



Healing with Whole Foods: Asian Traditions and Modern Nutrition

Paul Pitchford

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Used as a reference by students of acupuncture, *Healing with Whole Foods* is an invaluable guide to the theory and practice of Chinese medicine. With facts about green foods such as spirulina and blue-green algae and information about the "regeneration diets" used by cancer patients and arthritics, it is also an accessible primer on nutrition—and a inspiring cookbook with more than 300 mostly vegetarian, nutrient-packed recipes.

The information on Chinese medicine is useful for helping to diagnose health imbalances, especially nascent illnesses. It's smartly paired with the whole-foods program: because the Chinese have attributed various health-balancing properties to foods, you can tailor your diet to help alleviate symptoms of illness. For example, Chinese medicine dictates that someone with low energy and a pale complexion (a yin deficiency) would benefit from avoiding bitter foods and increasing "sweet" foods such as soy, black sesame seeds, parsnips, rice, and oats. (Note that the Chinese definition of sweet foods is much different from the American one!)

Pitchford says in his dedication that he hopes the reader finds "healing, awareness, and peace" by following his program. The diet is certainly ascetic by American standards (no alcohol, caffeine, white flour, fried foods, or sugar, and a minimum of eggs and dairy) but the reasons he gives for avoiding these "negative energy" foods are compelling. From the adrenal damage imparted by coffee to the immune dysfunction brought on by excess refined sugar, Pitchford spurs you to rethink every dietary choice and its ultimate influence on your health. Without being alarmist, he offers dietary tips for protecting yourself against the dangers of modern life, including neutralizing damage from water fluoridation. There's further reading on food combining, female health, heart disease, pregnancy, fasting, and weight loss. Overall, this is a wonderful book for anyone who's serious about strengthening his or her body from the inside out.

Healing with Whole Foods: Asian Traditions and Modern Nutrition Details

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Dawn says

As a friend put it, "he's a real radical." And yes, Paul Pitchford is very extreme in his assessments and directives. No sweets, no dairy or meat, except for the super-debilitated. It can be hard to figure out where you fit into all the information, but, after 2 years of poring over this tome, I find myself mentally referring to it with frequency, as well as looking to it often for recipes and advice. Also, importantly, it is no substitute for (competent) professional guidance, except maybe in very standard cases like diabetes. Highly recommended, but only serious candidates need apply.

Taran Hans-dhillon says

What an insight into Asian food! Anyone who believes in good diet, psyche and spirit this book is for them. It outlines the warning signs of illnesses and makes clear recommendations about foods and herbs that can be used in order not to worsen the illness. I haven't practiced any of the recipes, generally eat right anyway, but a couple of people who have read the book and practiced have actually recovered from their ailment, and some even from very severe conditions. I can, of course believe, on a common sense level if the health problem is arrested with right diet the body can heal itself and be stronger again.

I would strongly recommend this book for those who are constantly visiting doctors and having medicines for every little problem with their body. You can be healthy again but you need to take charge of what you put inside; they say stomach is the root cause of all illnesses. And if you throw the right stuff in it will it pay you dividend. So start thinking of your poor stomach who is so reliant on you!

Ah, it is worth getting an extra copy or two to keep handy for a near and dear one. I got it as a gift! I personally think, the information in the book is worth every penny spent.

Rolan Gregg says

a huge and complete book. run, don't walk, to get this one. everyone needs a copy even if you eat Froot Loops.

Gerbik says

Essentially a vegan adjustment of traditional Chinese medicine, this is a fucking tome (and I haven't read all of it). Nonetheless, it has the scent of total authority. More of a life-long reference than anything else, it is pretty great if you are interested in significantly changing your diet and balancing your constitution. Recipes, self-diagnostic stuff, theory, history, etc. Immense.

Corrina Sysyn says

This is almost a daily read for me. Highly recommend to anyone looking to improve their diet to combat an illness or to improve the quality of their life in general. This might be the best guide to whole foods I've ever owned...and I have quite a few. This one ain't collecting dust on my bookshelf. WE ARE WHAT WE EAT!

Jenalyn says

Asian healing can be at best confusing. However in what little research I have done they are spot on about many things, especially the links between personality and constitution. I reference this book almost once a day. Especially when trying to figure out how to pair food. Should I drink water with this meal? Should I serve this hot or cold for the best nutritional intake?

Mimi says

always reading this book. just a great resource on nutrition, definitely for those interested in chinese/asian nutrition theory and health. for most asians, especially in ayurvedic thought, the gut is the source of all the bodies ailments and this book speaks to that. he talks about foods that most people don't eat, sea vegetables, dark greens, grains like millet and amaranth. it has helped me to learn and incorporate a lot of foods i wasn't raised with into my eating.

Hepburn says

Paul Pitchford, the author of this book, studied Chinese medicine for a long time, so he spends a lot on ink writing about Yin-Yang theory. The interesting part in this section was about qi (chi), which is called prana in India and ki in Japan.

This book also suggests dietary treatment of several diseases in Part IV, so you can use it as reference.

The final chapter of this book was the most fascinating for me. It introduces "Sattva," which means "the path of equilibrium and essence." In Sattvic lifestyle, activities such as yoga and t'ai chi are practiced. Regarding diet, Sattvic food is simple, and Sattvic individual avoids overeating. Finally, Sattvic person has a clear and focused mind.

Well, I will spend rest of my life as a Sattvic person!

Heather P says

This was one of my textbooks in grad school and I thoroughly enjoy it. It is full of information that is sure to change your eating habits for the better. It lists different conditions and ways to eat to heal your body. It has a great section on calcium, magnesium, and brown rice that I think is invaluable. If you are concerned about what you eat and how to live healthier then you need to check out this book.

Stosch says

don't sleep on this. call it my bible.

Maile says

The most useful book I've owned - I don't go a day without referencing it.

Heidi says

This book changed my life. It explains how eating the right foods can heal what ails you, and it explains it in a way that makes total sense. I first read this book in 1995, and I continue to use it as a reference to this day.

Jamie says

an epic overview of east meets west nutrition from a chinese medicine perspective [no ayurveda here]. I'm not sure I'll finish this 700+ page reference, but it has been easier to use it as such since reading some of the deeper diagnostic discussions early on in the book. because I temper my hippie eating food habits [currently being dubbed the 'privileged peasant' diet] with lots of butter and bacon, I'm not sure I can be a proponent of this book with full integrity. but if you walk the middle path, like me, you'll find yourself somewhere between cool/hot, damp/dry, internal/external, and so forth...

Lisa Kekaula says

I will never be finished with this book. It is a manual for understanding your personal relationship to food and your body. I go to it often

Jib says

"Convenient" would be the word I'd use to describe this book. And that's really what it is: any time I need to refer to something on nutrition, I look it up in this book.

The Internet is extremely easy to use for research purposes. Many times I'll use Healing with Whole Foods

as a "jumping pad," by reading through what Pitchford said about the topic, then using the terminology I pick up from the book to do further research online.

An example would be hypoglycemia. I'll read notes from this book that he's written, then take what I learned from there to kickstart my research online (for example, instead of doing a blind search for "hypoglycemia" on Google, I'll go in with the aim of finding out the role of glucagon in a certain context, or glycogen, or how specific foods affect the condition, so on and so forth).

In other words, this book is fantastic for foundational knowledge, and encouraging the development of a very strong foundation via independent research from as many other sources as possible. I don't refer to this book as an authority on anything, but again, as a "jumping pad" that is a *great* aid to me in furthering my own research and experimentation.

The principles of food energetics (e.g., warming/cooling/drying/moistening/dispersing/collecting nature of foods, the bitter, sour, sweet, pungent, salty, astringent flavors, etc...) are very useful. The basic concepts of consuming more plant-based foods, chewing your food well, and paying attention to how you prepare and combine foods in order to balance deficiencies/excesses in your body (and how to identify excesses/deficiencies in your body)....these tenets are very helpful, and make a whole lot of sense.

An example of how this helps me daily is that I've gotten in the habit of eating raw radishes with heavy, fried meals, when I have them (which isn't too often), in order to help digestion (and I do find that this helps a lot), and I've been getting better at zeroing in on what the problem is when I feel sick, e.g., bad food combinations, overeating, not chewing well enough, or general damp/cold/hot/etc. conditions -- and I can make active moves to remedy that, such as selecting foods with the appropriate qi nature, e.g., if I'm feeling very hot and sluggish (very easy in this humid weather), I might make an effort to eat more celery and cucumbers, eat radishes with meals to help with digestion, avoid overeating, focus on chewing well, and also stay away from warm or hot foods, as well as moistening foods.

Nutrition can be a very obsessive compulsive world. Pitchford presents a very balanced view, and addressing foods as 'functional' -- none inherently being 'better' than another food, but actually have its own time and place in life to help us best...this is a very balanced approach, and it's the perfect remedy to all the dieting crazes going on now, which I think can tragically be very harmful to people by locking them into obsessive or compulsive mindsets where they think of foods as "good" or "bad."

Nutrition is all about balance. You can overdo anything, and you can under-do anything. Overindulgence can be as bad as neglect; a good lesson here is that over-eating certain foods can incur deficiencies, as minerals can compete for absorption -- the safest route to take is to let yourself relax, and select foods from a very wide spectrum. This book will help you find out what foods may be most appropriate for you in your current situation, and since we're dynamic beings, it will also help you find out what foods will be appropriate for you in any number of situations. Sometimes dairy will be very helpful; other times, it might be wise to avoid it completely.

Overall, reading this book can help you re-train your body to get back into a natural relationship with food, and to help you to see foods as having a function and purpose in life -- to give you energy, and to help you along -- and teach you about which foods can best assist you for your current physical condition and individual needs.

I thought this was a very un-biased and helpful book, overall, and I highly recommend it. And if you don't agree with something he says, or want to know more about it, you can go online and do some research. This

is one thing that's beautiful about the times we're living in now :D (so really, at the very worst, this book is an excellent resource for inspiring research and jumpstarting your understanding of nutrition and the immediate application of this knowledge into your daily life).

This one's a win-win all the way around.

*Also, the recipes are amazing. Simple techniques like making grain/seed milks are basically like doors opening up a whole new food group. I might be getting a little excited about that, but man, a lot of the ideas in there are pretty unique, and I'm really thrilled to be able to try all these things out (I love my oat yogurt XD)
