ferment is complete:** This slows fermentation dramatically and is how you stop a ferment at the flavor you like.

Traditional Lacto-Fermented Sauerkraut

Ingredients

- 1 medium head green cabbage, approximately 2 lbs
- Non-iodized sea salt or kosher salt, roughly 2% of the cabbage's weight (about 1 tbsp per pound of cabbage is a reasonable estimate; iodized salt inhibits the bacteria you want)
- Optional: caraway seeds, juniper berries, or dill

Instructions

43. Remove outer leaves of cabbage and reserve. Shred cabbage thinly by hand or with a mandoline.
44. Weigh the shredded cabbage. Add the correct amount of salt and massage vigorously for 5 to 10 minutes until significant brine releases.
45. Pack tightly into a clean quart jar, pressing down firmly until brine rises above the cabbage.

46. Roll a reserved outer cabbage leaf and place on top as a weight to keep shreds submerged. Cover with a cloth secured with a rubber band, or use an airlock lid.
47. Ferment at room temperature 65 to 75F for 1 to 4 weeks. Taste after 5 days. Press down daily for the first week to keep cabbage submerged.
48. When pleasantly sour to your taste, seal with a regular lid and refrigerate. Keeps 6 months.

The longer it ferments, the more sour and complex it becomes. A 3-day kraut is mild and crisp. A 3-week kraut is deeply sour and funky in the best way. Traditional German sauerkraut was fermented for months in large crocks.

Traditional Lacto-Fermented Kimchi

Ingredients

- 1 medium napa cabbage, approximately 2 lbs
- Quarter cup non-iodized sea salt
- 3 tbsp Korean red pepper flakes (gochugaru), 6 garlic cloves minced, 1 inch fresh ginger grated
- 1 tbsp fish sauce (traditionally fermented), 4 green onions cut into 1-inch pieces, 1 tsp honey

Instructions

49. Quarter the cabbage and cut into 2-inch pieces. Salt generously and let sit 2 hours until wilted. Rinse thoroughly and squeeze out excess water.
50. Combine gochugaru, garlic, ginger, fish sauce, and honey into a paste.
51. Mix cabbage, green onions, and paste together, working the paste into every piece.
52. Pack tightly into a jar. Press down until liquid rises. Leave 1 inch headspace.
53. Leave at room temperature 1 to 3 days, pressing down daily, until bubbly and pleasantly sour. Refrigerate. Kimchi continues to develop flavor for months, peaking between 2 weeks and 3 months.

Lacto-Fermented Garlic Dill Pickles

Ingredients

- 1 lb small cucumbers, scrubbed
- 2 cups filtered water, 1 tbsp non-iodized sea salt (for brine)
- 4 garlic cloves halved, large handful fresh dill including stems
- 1 tsp black peppercorns, 1 tsp coriander seeds, half tsp red pepper flakes
- 1 or 2 grape leaves, oak leaves, or horseradish leaves (tannins keep pickles crisp)

Instructions

54. Dissolve salt in water to make the brine.

55. Pack cucumbers vertically into a clean quart jar. Add garlic, dill, and spices between the cucumbers.
56. Tuck a grape leaf under the cucumbers. Pour brine over cucumbers to cover completely. Leave 1 inch headspace.
57. Cover with cloth and ferment 3 to 5 days at room temperature tasting daily. Refrigerate when pleasantly sour, around day 3 to 4.

The grape or oak leaf is not optional for crunch. The tannins inhibit the enzyme that makes pickles soft. This is traditional knowledge that Nourishing Traditions preserves and modern pickle-making often ignores.

08

LACTO-FERMENTED CONDIMENTS

Many condiments in the ancestral kitchen were alive

One of the more interesting revelations in Nourishing Traditions is that many traditional condiments were themselves fermented and therefore alive. The ketchup of colonial America was often lacto-fermented, not cooked. Traditional mustard was fermented in wine or vinegar and contained active cultures. Mayonnaise made with raw egg yolks and raw apple cider vinegar develops beneficial bacteria over its first few days in the refrigerator.

Many condiments in the ancestral kitchen were a vehicle for beneficial bacteria, digestive enzymes, and probiotic compounds. Most condiments in the modern kitchen are pasteurized, shelf-stable, and biologically inert. This chapter brings the traditional condiment back into the kitchen.

Fermented Tomato Ketchup

Ingredients

- Half cup tomato paste
- 2 tbsp raw apple cider vinegar
- 2 tbsp whey (drained from plain yogurt) or quarter tsp salt
- 1 tbsp raw honey or maple syrup
- Half tsp each: sea salt, onion powder, garlic powder, allspice, cloves, quarter tsp cayenne

Instructions

58. Whisk all ingredients together until smooth.
59. Transfer to a small jar. If using whey, leave at room temperature for 2 days before refrigerating.
60. Refrigerate. Keeps for several months. Flavor deepens over the first week.

This ketchup contains real tomato, real vinegar, and real enzymes. Every tablespoon delivers a small probiotic hit and tastes dramatically better than commercial ketchup.

Lacto-Fermented Chili Hot Sauce

Ingredients

- 1 lb fresh hot peppers: Fresno, jalapeno, or any mix
- 6 garlic cloves, 1 tsp non-iodized sea salt per cup of peppers

Instructions

61. Remove stems from peppers. Roughly chop. Combine with garlic and salt in a blender.

62. Blend to a coarse mash. Transfer to a jar. Press down to remove air pockets. Cover with cloth. Ferment at room temperature 5 to 7 days, stirring daily. It will become bubbly and tangy.
63. Blend again until smooth. Strain for a smoother sauce or leave textured. Bottle and refrigerate. Keeps for 6 months.

Egg Yolk Mayonnaise (Nourishing Traditions Style, Made Safely)

Ingredients

- 2 pasteurized egg yolks (or 1 pasteurized whole egg) at room temperature
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard, 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice or raw apple cider vinegar
- 1 cup extra light olive oil or half avocado and half olive oil
- Half tsp sea salt, optional: 1 tbsp whey from yogurt for extra tang (this is for flavor only; it does not change how the mayonnaise should be stored)

Instructions

64. Combine egg yolks, mustard, lemon juice, salt, and whey in a bowl. Whisk well.
65. Begin adding oil one drop at a time while whisking constantly to create the emulsion.
66. Once the emulsion is established, add oil in a thin steady stream. Taste and adjust.
67. Refrigerate immediately after making, whether or not you used whey. Because this mayonnaise is made with raw yolks, keep it cold at all times and use it within 5 days.

Traditional Whole Grain Lacto-Fermented Mustard

Ingredients

- Half cup whole yellow mustard seeds, quarter cup whole brown mustard seeds
- Quarter cup raw apple cider vinegar, quarter cup filtered water
- 1 tbsp raw honey, half tsp turmeric, quarter tsp sea salt

Instructions

68. Combine mustard seeds with vinegar and water. Soak 2 days at room temperature.
69. Transfer to a blender with honey, turmeric, and salt. Blend to desired texture.
70. Add more vinegar or water if needed for consistency. Jar and refrigerate. Keeps for 6 months. Flavor develops over the first 2 weeks.

09

ORGAN MEATS MADE APPROACHABLE

The most nutrient-dense foods on earth

The question is never whether organ meats are nutritious. The research is unambiguous. The question is always how to make them accessible and delicious to people who did not grow up eating them. This chapter answers that question with specific techniques and recipes that convert even the most reluctant organ meat skeptics.

The key insight is this: organ meats prepared properly do not taste like what people fear they will taste like. Chicken liver pate tastes like a rich, savory spread. Beef heart sliced thin and sauteed with herbs tastes like a more flavorful steak. Bone marrow roasted in the bone tastes like the most decadent butter you have ever eaten. The preparation is everything.

Classic Chicken Liver Pate (The Gateway Organ Meat)

Ingredients

- 1 lb pastured chicken livers
- Half cup grass-fed butter, divided
- 1 shallot minced, 2 garlic cloves minced
- 2 tbsp brandy or cognac (or apple juice)
- 1 tsp fresh thyme, sea salt, white pepper, nutmeg

Instructions

71. Soak chicken livers in milk or cold water for 30 minutes. Pat completely dry.
72. Saute shallot and garlic in 2 tbsp butter until soft. Remove and set aside.
73. Increase heat. Sear livers in the same pan about 2 to 3 minutes per side, then check with an instant-read thermometer and cook to a safe internal temperature of 165F (74C). Properly cooked liver still blends into a silky, rich pate once it hits the food processor with the butter and cream.
74. Add brandy and cook 30 seconds until evaporated.
75. Transfer livers, shallot mixture, and thyme to a food processor. Add remaining butter. Process until completely smooth. Season generously with salt, white pepper, and a pinch of nutmeg.
76. Pack into ramekins. Cover with a thin layer of melted butter to seal and preserve. Refrigerate overnight before serving.

Serve on sourdough toast with cornichons and a small green salad. This is the recipe that converts organ meat skeptics. The pate format disguises the texture while delivering the full nutritional profile of liver. This is the gateway.

Roasted Marrow Bones with Herbs and Sea Salt

Ingredients

- 6 to 8 center-cut marrow bones approximately 3 inches long
- Fresh flat-leaf parsley finely chopped, 1 shallot very finely minced
- 1 tbsp capers roughly chopped, lemon zest and juice, flaky sea salt
- Sourdough toast to serve

Instructions

77. Soak marrow bones in salted cold water 12 to 24 hours in the refrigerator, changing water once. This draws out blood and purifies the marrow.
78. Pat dry. Place upright on a foil-lined baking sheet.
79. Roast at 450F for 15 to 20 minutes until marrow is soft and beginning to bubble at the edges.
80. While roasting, combine parsley, shallot, capers, and lemon zest into a gremolata. Serve bones immediately with the gremolata, lemon juice, flaky salt, and sourdough toast.

Scoop the marrow from the bone with a small spoon and spread on the toast like butter. Top with gremolata and salt. This is one of the most luxurious preparations in traditional cooking and one of the most nutritionally dense foods you can eat.

Sliced Beef Heart with Herbs and Garlic

Ingredients

- 1 lb beef heart, trimmed of fat and membrane, sliced thin against the grain
- 3 garlic cloves thinly sliced, fresh rosemary and thyme
- 2 tbsp tallow or ghee, red wine or balsamic vinegar splash
- Sea salt and cracked pepper

Instructions

81. Slice heart very thin, approximately quarter inch. This is critical for tender results. Season generously with salt and pepper.
82. Heat tallow in cast iron until smoking hot. Sear heart slices in a single layer 60 to 90 seconds per side. Do not overcook. Remove heart.
83. In the same pan saute garlic with herbs 30 seconds. Deglaze with wine or vinegar. Return heart and toss to coat.

Cooked correctly, beef heart has a flavor somewhere between a good steak and a well-seasoned mushroom. It is firm, deeply savory, and extremely satisfying. Among the most economical cuts available and among the most nutritious.

Sneaking Liver into Ground Meat

The most sustainable way to incorporate liver for those who cannot yet eat it in obvious form is to blend it frozen into ground beef. Frozen liver grated on a box grater and mixed into ground beef at a ratio of 10% liver to 90% beef is completely undetectable in flavor or texture.

84. Freeze beef or chicken liver solid.

85. Grate frozen liver on the large holes of a box grater directly into ground beef.

86. Mix thoroughly. Use in any ground beef application: burgers, meatballs, meat sauce, and tacos.

This technique makes it possible to eat the nutritional equivalent of a serving of liver hidden in food that tastes like regular ground beef. At 10% the flavor is genuinely undetectable. Particularly useful for feeding children or partners who are not yet organ meat converts.

10

RAW DAIRY: THE LIVING FOOD

What pasteurization removes and why it matters

Raw milk is the most controversial food in this guide. It is also one of the most nutritionally complete foods available to humans and one of the most universally consumed sacred foods that Weston A. Price documented across traditional cultures. The decision to consume raw dairy is a personal one that each reader must make for themselves.

This chapter presents the nutritional and historical case for raw dairy as Price and Fallon have made it, and provides traditionally prepared alternatives for those who cannot access or choose not to consume raw dairy. However you decide, favor a defined starter culture (like kefir grains or a commercial buttermilk or yogurt culture) over spontaneous room-temperature fermentation, which is much harder to control safely, and source raw dairy only from a farm with regular pathogen testing.

FOOD SAFETY MATTERS: RAW MILK

Raw milk can carry harmful bacteria such as Salmonella, E. coli, and Listeria, and public health guidance generally advises against it, especially for children, older adults, pregnant people, and anyone immunocompromised. If you choose to drink raw milk, source it from a farm with regular pathogen testing and clean handling practices, and store and use it cold. When in doubt, choose pasteurized.



Milk, straight from the source.

What Raw Dairy Contains That Pasteurized Does Not

- **Beneficial bacteria:** raw milk contains diverse *Lactobacillus* strains and other beneficial bacteria that colonize the gut. Pasteurization kills all of these.
- **Native enzymes:** lipase for fat digestion, phosphatase for calcium absorption, lactase for lactose digestion (which is why many lactose-intolerant people can tolerate raw dairy). Pasteurization destroys all enzymes.
- **Fat-soluble vitamins in their native form:** vitamins A, D, and K2 are present in raw dairy bound to the fat globule membrane in their most bioavailable configuration. Pasteurization and homogenization disrupt this structure.
- **Immunoglobulins and lactoferrin:** immune proteins completely destroyed by pasteurization. These are the compounds that give colostrum its extraordinary immune-supporting properties.
- **Wulzen factor:** a fat-soluble nutrient discovered by Dr. Rosalind Wulzen that prevents arthritis and joint stiffness in animal studies. Present in raw cream and butter, destroyed by pasteurization.

TRADITIONAL WISDOM VS MODERN EVIDENCE

Traditional wisdom: raw milk from grass-fed animals was treated as a complete, living food across many pastoral cultures.

Modern evidence: raw dairy does retain enzymes, immunoglobulins, and fat-soluble vitamins that pasteurization reduces, but pasteurization also removes a real infection risk. It's a genuine tradeoff, not a settled case either way, so make the choice that fits your household.

Traditional Raw Dairy Preparations

- **Cultured Buttermilk or Yogurt:** Rather than leaving raw milk to ferment spontaneously at room temperature, culture it with a defined starter (a buttermilk or yogurt culture, sold specifically for this purpose) and follow that culture's time and temperature guidance. A defined culture gives you a predictable, tested ferment instead of an uncontrolled one. If you would rather sidestep raw-milk fermentation altogether, kefir grains (below) are the easiest, most forgiving place to start.
- **Cultured Butter from Raw Cream:** Allow raw cream to sit at room temperature for 8 to 12 hours to allow natural bacteria to culture it slightly. Churn the cultured cream in a stand mixer or jar until the fat globules break and butter separates from buttermilk. Wash the butter in cold water, knead to remove all buttermilk, salt, and form into a log.
- **Kefir from Milk Kefir Grains:** Kefir grains are a symbiotic culture of bacteria and yeast that ferment milk in 24 to 36 hours at room temperature, producing a tart, slightly fizzy, probiotic-rich drink containing dozens of distinct bacterial and yeast strains. Strain the grains, refrigerate the kefir, and return the grains to fresh milk to begin the next batch.
- **Crème Fraîche:** Combine 1 cup cream with 2 tablespoons buttermilk or crème fraîche from a previous batch. Stir and leave at room temperature 12 to 24 hours. The cream will thicken to a rich, tangy consistency that does not curdle when heated.

Raw milk legality varies by state and country. In states where it is legal for direct sale, the Weston A. Price Foundation maintains a farm directory at westonaprice.org. When purchasing

raw dairy, look for farms with grass-fed, pastured animals, regular testing for pathogens, and transparent practices.

11

NOSE TO TAIL COOKING

How most of humanity cooked until the last 50 years

Nose to tail cooking is not a trend. It is a return to how most of humanity cooked until the last 50 years. Across traditional cultures, most of the animal was put to use. Little was wasted because little was considered waste. The bones made broth. The fat was rendered. The organs were often eaten first, prized for being some of the most nutritious parts.

The modern preference for boneless, skinless, tasteless chicken breast and premium cuts while discarding everything else is a cultural aberration of the last few decades. It is nutritionally impoverished, economically wasteful, and it contributes to a food system where the most nutritious parts of the animal are turned into pet food or discarded while humans eat the least nutritious.

The Economics of Nose to Tail

Nose to tail cooking is also the most economical approach to meat. Chicken thighs cost half the price of chicken breasts and are more flavorful and more nutritious. Chicken backs and necks are often free from a butcher who does not know what to do with them. Beef oxtail and beef cheeks are far less expensive than steaks and produce extraordinary results with slow cooking.

The secret that traditional cooks knew and that modern cooking has forgotten is that the best-tasting, most nourishing cuts are almost always the least expensive. They require more time and attention but not more skill. A braised oxtail requires patience but not talent.

Classic Braised Oxtail in Red Wine

Ingredients

- 3 lbs oxtail pieces
- 2 cups red wine, 2 cups homemade beef bone broth, 1 can crushed tomatoes
- 1 onion, 4 garlic cloves, 2 carrots, 2 celery stalks
- Fresh thyme, rosemary, bay leaves, 2 tbsp tallow or lard, sea salt and pepper

Instructions

87. Season oxtail generously with salt and pepper. Sear in tallow in batches until deeply browned on all sides. Remove.
88. Saute vegetables in the same fat until golden. Add garlic and cook 1 minute.
89. Add wine and reduce by half, scraping up the browned bits from the bottom.
90. Return oxtail. Add broth, tomatoes, and herbs. Liquid should come two-thirds up the oxtail.
91. Cover and cook at 300F for 3 to 4 hours until meat is falling from the bone.
92. Remove oxtail. Strain and reduce the braising liquid until it coats a spoon. Return oxtail. Serve over polenta, mashed root vegetables, or with crusty sourdough.

Oxtail contains the highest concentration of collagen of any beef cut. After slow cooking, the collagen melts into the braising liquid creating a sauce of extraordinary richness that gels beautifully when chilled. This is nose to tail cooking at its most delicious.

Rendering Fat While Cooking

Every time you roast a chicken, a duck, or any fatty piece of meat, you are producing rendered fat. Do not let it go to waste.

- After roasting a chicken: pour all the fat and juices from the roasting pan into a jar. Refrigerate overnight. The fat solidifies on top and the jelly sits below. Use the fat for schmaltz and the jelly to enrich sauces and soups.
- After cooking bacon or pancetta: save every drop of the fat in a jar in the refrigerator. Bacon fat is an extraordinarily flavorful cooking fat for vegetables, eggs, and cornbread.
- After browning ground beef: drain into a jar rather than the sink. Ground beef fat is essentially tallow and is excellent for sauteing.
- After making bone broth: the fat layer that solidifies on top is tallow (from beef) or chicken fat. Skim and save in a jar.

12

TRADITIONAL GRAIN PREPARATION

Why how you prepare grains matters as much as which grains you eat

There is a profound difference between a whole grain consumed directly from the field and the same grain that has been soaked, sprouted, or fermented through traditional preparation methods. This difference, largely ignored by modern nutritional science until recently, was understood empirically by every traditional culture that consumed grains regularly.

Grains, legumes, and nuts contain compounds called antinutrients: phytic acid, lectins, oxalates, tannins, and enzyme inhibitors. These compounds bind minerals like zinc, iron, calcium, and magnesium, preventing their absorption. They irritate the gut lining. When grains are eaten without traditional preparation, these compounds significantly reduce the nutritional value of the grain and actively harm digestion.

The Traditional Solutions

- **Soaking:** Soaking grains and legumes in warm water with an acidic medium such as whey, yogurt, kefir, lemon juice, or apple cider vinegar for 8 to 24 hours activates phytase, the enzyme present in the grain that breaks down phytic acid. It also begins breaking down lectins and enzyme inhibitors and partially predigests the grain.
- **Sprouting:** Sprouting takes the process further than soaking. When a grain or legume is kept moist and allowed to germinate, its phytic acid is reduced dramatically, its enzyme inhibitors are neutralized, its B vitamin content increases significantly, and the protein quality improves. Basic method: soak seeds 8 hours, drain and rinse, place on a tray, rinse and drain twice daily. Sprouts are ready in 1 to 3 days when a small tail appears.
- **Fermentation (Sourdough):** Long fermentation of grain with wild yeast and bacteria, the sourdough process, is the most complete antinutrient reduction method available. A proper sourdough with a 12 to 24 hour fermentation reduces phytic acid by 90 to 100%, dramatically reduces lectins, pre-digests gluten proteins, and produces a bread that even many gluten-sensitive individuals can tolerate.

Traditional Soaked Oatmeal with Toppings

Ingredients

- 1 cup rolled oats, 1 cup warm water, 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar, whey, or plain yogurt
- To serve: grass-fed butter, raw honey, fresh fruit, and cinnamon

Instructions

93. The night before: combine oats with warm water and acid medium. Cover and leave at room temperature 8 to 12 hours.

94. The next morning: add another cup of water and a pinch of salt. Bring to a simmer, stirring, 3 to 5 minutes.
95. Serve with a generous knob of grass-fed butter, raw honey, fresh or stewed fruit, and ground cinnamon.

Soaked oatmeal cooks in half the time, has a creamier texture, and is dramatically more digestible than unsoaked oats. This is how traditional cultures in Scotland, Ireland, and Scandinavia prepared oats for centuries.

13

THE SOURDOUGH DEEP DIVE

The original bread across countless cultures

Sourdough is the original bread. Nearly all bread before the commercial production of active dry yeast in the 19th century was a sourdough. Wild yeast and lactic acid bacteria ferment the flour, producing carbon dioxide for rise, lactic and acetic acids for flavor and preservation, and enzymes that transform the nutritional profile of the flour.

A true sourdough requires three things: a wild yeast starter, flour, and time. The result, when done correctly, is a nutritious, digestible, flavorful bread, and one that many people who find conventional bread difficult can eat without issue. One important caveat: long fermentation is not the same as gluten-free. Traditional sourdough can be easier for some people to digest, but it is not safe for anyone with celiac disease unless it is made with a certified gluten-free flour and starter.



Long fermentation, baked into something worth waiting for.

Building a Sourdough Starter from Scratch

A sourdough starter is a community of wild yeast and lactic acid bacteria naturally present on flour and in the environment. Building one from scratch takes 5 to 10 days. Once established, it lives indefinitely if fed regularly.

- **Day 1:** Day 1: Combine 50g whole wheat or rye flour with 50g filtered water at room temperature in a clean glass jar. Stir vigorously to incorporate air. Cover loosely and leave at room temperature.
- **Days 2 to 4:** Discard half the starter. Add 50g flour and 50g water. Stir well. Cover and leave at room temperature. Repeat this feeding daily. By day 3 or 4 you may see small bubbles beginning to form.
- **Days 5 to 7:** Switch to feeding twice daily if the starter is showing activity. The starter is ready when it doubles in size within 4 to 8 hours of feeding, has a domed top with bubbles, smells pleasantly yeasty and tangy, and a small amount dropped in water floats.
- **Maintenance:** For regular bakers: keep the starter at room temperature and feed once or twice daily. For occasional bakers: store in the refrigerator and feed once a week. Remove 12 to 24 hours before using and feed once to reactivate.

Basic Country Sourdough (Pane di Casa)

Ingredients

- 450g bread flour or a mix of bread flour and whole wheat
- 315g water at room temperature (70% hydration)
- 100g active sourdough starter (fed 4 to 8 hours before using)
- 9g sea salt

Instructions

96. Autolyse: combine flour and 300g water. Mix until no dry flour remains. Cover and rest 30 to 60 minutes.
97. Add starter and remaining water. Mix until fully incorporated. Add salt. Squeeze through fingers until combined.
98. Bulk fermentation: perform 4 sets of stretch and folds over the first 2 hours, one set every 30 minutes. Then leave undisturbed for 2 to 4 more hours until the dough is bubbly and jiggly.
99. Gently turn onto an unfloured surface. Shape into a round creating surface tension. Rest 20 minutes uncovered.
100. Final shape into a tight boule. Place seam-side up in a floured proofing basket. Cold retard: refrigerate uncovered 8 to 16 hours.
101. Preheat a Dutch oven in the oven at 500F for at least 45 minutes. Turn the cold dough directly into the hot Dutch oven. Score the top with a razor or sharp knife.
102. Bake covered at 500F for 20 minutes. Remove lid, reduce to 450F, and bake 20 to 25 more minutes until deep brown. Cool on a wire rack for at least 1 hour before slicing.

A perfect sourdough loaf has an open, irregular crumb, a crackling crust, a complex sour-sweet flavor, and a resilience that stays fresh longer than any commercial bread. The first loaf will not be perfect. The tenth will be extraordinary. Keep going.

Overnight Sourdough Pancakes

Ingredients

- 1 cup sourdough starter (discard or active)
- 1 cup whole milk or buttermilk, 1 cup all-purpose or whole wheat flour
- To add in the morning: 2 eggs, 2 tbsp melted butter, 1 tsp each baking soda and salt, 1 tbsp honey

Instructions

103. The night before: combine starter, milk, and flour. Cover and leave at room temperature.
104. The next morning: add remaining ingredients. Stir gently until just combined.
105. Cook in butter or lard on a medium-hot cast iron griddle until bubbly, then flip.

Overnight fermented sourdough pancakes are the most flavorful pancakes possible. The fermentation develops complex flavor and dramatically reduces the phytic acid content of the flour. Top with raw butter and real maple syrup.

14

THE ANTI-NUTRIENT REFERENCE GUIDE

Your master reference for traditional grain preparation

This is your master reference for understanding which antinutrients are present in which foods, what harm they cause if not addressed, and which preparation method eliminates or significantly reduces them. This is core Nourishing Traditions territory and one of the most practically useful reference tools in the ancestral cooking tradition.

Antinutrient	Found In	Neutralized By
Phytic Acid	All grains, legumes, nuts, seeds	Soaking, sprouting, sourdough fermentation
Lectins	Legumes (esp. kidney beans), wheat, nightshades	Thorough cooking, soaking, pressure cooking
Oxalates	Spinach, almonds, beets, chocolate, rhubarb	Cooking, calcium-rich food alongside, boiling
Tannins	Tea, coffee, wine, sorghum, some legumes	Soaking, cooking, fermenting
Enzyme Inhibitors	Raw grains, legumes, nuts, seeds	Soaking, sprouting, roasting, fermentation
Gluten	Wheat, rye, barley, spelt	Long sourdough fermentation (12-24+ hrs), sprouting
Saponins	Quinoa, legumes, some herbs	Thorough rinsing, soaking, cooking
Goitrogens	Cruciferous vegetables, soy, millet	Cooking reduces significantly; ensure iodine adequacy
FODMAPs	Onion, garlic, wheat, legumes, dairy	Cooking, fermentation, soaking
Phytoestrogens	Conventional soy, flaxseeds, some legumes	Traditional fermentation (soy), moderate intake

You do not need to avoid all foods containing antinutrients. You need to prepare them the way traditional cultures always did. Soak your grains and legumes overnight. Make sourdough bread from a long-fermented starter. Sprout your nuts and seeds. Cook your cruciferous vegetables rather than eating them raw in large quantities. These simple steps are what separate a traditional grain-containing diet from a problematic one.

15

SEASONAL COOKING AND FOOD PRESERVATION

The ancestral kitchen was a seasonal kitchen by necessity

The ancestral kitchen was a seasonal kitchen by necessity. Food was preserved in summer for winter. Roots were cellared in fall. Berries were dried or made into jam. Meat was salted, smoked, or fermented. This relationship with food preservation was not a burden. It was a source of skill, pride, and deep seasonal engagement with food.



Putting up the harvest, the old way.

Traditional Preservation Methods

- **Lacto-Fermentation:** The most nutritionally superior preservation method. Fermentation not only preserves food but improves it, adding beneficial bacteria, enzymes, and complex flavors. It is also the simplest and most ancestrally universal preservation method.
- **Salt Curing:** Salt draws moisture from food through osmosis, creating an environment hostile to pathogenic bacteria. Salt-cured fish, the salted cod of Scandinavia and Portugal, has sustained entire civilizations through winter. A basic salt cure is equal parts salt and sugar with herbs and spices, rubbed generously onto fish or meat and refrigerated 24 to 72 hours.
- **Smoking:** Hot smoking, cooking food to a safe internal temperature above 140F while it smokes, preserves and flavors at the same time, and is the more approachable method for a home kitchen. Cold smoking is a fascinating traditional art, but safe execution requires precise control of salt, temperature, humidity, and time. Use a tested recipe from a trusted food-preservation source rather than improvising, and don't rely on cold smoke alone to make food safe to eat.
- **Drying and Dehydration:** Sun drying was the most universal food preservation method before refrigeration. Dried mushrooms, dried herbs, dried fruit, dried meat (jerky and biltong), and dried fish have sustained human populations across every continent. Dehydrate at the lowest possible temperature to preserve enzymes.
- **Root Cellaring:** Root vegetables, winter squash, potatoes, apples, and other produce can be stored for months in a cool, humid, dark environment. A basement corner, an unheated garage, or a dedicated root cellar maintains the 32 to 40F temperature that keeps root vegetables dormant and fresh.

Easy Gravlox (Salt-Cured Salmon)

Ingredients

- 1 lb wild salmon fillet, skin on, pin bones removed
- 3 tbsp sea salt, 2 tbsp raw honey or sugar
- Large bunch fresh dill, 1 tsp cracked black pepper, 1 tsp lemon zest

Instructions

106. Combine salt, honey, pepper, and lemon zest.
107. Lay half the dill on a piece of plastic wrap. Place salmon skin side down on top.
108. Coat the flesh side generously with the salt mixture. Top with remaining dill. Wrap tightly and refrigerate with a weighted plate on top for 24 to 48 hours.
109. Unwrap and slice very thin on the diagonal. Serve with sourdough, cultured butter, and capers.

Gravlax is one of the great dishes of Scandinavian cuisine and one of the most accessible home-cured preparations. The salmon cures to a silky, richly flavored texture that is completely different from cooked salmon. Because it is never cooked, use salmon labeled for raw or sushi-grade consumption, and freeze it first per FDA parasite-control guidelines (commercial sushi-grade fish is

typically pre-frozen for this reason). Salt-curing seasons and firms the fish, but it does not reliably make it as safe as cooking does.

16

THE ANCESTRAL SPICE PANTRY

Spice as medicine across every traditional culture

Every traditional cuisine on earth built its identity through spice. The trade routes that connected the ancient world were spice routes. Wars were fought over pepper, cinnamon, and nutmeg. The spices of traditional cooking are not merely flavoring. They are medicine, preservative, and the accumulated wisdom of traditional cultures who observed their effects over thousands of years.

The Essential Ancestral Spices

- **Turmeric:** 4,000 years of documented use in Ayurvedic medicine as an anti-inflammatory, digestive, and liver-supporting herb. Never use without black pepper (piperine increases curcumin absorption by 2000%) and fat (curcumin is fat-soluble).
- **Ginger:** Used across Asian, Indian, and Middle Eastern traditional medicine as the primary digestive herb for over 5,000 years. Antinausea, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, and warming. Use fresh, dried, and fermented.
- **Cinnamon:** Blood sugar regulating, antimicrobial, and warming. Used across every culture with trade access for thousands of years. Ceylon cinnamon has lower coumarin content than Cassia and is preferred for regular use.
- **Cumin:** Digestive herb par excellence. Used across Indian, Middle Eastern, North African, and Latin American cuisines. Stimulates digestive enzyme production and reduces bloating.
- **Coriander:** The seed of the cilantro plant, paired almost universally with cumin. Heavy metal detoxifying, digestive, and antimicrobial.
- **Cardamom:** The most expensive spice by weight after saffron and vanilla. Essential in Scandinavian, Indian, and Middle Eastern baking and cooking. Digestive support and powerful antioxidant.
- **Black Pepper:** Increases the bioavailability of curcumin, selenium, and many other nutrients. Anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, and warming. Always pair with turmeric.
- **Cloves:** Among the highest antioxidant foods measured by ORAC value. Analgesic, antimicrobial, and digestive. Essential in spice blends across every culinary tradition.

Traditional Spice Blends to Make From Scratch

Ras el Hanout (North African)

2 tsp each cumin and ginger, 2 tsp coriander, 1 tsp each cinnamon and turmeric and paprika, half tsp each cardamom and cloves and black pepper, quarter tsp each cayenne, nutmeg, and allspice. Toast all spices briefly in a dry pan until fragrant. Cool completely and grind in a spice grinder. Store airtight up to 6 months. Use on lamb, chicken, vegetables, and in tagines.

Garam Masala (Indian)

2 tbsp each cumin seeds and coriander seeds, 1 tbsp black pepper, 1 tsp cardamom seeds, 1 tsp cloves, 2 cinnamon sticks broken, half tsp nutmeg. Toast whole spices in a dry pan until fragrant and slightly darkened. Cool completely. Grind to a fine powder. Store airtight. This is the most aromatic garam masala possible versus pre-ground.

Za'atar (Middle Eastern)

3 tbsp dried thyme, 2 tbsp dried oregano, 2 tbsp sumac, 1 tbsp sesame seeds toasted, 1 tsp sea salt. Combine all. Mix with olive oil and use as a dip, rub, or topping for bread. Mix fresh before each use for the most aromatic result.

17

TRADITIONAL COOKING TECHNIQUES

Time, patience, and attention over talent and equipment

The techniques of ancestral cooking are simple in principle and endlessly rewarding in practice. They require time more than skill, patience more than talent, and attention more than equipment. Every technique in this chapter has been practiced across multiple traditional cultures for thousands of years because it produces results that no modern technique can fully replicate.

Braising

Braising is the technique of browning meat at high heat and then cooking it slowly in a small amount of liquid in a covered vessel. The combination of moist heat, time, and the Maillard reactions from the initial browning produces the most tender, flavorful, and nutritious result from the toughest, most collagen-rich cuts. Every traditional culture practiced braising, from the French braise to the Moroccan tagine to the Chinese red braised pork to the Indian curry.

The keys to perfect braising: brown the meat deeply before adding liquid. Use the most flavorful liquid you have, ideally homemade bone broth. Keep the heat low enough that the liquid barely simmers. Give it time. A braise that has cooked for 4 hours is dramatically better than one cooked for 2.

The Maillard Reaction

The Maillard reaction is the chemical process by which amino acids and sugars react at high heat to produce hundreds of new flavor compounds. It is responsible for the brown crust on seared meat, the golden color of bread, the complexity of roasted coffee, and the caramelization of onions. It is the most important chemical reaction in cooking.

The Maillard reaction requires surface dryness (wet meat steams rather than sears), high heat (minimum 280 to 330F), and a fat with an appropriate smoke point. Pat meat completely dry before searing. Use a fat with a smoke point above 400F for high-heat searing. Do not crowd the pan, overcrowding drops the temperature and causes steaming rather than browning.

Low and Slow Roasting

Traditional cultures that had access to ovens or fire pits understood that long, slow cooking of large cuts of meat produced results that quick cooking could not: complete collagen conversion, deep flavor development, and tender, self-basting meat. The French rotisserie tradition, the American pit barbecue tradition, the Argentine asado, and the Polynesian imu all represent different cultural expressions of the same fundamental insight.

Slow-Roasted Beef Short Ribs

Ingredients

- 4 lbs bone-in beef short ribs
- 2 tbsp tallow or ghee, sea salt, cracked pepper, garlic powder
- 1 cup bone broth and aromatic vegetables for the roasting pan

Instructions

110. Season short ribs generously 24 hours ahead. Refrigerate uncovered to dry the surface.
111. Sear in smoking hot tallow until deeply browned on all sides. Do not rush this step.
112. Place in a roasting pan. Add 1 cup bone broth and aromatic vegetables.
113. Cover tightly with foil or lid. Cook at 250F for 6 to 8 hours until completely tender.
114. Rest 20 minutes before serving. Reduce the cooking liquid into a sauce.

Short ribs cooked this way are among the most satisfying dishes in any cuisine. The collagen in the ribs converts to gelatin during the long cook, creating a self-basting effect and producing meat that falls from the bone into rich, gelatinous cooking juices.

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COMPLETE ANCESTRAL MEAL RECIPES*Bringing everything together*

This chapter brings everything together. These are complete ancestral meal recipes that draw on the broth from Chapter 6, the fermented sides from Chapter 7, the rendered fats from Chapter 3, the organ meats from Chapter 9, and the traditionally prepared grains from Chapter 12. Each meal is a complete expression of the ancestral kitchen philosophy.

Broth-Poached Eggs with Sourdough and Cultured Butter**Ingredients**

- 2 cups homemade chicken bone broth
- 4 pastured eggs
- 2 slices sourdough bread, toasted
- Generous portion of grass-fed butter, fresh herbs, flaky salt, cracked pepper

Instructions

115. Bring broth to a bare simmer in a wide pan. Add a splash of apple cider vinegar.
116. Crack each egg into a small cup. Slide into the barely simmering broth.
117. Poach 3 minutes for runny yolks. Lift out with a slotted spoon.
118. Toast sourdough and spread with very generous butter. Serve eggs on toast. Ladle a small amount of broth alongside as a sipping broth.

This breakfast provides bone broth for gut lining, pastured egg yolks for choline and fat-soluble vitamins, fermented sourdough for probiotic and nutrient benefits, and grass-fed butter for K2 and butyrate. A complete ancestral breakfast in 10 minutes.

Salmon Nicoise with Fermented Vegetables and Traditional Vinaigrette**Ingredients**

- 2 wild salmon fillets, poached in broth or lightly seared
- 4 pastured eggs, soft boiled
- Haricots verts or green beans blanched, small potatoes boiled and cooled (resistant starch)
- Olives, capers, and anchovies, 2 tbsp fermented pickles or sauerkraut
- For vinaigrette: 1 tbsp Dijon mustard, 2 tbsp raw apple cider vinegar, 4 tbsp olive oil, fresh herbs

Instructions

119. Arrange all components on a platter. Dress with vinaigrette.
120. Serve the sauerkraut or fermented pickles on the side.

Wild salmon provides DHA, vitamin D, and selenium. Eggs provide choline and fat-soluble vitamins. Cooled potatoes provide resistant starch for the microbiome. Anchovies and capers provide iodine and minerals. The fermented condiment provides probiotic support. This is the ancestral kitchen firing on all cylinders.

Pot au Feu (French Boiled Dinner)

Ingredients

- 3 lbs mixed bone-in beef cuts: short ribs, oxtail, and brisket
- 4 marrow bones
- 4 carrots, 4 leeks, 4 turnips, 1 head celery, 1 onion studded with cloves
- 1 bouquet garni: thyme, bay, parsley, peppercorns
- Bone broth or water to cover
- To serve: Dijon mustard, cornichons, flaky salt, sourdough, cultured butter

Instructions

121. Place beef in a large pot. Cover with cold broth or water. Bring slowly to a near-boil. Skim foam consistently for 30 minutes.
122. Add bouquet garni and onion. Reduce to lowest simmer. Cook 3 hours.
123. Add marrow bones and all vegetables. Cook 1 more hour.
124. Serve the broth first as a soup with marrow bones and sourdough toast for spreading the marrow.
125. Then serve the meat and vegetables on a platter with mustard, cornichons, and flaky salt.

Pot au Feu is one of the great dishes of French peasant cooking and one of the most complete ancestral meals available. The broth is medicine. The marrow is medicine. The slow-cooked collagen-rich cuts are medicine. It is a meal in two courses that feeds the whole body.

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BUILDING ANCESTRAL COOKING HABITS

A practice that builds over months and years

Ancestral cooking is not something you achieve all at once. It is a practice that builds over months and years as you accumulate skills, season your cast iron, develop your sourdough starter, and establish the habits that make traditional food preparation feel natural and effortless.

The Weekly Rhythm of an Ancestral Kitchen

Every ancestral kitchen had a rhythm. Certain things were done on certain days. This rhythm is not constraint. It is structure that makes traditional cooking sustainable in a modern life.

- Sunday or batch cook day: make bone broth, start a ferment, prepare soaked grains for the week, roast a whole chicken or large cut for multiple meals
- Monday: use the roasted chicken for dinner, save the carcass
- Tuesday: make broth from the carcass if you did not do it Sunday
- Wednesday: bake sourdough from the starter fed on Sunday
- Thursday: use the broth as the base for soup or stew
- Friday: fermented foods have been ready for the week, use liberally
- Saturday: shop for next week's ingredients, plan the batch cook day

Getting Children Involved

Children who participate in the preparation of food are dramatically more willing to eat diverse, nourishing food than children who do not. This is universal across cultures. Traditional societies involved children in food preparation from the earliest ages as a form of education, skill transfer, and family bonding.

- Toddlers can wash vegetables, stir soft mixtures, and hand you ingredients
- Young children can peel garlic, tear herbs, roll dough, and pack fermentation jars
- Older children can learn to make sourdough, ferment vegetables, and prepare simple dishes independently
- Teenagers can learn to make broth, season cast iron, and understand why traditional preparation methods matter

Your First Year in the Ancestral Kitchen

The most common mistake in transitioning to an ancestral kitchen is trying to change everything at once. The sustainable approach is exactly what the ancestral approach to any lifestyle change requires: gradual, intentional, prioritized, and enjoyable. Not more pages, just one skill at a time.

- **Month 1:** Learn your fats and season your pan

- **Month 2:** Make broth
- **Month 3:** Start a ferment
- **Month 4:** Learn one soaked grain or legume
- **Month 5:** Begin sourdough
- **Month 6:** Learn one organ-meat recipe
- **Then:** Keep building. Expand your fermenting repertoire, explore more organ meats, deepen your spice knowledge, and let the kitchen become the center of your home.

The Kitchen as Sacred Space

Weston A. Price found the same thing in every traditional culture he studied. Not just nutritional superiority in the food. But a reverence for the food and for its preparation. The kitchen was the center of the home. The preparation of food was a skilled practice passed from generation to generation. The sharing of food was the primary vehicle for community, celebration, and care.

When we cook the way our ancestors cooked, we are not just improving our nutrition. We are recovering a relationship with food that modernity has systematically dismantled. The act of rendering fat, making broth, fermenting vegetables, and baking sourdough is a reclamation. It says that this matters. That how we feed ourselves and those we love is worth our time and attention. That the kitchen is not an inconvenience but a sanctuary.

Start with the cast iron. Start with the broth. Start with the sourdough starter bubbling on your counter. The rest follows.

Cook the food your great-grandmother would recognize. Feed the people you love the way people have fed the ones they love across countless traditions. That is the whole philosophy.

Your Weekly Kitchen Rhythm: A Checklist

Print this page and keep it on the fridge. This is the rhythm from Chapter 19, laid out so you can check it off.

- ☐ **Sunday:** batch-cook day. Make bone broth, start a ferment, prepare soaked grains for the week, and roast a whole chicken or large cut.
- ☐ **Monday:** eat the roasted chicken for dinner and save the carcass.
- ☐ **Tuesday:** make broth from the carcass if you did not do it Sunday.
- ☐ **Wednesday:** bake sourdough from the starter you fed on Sunday.
- ☐ **Thursday:** use the broth as the base for soup or stew.
- ☐ **Friday:** lean on whatever ferment is ready this week.
- ☐ **Saturday:** shop for next week's ingredients and plan the next batch-cook day.

**THE KITCHEN IS NOT AN INCONVENIENCE.
IT IS A SANCTUARY.**

Start with the cast iron. Start with the broth. The rest follows.

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Informed by the research of Weston A. Price and the work of Sally Fallon Morell