

Eating with Colors:
Eating Locally Grown: Impressions and Knowledge from a Gourmet
Dr. Henriette Alban

A late Summer morning, with welcome rain finally falling, was the perfect time to make a thick vegetable stew. I had large and delicate squashes, purple potatoes, fall kale, a couple of hot peppers, shallots and garlic, all locally grown.



This is and more is what I pile into my market basket every week coming home from the Farmer's Markets. Here in Pennsylvania, we're truly fortunate to have abundant clean water, great soil for agriculture and many small and medium farmers who provide our area with clean, fresh, home-grown, unsprayed and organic produce.

Connecting well with the people who grow my food is important to me. It lets me know that the various mushrooms, the vegetables, the fruits, spices and nuts, the herbs and tinctures, soaps and salves have been made from the same ground where I live, whose water I drink and whose wind and sunshine I share.

"Why", you ask? The closer to your own area that you can eat and live – i.e., the shorter the distance from trees and fields to your table – the better it is for your overall health and wellbeing. "Farm to Table" movements are growing all across the country. And gourmet restaurants have embraced the idea as progressive and environmentally sustainable. You could say eating healthy has become trendy and fashionable. About time, I say.

CSAs

It's no longer in question that to shop for conventionally sprayed, pesticide-laden fruits and vegetables is bad for us. I choose not to be politically correct. If you're passionate and clear on what your well-being deserves,

you find a way to make it work for you. Whether we shop for organic foods online or we buy a 'share' from a Community Supported Agriculture farm (CSA), we make sure our families get the best food possible.

Our bodies can't handle the chemical load anymore. And in the long run we know that ultimately, quality of life comes down to avoiding chronic health issues, inflammation and, of course, how well we live our older years.



Some farmers offer CSAs for the growing season only. Others supply you with produce from the greenhouse through the cold season as well. And for those who are interested in 4-season gardening yourselves, I refer you to Elliot Coleman, whose book of the same name is a classic and who perfected this concept in frigid Maine.

If there is nothing in your community and no farms with CSA options, you could start a co-op with neighbors where you buy from an organic supplier or wholesale directly from a purveyor. Some large box stores have an organic section for produce.

Eating the Rainbow

So how about the colors? ***Eating the rainbow is what is recommended.*** How do I do that? First off, as in all my recommendations, begin with what you already know and like. Which veggies and fruits does your body crave? Is there a seasonal difference? Are you eating the same boring iceberg lettuce with tomatoes and cucumbers, or are you already enlivened with baby kale, raw spinach leaves, arugula, grape tomatoes and thinly sliced, fresh zucchini?

You may notice a change in your taste preferences from fresh and juicy in Summer to rooted and warming in the Winter. Greens throughout the year are easily assimilated into a year-round menu. In fact, wintergreens, such as kale, mizuna, mache and beet greens don't mind the cold weather. Leaving the root veggies in the ground through frost, increases their natural sweetness and nutrient content. Even while some greens will freeze overnight, come the thawing sun, you can harvest them for a deliciously sweet or bitter treat. Bitter flavors are super healthy for your liver and help you detox on a daily basis.

Shop as late into the season from the local farms as possible. Local, unsprayed is better than organic from California or Texas, unless of course you live around the corner from these farms. Food once plucked from the earth, and cut from the plant, quickly loses its efficacy and flavor, not to mention the enzymes. Enzymes keep us healthy and are one of the main reasons to also eat raw veggies with your meals. Anyone with hydration issues is advised to eat lots of raw fruit and vegetables, either in juice form or as a piece, for the highly charged water is the right ionic way to nourish your cells.

Should you not yet be a produce lover, I invite you to taste and sample the flavorful late Summer and Fall offerings still available in many areas. Many recipes offer soups or stews that include these wonderful nourishing veggies. Sweet potatoes, the many Fingerling, purple, yellow potatoes are so delicious, many of them heirloom varieties. That means they are the same since great grandma's times, and have not been altered for growing, and changed for extended shelf life or travel conveniences.

More Fall vegetables include Squashes, Carrots, Green and Yellow Zucchini, and Cucumbers. How about sweet and hot peppers, they deserve an important place in your medicine cabinet. Did you know that if you toss a whole red Cayenne pepper into a stew or soup, it enhances the flavor manifold. Don't bother cutting out the seeds, stem or membrane, the soft heat that comes from leaving it whole is an extra bonus to the chef. All peppers, especially the red, orange and yellow ones as well as many of the hot peppers, are high in Vitamin C, which is much better absorbed from food than from supplements. Try freezing the peppers you buy at the market and use them as you desire. Or, you could get them dried and even smoked. That's an amazing flavoring agent for your pea and bean soups and happily leave out the ham hocks.



Let's take a closer look at how nutrients of these colorful natural gifts nourish our bodies and minds and are in fact essential for whole body function.

Yellow

All laxative foods are yellow and many of them contain magnesium. We have Yellow Summer and Winter Squash, Apricots, Oranges, Grapefruit, Castor Oil (ideal for a pack over your liver and gallbladder) and Senna. Organic non-GMO Yellow cornmeal is a good laxative food, even though it is a heavy starch, because it's high in magnesium.

Other high magnesium foods include: Apples, Avocados, dried Bananas, Beet tops, Black Walnuts, Brazil nuts, Cashews, Cabbage, Coconuts, Sunflower seeds, Dandelion greens (yellow flowers) and many more.

Orange

Orange foods are among our most loved staples and include Oranges, Apricots, Carrots, Pumpkins, Parsnips, Summer squash and more. The compounds that give orange and yellow fruits and vegetables their color are called carotenoids. Carotenoids may help improve your immune function and lower your risk for heart disease, vision problems and cancer. Beta-carotene is a carotenoid that your body uses to create vitamin A. Folate, potassium, bromium and vitamin C are also often found in orange and yellow fruits and vegetables.

Red, Blue and Purple

Red, blue and purple fruits and vegetables usually contain anthocyanins, and red fruits and vegetables often contain lycopene as well. Both are high in vitality and actively fight stress in our body. In their interactions, anthocyanins have antioxidant properties that help limit damage caused to your cells by free radicals and may also lower your risk for heart disease, stroke, cancer, macular degeneration and memory problems. Lycopene may help lower your risk for cancer and heart disease. These brightly colored fruits and vegetables often also

contain essential vitamins and minerals such as potassium, vitamin A, vitamin C and folate. Compounds in these fruits and vegetables also help keep your vision and immune system healthy and limit your risk for urinary tract infections.



Berry Balance™

Just like eating red, blue and purple vegetables, Xooma's Berry Balance product offers a powerful and unique multi-berry extract. Studies showing how berries are rich in anthocyanins deliver potent health benefits. Blood sugar support is another key offering of Berry Balance. Some of the many benefits from the ingredients in Berry Balance include antioxidant support, enhanced brain function, mental clarity, anti-aging properties, and cardiovascular protection.

Green

Chlorophyll-rich foods are Kale, Chard, Collard Greens and Lettuces, Green Apples that have been grown in sunshine and naturally rich soil, exposed to the photosynthesis of the sun. At the same time, these foods contain high amounts of natural minerals synthesized by their growth from healthy soil on farms that enrich their ground with natural composts and ascertain the right level of Soil Based Organisms. Some of these fruits and vegetables also contain indoles, which may lower your risk for cancer, and lutein, which helps prevent problems with your vision. Other common nutrients in many of these fruits and vegetables include vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin K and folate.



KardiaXyme™

Closely tied to the 'green' category of food, KardiaXyme is a unique blend of hand-selected varieties of algae and an exclusive source of marine minerals. We know marine algae is green, and algae is often referred to as a super alkaline food. KardiaXyme is a superior, one-of-a-kind algae supplement that contains potent and highly bioactive polyphenols that optimize cellular, cardiovascular and metabolic health to support lifelong physical and mental wellness.

White

White fruits and vegetables get their color from polyphenol compounds with antioxidant properties called anthoxanthins, which may help lower your risk for heart disease and cancer. Some white foods, like garlic, contain allicin, which may help lower the risk for high blood pressure, high cholesterol, cancer and heart disease. These foods may also be good sources of potassium, vitamin C, folate, niacin and riboflavin. A study published in November 2011 in "Stroke" found that consuming more white fruits and vegetables may lower your risk for strokes.

Among them, we have white Eggplant, Daikon and red Radish, Belgian Endives, the Mexican Jicama, Turnips, Kohlrabi and more.

The traditional palette of colors covers the entire living spectrum.

Now this is just the colors of food. But wait, aren't we surrounded by colors as well? Don't they influence our moods and our chemistry? Sure do. And many people love to live surrounded by color on the walls, on the floors and in the clothes and accessories they wear, a favorite coat and jacket. Doesn't that make you feel

good? For the girls, how much does a lead-free lipstick color make us feel and look more alive, especially during the no tanning months?

Much has been written about colors as therapeutic agents, stimulating us to think, to have more vigor in the bedroom, deepening our sense of peace and calm, offering more restful sleep, and even to stimulate our appetites.

Color is the marriage of light and substance – the transformation is magical as everyone knows who has ever watched a garden ripen to its fullness.

We are beings of light. Light suffuses all our healthy tissues and cells. Sometimes we meet people who radiate light who are shiny, who seem to be lit up brightly. Such a person is not only very healthy, they are also emotionally filled with light and joy.

What tones of colors speak to you? Do you like them warm, cool, in-between, mixed? Does it make a difference if it's Winter or Fall? Fashion and styles reflect the seasons with lots of matching colors; orange around Fall and deep greens into Winter; and more recently, a wine colored burgundy that has a different appeal when we think of the deep red of a lovely Cabernet, Pinot Noir or Merlot.

You eat with your eyes, too. Well, I hope you do. What could be more important than to appreciate the beautiful presentation of great food on a table, or on your plate? Well, eating it, may be just as delightful as seeing it. Don't you find sometimes when you get a really pretty looking wrapped gift that it's too nice to open? You would like to enjoy it a bit more by looking at it for some time, keeping the contents a mystery for just a little longer...

I have that with food. I love looking at it, admiring the arrangements on my plate, thinking about what I might begin with and enjoy the fragrance of what's offered. Meanwhile, my salivary glands are busy following my eyes and my nose. They are producing just the right enzymes, the right digestive juices to help digest what my other senses have detected.

Just ask someone who loves cooking and has an entire shelf (or more) dedicated to cookbooks. Being one of them, I can share that we're just as turned on by the pictures as we are by the desire to make the dishes offered. When you have an inherent desire to make food for your loved ones, you will find a way to learn and improve. You'll look more towards the fresh and healthy spectrum. These days we have so many chefs who have brought organic, vegan, vegetarian and omnivore menus and plates to our attention, there is something for everyone. From complex to simple, learn to prepare your food with your own hands. Cooking classes are fun opportunities to meet new people and to create community. Or, if you already know how, why not share your tastes and skills with a few friends on a rotating basis? Sharing food is Love!

Food offered and eaten with love and having a gusto for the presentation is the first course of any meal. It is your appreciation of what is in front of you that benefits your digestion that transforms the food into real energy and joy. Can you imagine eating this way all the time? Some call that mindful eating, while others speak of being a gourmet.

Here is a bit of a distinction that gets confused. A 'Gourmet' is someone who enjoys the quality of food and who is a connoisseur (derived from the French word for 'knowing'). A 'Gourmand', on the other hand, or

'glutton', is someone who enjoys the quantities of food; the more the merrier, like the all-you-can-eat buffets. Of course, where the word comes from, namely France, they don't have all-you-can-eat buffets! That's not a priority in Europe in general. They do love good food, fresh, and delectably presented in a way that enhances the eating experience.

So yes, I get it, not every meal is that delectable and well prepared, or even colorful or aromatic, to be worthy of admiration. After all, eating, feeding ourselves is a necessity and we often don't have time to do it right. Still, we have a choice. We can choose to have at least two, maybe three meals a week prepared in a way that delights our senses and satisfies more than just our hunger. It fills an appetite for beauty and harmony from our tables to our bodies.

Such meals - in fact all meals - deserve to be eaten mindfully and slowly chewed with gratitude in our hearts. Studies have shown that actually blessing our food by forming a dome shape over our plate, energizes what you eat to a higher level. Such mindfulness is easy to perform. Try to take a moment's notice of your plate and bless it before digging in.

Foundational support with Xooma

X2O™ helps Xooma's other products work better, or synergistically, as we say. Since water is foundational for our bodies, X2O is foundational for our water. Having over 70 naturally-occurring trace minerals, X2O water offers better hydration along with an alkaline-rich environment. We know this is key for vitally good health, along with a diet rich in locally grown and chemical-free vegetables and fruits. So I encourage you to drink your X2O water and eat a local rainbow-colored diet!



Thank you and here's to your good health,
Henriette Alban, ND



Born and raised in Switzerland by health conscious parents, Dr. Henriette Alban, ND grew up using natural ways to achieve and maintain well-being. Building on this foundation from her youth, Henriette moved to New York City where she studied and received certifications in Shiatsu and Swedish massage therapy, as well as digestive and colon health therapies. She also became a researcher in vitamins, nutrition and hormone health – all of which was very helpful after she gave birth to a beautiful son whose allergies led to life-threatening asthma. While watching the ineffectiveness of the medical system in healing her son, she intensified her studies of the holistic field to avert the awful effects of asthma. Founding a group for parents of asthmatic children in NYC, she brought in experts in the field and offered much needed nutritional advice to parents who were challenged by how to take care of their asthmatic children.

Combining her 20 years of studies, Henriette Alban pursued and was awarded a Diploma of Doctor of Naturopathy from the Trinity School of Natural Health in 1997. The same year she opened her private practice in Maryland, with the intent of helping people in the community to eat better and learn how to heal themselves and their families. Almost immediately she began holding classes, lectures, and workshops. Thus, she brought to reality her desire to be a beneficial presence in the world. Henriette, now in Reading, PA opened her practice Living in Balance in 2004.

As part of Xooma's Advisory Board, Dr. Alban brings years of experience and a variety of modalities to support her work in helping others create positive changes in their health and their lives. This is coupled by a strong sense of quality and integrity in formulations and a desire to assist Xooma in making products as pure and effective as possible.