



HOW TO COOK AND PREPARE WHOLE FOODS?



Whole foods are foods found in their natural state, as close as possible to the way they were grown. When you eat whole foods, you benefit from having all the fiber, protein, vitamins and minerals intact. They have not been processed to give them a longer shelf life. Whole foods are perishable in their nature and can go bad or rancid. Select whole foods in the produce section of your grocery store: fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as raw nuts, seeds, grains, and legumes. Many of our processed foods today are fortified to add vitamins and minerals. Although this can improve the nutritional content it does not make them into whole foods. White bread for example has had the germ, (the protein) and the bran, (the fiber) removed, thereby losing most of the vitamins and minerals also. Some of the vitamins are then added back in to make it a healthier product, preventing basic vitamin deficiency.

Whole foods require preparation to eat, and must be peeled, chopped, diced, juiced, soaked, steamed, or baked to name a few methods of preparation. You would be surprised how many people own a steamer basket, and know how to use it. Steaming fresh or frozen vegetables is one of the delights of whole food consumption. Vegetables picked straight from the field are frozen, and their vitamins are kept intact, which is a great way to consume them for health value. If steaming is boring you, try baking potatoes, yams or squash in the oven. Olive oil is an unprocessed oil, and almost all vegetables can be cooked in a little olive oil in a frying pan, a technique called saute-sealed. This preserves the taste and seals in the nutrients. Saute-seal your fresh or frozen vegetables on medium for a superior taste and texture. Also try pressure cooking grains and beans to seal in flavor, an alternate to slow cooking.

Eating fruits and vegetables in season helps give us variety, but so does eating by the rainbow: select whole foods of different colors to bring appeal to the palate and the plate.