

# Change is Good! Tonya Judd, M.H.

It is easy to get caught up in fixing the same meals and eating the same foods every day. Believe me, I know! When I switched to a whole foods, plant based lifestyle I would make an amazing guacamole with fresh tomatoes, avocado, onion, garlic and lemon juice that I would wrap in romaine or butter lettuce leaves. I thought that it was delightful. It was my favorite “meal”. I was new to this lifestyle change and was grasping to figure out and learn how to make meals in a new way. Keep in mind that this was many years ago before there were so many raw/whole food, plant based blogs, recipes and books. I had found a few raw food blogs that featured recipes. At times it felt like learning a foreign language with some of the ingredients! I was also, sadly, in the fear mode. I feared that if I didn’t do it “right” it wouldn’t work and I wouldn’t see the benefits or have the results I was desiring.

We eat the same foods without adding variety for a variety of reasons. Oft times it’s a matter of convenience. We know how to make that particular meal and know it’s one that we or our families enjoy. The lack of time to prepare new recipes can often keep us from trying something new, and sometimes we really like certain foods and don’t mind eating them often. I am not implying that you can’t or shouldn’t eat the same meal multiple times each month or that you need a plethora of expensive, ethnic or even time consuming recipes. Simple and nutrient filled meals are the goal. Yet there are reasons to mix things up a bit and incorporate a variety of fresh fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds and whole grains in new and different recipes while still keeping it simple. Some of the main reasons to add variety are as follows:



- A variety of whole foods helps to give your body the necessary nutrients. Just think of the vitamins, mineral, micronutrients and phytochemicals that can be obtained from eating a variety of yellows, purples, reds, oranges and greens as vitamin and mineral content differs between foods.
- You can become bored with eating the same foods day in and day out. When this happens it is easier to fall back into your old patterns.

- Eating the same thing every day can lead to nutrient deficiencies and burnout wherein you no longer want to eat that particular food or meal.

Remember we eat with our eyes first, so keep your foods colorful. Variety is essential to your success for several reasons. We should also keep in mind that presentation has a lot to do with how much we enjoy our food. We should set the table, sit at the table and eliminate electronic distractions.

Learn to make and have a variety of salad dressings to have on hand. This is one thing that can make all the difference in changing a basic salad into a meal. Let's say you have 3 different salad dressings that are ready for the week and they include: Italian Dressing, Asian Garlic Dressing and a Chili Lime Dressing. Each salad could realistically start with the same bed of greens. For the "Italian" salad you could add tomatoes, zucchini, olives, sprouts, onions, garbanzo beans and red peppers. For the "Asian" salad you could add avocado, mung bean sprouts, sesame seeds, red bell pepper and mandarin oranges. The "Chili Lime" salad could include green chilies, avocados, black beans, onions, corn and tomatoes.

If you are accustomed to eating a pre-soaked and low heated grain for breakfast, try adding some fun mix-ins. For instance if you love oat groats, try mixing in apples, dates, coconut, shredded carrots and cinnamon. Blueberries, coconut and lemon zest are a super combination as well.

Keep in mind that herbs and spices {fresh or dried} are an excellent way to add variety and change basic meals and add an extra added punch of nutrition! Try some new spice blends or make up your own.

As for dinners, baked potatoes topped with beans and veggies or your homemade marinara sauce and fresh chopped veggies make a great simple main dish. Hummus with veggies and a sprouted pita make an excellent simple lunch. Sauté a portabella mushroom with some onion, red and green bell peppers and add fajita seasoning.

Try making a few extra servings that you can pop in the freezer and reheat in the oven for another meal. I love to make veggie burgers and store them in the freezer for future meals. These are great as a topping for a salad or as a burger with other sides. When you make a batch of soup freeze the left overs for another meal.

These are just a few simple suggestions to help give you some ideas to change things up and make your meals fun while providing optimum nutrition. If you would like more ideas, we include a recipe with each Herbal Legacy Newsletter or you could try some of the following books available at Christopher Publications:

- \*The Oh She Glows Cookbook
- \*Eat Clean Live Well Cookbook
- \*FAVES
- \*Original Fast Foods

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