



**Natalia García**

Functional Nutrition & Wellness

# Eating Clean, Unprocessed Foods

A whole food is food that has not been altered since it was harvested from the ground or animal. A chicken breast, a pear, a sweet potato, and an onion are all whole foods. A processed food goes to a factory and is altered, treated, or combined as an ingredient into some food product. Not only is the food refined and changed from its natural form, but sugar and other junk ingredients are often added as well. By eating whole foods and avoiding processed foods, you are automatically reducing your intake of sugar and refined starches that cause health problems.

## Examples of **WHOLE FOODS**:

- Organic chicken, grass-fed beef, fish, eggs
- Nuts, seeds
- Fresh fruits
- Fresh vegetables
- Legumes and beans\*
- Starchy vegetables
  - Red Bliss potatoes
  - Sweet potatoes
  - Winter squash
  - Beetroots
  - Cassava
  - Plantains

\*Not suitable for people with autoimmune conditions





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## HEALTHY FATS

- Avocado
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Coconut oil

## SWEETENERS

- Organic Stevia
- 100% maple syrup
- Organic honey

## BAKE WITH:

- Almond flour
- Coconut flour
- Chickpea flour



There are foods on this list that you do not eat exactly as they are harvested from the ground. These are minimally processed foods. They are processed into a form that makes them more user friendly, with as little alteration or added ingredients as possible. Examples would be olive oil or coconut flour. Olives grow on trees, but they have to be pressed to make the oil. You could press them yourself, but if you buy a bottle of olive oil it is still a whole food. Similarly, if you buy coconut flour, it is just ground coconuts, nothing more. These are whole real foods.

Some foods have to be scrutinized to decide if they are really minimally processed. Almond milk may fall into either category of minimally or largely processed. When choosing a brand of almond milk, it is important to examine the ingredients. Some brands of almond milk add sugar, carrageenan gum, xanthan gum, and preservatives. Other brands of almond milk contain only almonds, water, and salt. The latter brands are obviously the minimally processed whole foods.



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Examples of processed foods:

- Bread, pasta, crackers
- Candy
- Chips, pretzels, granola bars
- Most cereals
- Muffins and cookies
- Sausage, salami, bologna, hot dogs
- Fruit snacks, fruit juice.



Nothing comes out of the ground  
looking like a loaf of bread

## **A word about wheat:**

Many people think whole wheat is a whole food. To eat unprocessed wheat means eating stalks of grass. So, the breads and pastas that are available at the store are **always processed**. You can buy minimally processed wheat grass at health food stores.)

I encourage you to find better alternatives that use the simplest real ingredients and are gluten free. This way you can be sure that you are taking care of your gut health and body balance. You can refer to the "Better Alternatives" document for the best substitutes.

It isn't realistic to expect yourself to never ever eat a processed or packaged food again. The goal is to have whole foods as the norm, and processed food more infrequently. When you do have processed foods, try to make sure that they are made with whole food ingredients.

As you decide about what foods to eat, practice asking yourself "is this a processed food?" It is a simple straightforward way to look at food. Let it guide you to make healthful choices. Remember, you do not need to be perfect or eat whole food 100% of the time to feel the benefits. Try as much as you can. The more you stick to real whole foods, the more your body will thank you for it.