



Nourishing Traditions: The Cookbook That Challenges Politically Correct Nutrition and the Diet Dictocrats

Sally Fallon , Mary G. Enig , Marion Dearth (Illustrator)

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The Diet Dictocrats don't want you to know that...

- Your body needs old-fashioned animal fats
- New-fangled polyunsaturated oils can be bad for you
- Modern whole grain products can cause health problems
- Traditional sauces promote digestion and assimilation
- Modern food processing denatures our foods but
- Ancient preservation methods actually increase nutrients in fruits, nuts, vegetables, meats and milk products!

At last, a successful challenge to Politically Correct Nutrition and the Diet Dictocrats!

Recalling the culinary customs of our ancestors and looking ahead to a future of robust good health for young and old, *Nourishing Traditions* offers modern families a fascinating guide to wise food choices and proper preparation techniques. Nutrition researcher Sally Fallon unites the wisdom of the ancients with the latest independent and accurate scientific research. The revised and updated Second Edition contains over 700 delicious recipes that will please both exacting gourmets and busy parents.

Nourishing Traditions: The Cookbook That Challenges Politically Correct Nutrition and the Diet Dictocrats Details

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Author : Sally Fallon , Mary G. Enig , Marion Dearth (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review Nourishing Traditions: The Cookbook That Challenges Politically Correct Nutrition and the Diet Dictocrats for online ebook

Samee says

This cookbook brought my understanding of food to a new level. More than any other (aside from perhaps my Zen cookbook), Fallon's book made me engage with ingredients and think about them in new ways. It added another dimension to my cooking (almost literally--it was like moving from Flatland to Sphereland). It showed me where the life was in my food.

With that said: DO NOT RELY on Sally Fallon for your nutrition and cooking information needs. She is just as much of a diet dictator as the shadowy figures she rails against--and forget about the "studies" she cites throughout (in 10pt marginalia on every page, no less). She lives in a mysterious and no doubt exciting world where anecdotal evidence topples the wisdom of decades and the hard work of scientists, where the dietary necessities of "primitive" cultures become the gospel for a decadent First World, and where any foodstuff that comes in a box is imbued with some sort of acid that slowly eats away at your vitals.

I exaggerate. But not much. She represents most of what I love and hate about the holistic health movement(s), and as a result, I think that her book is important reading for all of us.

In brief: she advocates whole foods, healthy fats, plenty of meat, lots of cooked vegetables, lots of whole grains, lots of fermented dairy, and lots of fermentation in general. I heartily approve of her general cooking philosophy (although I have no objections to vegetarianism, as she does), but I don't approve of her premises or her strictness.

As with almost any cookbook of this length (7x10, 12 and 10 point font, no photos, nearly 700 pages), the recipes are hit or miss, although there are a higher proportion of winners than one might expect. She shines, oddly enough, in the snack and dessert sections (possibly because I don't have an enormous sweet tooth). Likewise, her dairy and egg recipes are almost universally delicious. Her bread and grain recipes are quite good if you pay attention to proportions and add (gasp!) white flour when necessary. It's definitely a good idea to experiment with her condiments; many of the recipes are good, but tastes will vary. She gets low marks from me in the seafood section; many of the recipes are bland, and most involve poaching. I have no desire to poach every fish I eat.

If you're a gourmand, her most unusual recipes are certainly the reason to buy this book. She provides excellent step-by-step instructions for daunting projects like sourdough, sauerkraut, kimchi, various chutneys, and raw meat appetizers. She also includes recipes for obscure and old-fashioned dishes and drinks like small beer, liver and onions, and Yorkshire pudding. She does not always do justice to non-European dishes; sometimes it's her fear of heavy flavoring, and sometimes she just seems to miss the point. Most importantly, though, you can gain a real, nuanced understanding of fermented foods and traditional cuisines through her notes--as long as you ignore some of the more wingnutty bits and supplement with your own reading.

If you are looking for a sensible introduction to home cooking, this is not the book I would recommend for you. But if you know a bit about food, and you want to connect with and think critically about your food, I heartily recommend this book.

Maren says

I came upon this book three years ago at Barnes and Noble. I read it, sitting in the bookstore, leaning against the bookshelves over the course of a few weeks, while my kids were at preschool for an hour. Fallon puts together a very interesting book though she isn't an anthropologist, a researcher, or a very good chef (though some of her salads are delicious).

She denounces modern food preparation methods, including the pressure cooker and the microwave in favor of old-fashioned methods of preserving, culturing, sprouting, etc. She advocates time spent in the kitchen feeding a family wholesome, unprocessed foods. She also advocates the family garden and farm. Her book made me really think about how little I knew about the processes our food goes through before it hits our grocery store shelves. Fallon got me into making my own yogurt and experimenting with alternative grains. I now own this book, and though I don't like many of the recipes, I like reading the quotes and getting ideas. I also think her suggestions on soaking grains to make them more digestible (especially for children) are dead on.

Lucinda says

As a child I lived in the city, playing outside, watching a lot of tv and chasing down the ice cream truck until my dad remarried when I was 8 and we moved to a small farm. On that farm, our family ate EXACTLY how she teaches in this book. We milked our cow and goats and drank raw milk. We raised and butchered our own cow, pigs and chickens. My step-mom made us eat liver (organs) and lacto-fermented foods like sauerkraut and pickled veggies. She was German but now I am wondering if she lived by this book!

We have a son that was born with heart defects so I am constantly reading books that will teach me how to feed him to protect him against worsening his heart disease and this book takes us back to eating a diet before all the modern inventions ruined our food. We are doing some things right like eating eggs from a neighbors chickens, eating butter (never margarine), we only use coconut oil and cold-pressed olive oil and never any oils that aren't expeller pressed, we buy all organic fruits and veggies and plant a garden and we only eat beef and chicken from a local farm. We also just found a source for raw milk since homogenized/pasteurized milk is one of the main sources for heart disease.

Before I found this book I already knew of Weston Price (a dentist) and his travels to remote tribes and villages where he studied their teeth and their diets. It is amazing what he learned! If any tribe was near civilization he always cautioned them not to EVER eat anything from the "white man's stores"! We would be doing a lot better if we did the same. I am a big supporter of co-ops and farmers markets! If we didn't travel so much, we would probably have our own small farm. I actually appreciate my childhood experience even though I didn't like my mean step-mother! Read this book!

Ruth says

I have such a love / hate relationship with Sally Fallon and the Weston A Price Foundation. So much of what they advocate is so wonderful - a return to real food, slow cooked, sustainably grown - and delicious.

Unfortunately, the legitimate scientific studies and well-reasoned arguments are mixed together in equal parts with unsubstantiated, unscientific hogwash.

Jill says

Wow! This book is seriously challenging my notion of good food and a healthy diet. Just getting into it, but I think many of her ideas are right on: lacto-fermentation, sprouted grains, cultured dairy products, meat - especially organs, and real butter! I didn't know whether to laugh or cry when, over a bowl of my homemade granola, I read the intro to the chapter on whole grains: "Nor do we recommend granola, a popular "health" food made from grains subjected only to dry heat and therefore extremely indigestible. Granola, like all processed breakfast cereals should have no place on our cupboard shelves. Boxed breakfast cereals are made by the extrusion process, in which little flakes and shapes are formed at high temperatures and pressures. Extrusion processing destroys many valuable nutrients in grains, cause fragile oils to become rancid, and renders certain proteins toxic. For a new generation of hardy children, we must return to the breakfast cereals of our ancestors - soaked gruels and porridges." I made her soaked millet porridge for breakfast the next morning - topped with milk, butter, and maple syrup (as she recommends) and it was fabulous. But I still stare longingly at my jar of granola...

Melanie says

Ok, this book is a little outdated, so I wonder how the more recent research on omega3/6/9 plays in to what's here. Or certain alternative sweeteners. Also really dogmatic ("everything for sale at the grocery store is crap; you really need to shop exclusively at health food stores or direct from farms") and if you follow the advice without living on a farm, you're gonna be broke pretty quick. Even if you're rich, you'll be time-impoverished while sprouting/fermenting/culturing all this stuff. You should use methods and techniques that traditional peoples used, and steadfastly avoid the microwave or pressure cookers. I don't know what she thinks of hot water canning.

Another problem is data mining: she accepts WAP's nutritional theories from the 1920s-30s as gospel while dismissing almost all data that don't align with those theories. If I had a baby and nourished him properly from conception, would he have a "broad handsome face" capable of accommodating all 32 strong adult teeth? I haven't checked the other references in the book, but if the book is 15 years old, the studies are older, and in nutrition science, a decade is practically a lifetime. I definitely agree there is tons of room for improvement in the Western diet but don't necessarily believe that everything in this book must be adhered to all the time (seriously? no chocolate? no wine? sushi is bad but not carpaccio? pork is apparently a no-go but she never explains why). Also, I would never touch offal, certainly not from factory farmed meat. I wouldn't grate frozen liver to slip into my children's rice pilaf or mix sauteed brains into the meatloaf. Nor would I drink water with clay dissolved in it, even if it does contain beneficial minerals, or wean my child early because my milk was "inferior" to her insane formula recipes (pig milk, anyone?)

As for the recipes, I hate how in order to make one you have to make another one (or more) first. I don't have time to make my own yogurt and grind my own wheat and spelt in order to make pizza dough, which, of course, I have to top with tomato sauce (made by me, and ideally containing bone broth as an ingredient). Or make my own whey in which to ferment fruits/vegetables. Some of the recipes are intriguing and I understand the value of meal planning but doing so at this level is ridiculous, I must say. A lot of them

require special ingredients that must be ordered from elsewhere (piima, kefir, kombucha, kelp, etc) which is more than a little bit of a hassle. And with varying fermentation times, a cold spell this week could upset the meal plans two weeks from now.

Laura Lemay says

Any book that contains the word "dictocrats" in the title should probably be read with a wary eye. This is a rant in the form of a cookbook, based on the work of the Weston Price Foundation. I'm sympathetic to many of the ideas here (especially the idea of eating natural, organic, unprocessed foods) but I think the authors use questionable science to back up many of the more out-there ideas. There's some serious cherry picking of references here. If it convinces people to eat healthier, to eat closer to nature, that's a good thing, but I was turned off by the didactic, lectury tone and the wacky conspiracy theorist smell.

I did like the fermenting recipes (I have some pickles up right now using the recipes in the early part of the book), but little other that really called out to me that I had to try.

I'm glad I read it because a bunch of friends have been pushing the WP foundation at me, and now I know exactly what they're up to, but I'm not at all convinced by the arguments.

Cassie says

Man, I love this Nourishing Traditions cookbook. It has immediately filled my kitchen with little dishes of fermenting stuff in a way that even Wild Fermentation did not. Fallon is pretty big on meat (mmm organs) but i think even hard core vegans could find stuff to take from it, e.g. fermenting fruits and veggies, soaking grains, eating coconut oil. It may even make me a raw dairy product convert if I get a little ambition. It's sort of the perfect recipe book companion to Pollan's In Defense of Food.

melissa says

I am a reformed vegan. I will say this again and again with no shame. I was a longtime vegetarian who went vegan after being diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis and fibromyalgia. I thought I was eating "cleaner" and "healthier". I guess I did feel morally superior but physically I felt like crap and I never felt any relief from autoimmune disease flare-ups. Then I was diagnosed with hypothyroidism. I felt like my body was turning against me even though I thought I was healthy. After finding out that soy was a big NO for anyone who is hypothyroid (and here I was living off of a diet that was about 90% soy! I mean, Tofutti Cuties!!) I felt stuck. And then magically one day I met Weston A. Price. Only I didn't actually meet him because he's dead and everything, but I met his foundation. I'm not going into all the specifics. Go do that yourself. But I tell you all this because my life has seriously been changed/improved/healed after I picked up Nourishing Traditions.

I've loosely been following the dietary guidelines for about a month and I have experienced:
-ridiculously improved energy. I mean *insane*. And I have almost-normal sleep now!
-weight loss without much effort

-almost nonexistent sugar cravings (before this sugar was my heroin. I mean, shakes and chills and visions of goblins until I had an hourly fix)

-cleared complexion

-okay, this is going to be harder to explain but I have this definition I never had before in my face and body. Like, contours I never knew I had. And it's not the weight loss because even when I was terribly thin I didn't have quite the same definition. I mean, it's magic!

Plus I've had about 99% less joint swelling! Magic, I tell you! I will get off this soapbox now!

So, as another review said, this is more textbook than cookbook so I have a feeling I will be reading this forever. The general idea is grass-fed, organic meats, full-fat dairy (and lots of it!), coconut oil, organic produce and then only two parts I haven't ventured in to, lacto-fermented foods and organ meats. The former because I tried to make fermented carrots and the smell was too vile to try them and the latter because I'm still too squeamish to venture inside the animal. Also, I haven't had raw dairy yet because there is only one certified raw dairy farm in Texas and it is a few hours from where I live. I MISS YOU CALIFORNIA I WILL COME BACK SOON!!!

There are 7500 characters remaining for this review. I wish I could use them all. 7481.

Astrid says

This book inspired me to become a nutrition consultant. It's a must-read. The first part of the book discusses nutrition concepts, and the second part presents a plethora of recipes. Don't worry if you are vegetarian; while Fallon focuses much of her time on meats, there is plenty of other information to be gleaned from this volume.

Sara says

I was first given this book by an herbalist friend of mine who endorsed its content and position on diet, but warned me about Sally Fallon's "spit-and-vinegar" approach to food choices and social change. No doubt--Nourishing Traditions absolutely lives up to its subtitle in Sally Fallon's direct, no-nonsense critique of prevailing nutritional values and investigation of the vagaries of processed foods. This book is both a bible of useful recipes and an argument for a considered, holistic relationship to food and diet that are incredibly valuable.

I am a vegetarian, and it's important to note that Fallon does not endorse vegetarianism, nor is the text limited to meat-free recipes (by any means!). Nonetheless, both the meat and meat-free recipes are numerous and fascinating. I took a brief break from vegetarianism a few years ago, and this was my reference for the transition.

Nourishing Traditions begins with a section about nutrition that I recommend as much as the recipes that make up the bulk of the book. Probably her most adamant position is that about the importance of saturated fats in a healthy diet. (Similarly, this book takes a strong stance against trans-fats; it was published before the mainstream anti-trans-fats revolution a few years ago.) She favors pro-biotic fermented foods just as highly and opens the book's recipes section with instructions for fermenting dairy and vegetables.

I recommend this book as a cooking reference and as a starting place for reevaluating one's relationship to food--it advocates a more integrated, participatory relationship to food and diet, and it is deeply empowering.

Becca says

My stepmother gave me this book for my birthday. Looking it over at first I thought-- "Wow, she thinks I'm a spelt-eating, raw-milk drinking, conspiracy theorist lunatic." This book begins with 80 pages of single space size 10 font INFORMATION-- about how the USDA, the American Cancer Association, and your pediatrician are all part of a sinister alliance to give you cancer, heart disease, cavities, and arthritis, and about the vast conspiracy of misinformation in the health and food world, and more detailed chemical analysis of the foods you should and shouldn't eat than I've ever read before.

Did I say looking it over-- at first?

Well at second look-- I read the whole 80 page introduction. It basically says: Eat butter, eat sea salt, eat meats, preserved food and soaked foods are easier to digest and have more enzymes. Don't eat sugar, or white flour, or any fat besides butter and olive oil. Traditional cultures have the right idea: butter, organ meats, sausages, pates, miso, natto, saurkraut.

And on third glance-- once I got past all the dense reading and into the actual recipes-- wow, this stuff is yummy.

As weird as this book is, I have had it for 3 days and I have made 5 recipes out of it already: yogurt cream cheese, whey, carrot kim chee, dill pickles, bean sprouts. That's a way better track record than my favorite, The Joy of Cooking.

Roslyn Ross says

Just finished reading this beast cover to cover (it's half cookbook, half nutrition re-education). The most important book on food/health I have read in my life. I have been making my own keifer, cream cheese, butter, buttermilk, root beer and so many other things since I got this--it's been incredible! So far the effects of eating this way include: no more hair loss for Tom, beautiful skin for me, overall feeling happier, no desire to eat sugar or drink alcohol (I am convinced that those cravings are actually cravings for lacto-fermented beverages and things since now I will literally be having a bad day and crave my homemade root beer or kombucha). We'll see as time goes on what other benefits turn up! Regardless, I love the food!

Amy says

Full of well-researched and presented information on the value of traditional foods and dietary habits. Fallon has an agenda, but is not afraid to point out the failings of any kind of extreme diet. The only drawback of this book, she advocates against coffee and chocolate because of the negative effects of caffeine. I suppose, in logic, I agree, but I get so much satisfaction from those two items, that I can't imagine a fulfilling life without them. Such is the nature of addiction.

michael says

As a cookbook, its ok. It has a few odd and interesting recipes, but nothing really that jumps out as memorable.

As for the rest. Its starts out by trashing fad diets while trying strongly to encourage you to believe it isn't a fad diet itself. Then rumbles on into telling you that packaged, prepared food is bad for you, you're gonna die of malnutrition. Packaged, prepared ingredients are bad for you, you're gonna die from malnutrition. Your only chance is to get hard to find and expensive raw ingredients. Which you must correctly prepare prior to consumption, else you're gonna die from malnutrition. Basically, you're gonna die from malnutrition, but this book is here to save you.

Overall, the book presents such an extreme viewpoint that it can be difficult to read at times. While there are maybe good ideas presented in the book, they are drowned out in the dogmatic preaching.
