



[www.rawsomelivingfoods.ca](http://www.rawsomelivingfoods.ca)

"Our mission is to be inclusive, non-judgmental and welcoming; ready to engage anyone interested in Living Food to strive for a more healthy lifestyle. The struggle with health concerns can be daunting. Our goal is to convince anyone struggling with health opportunities to be passionately patient with yourself."

## February Newsletter

February 2012



*"Nature alone is antique, and the oldest art a mushroom."  
-Thomas Carlyle*

One of my favourite authors on food topics is Michael Pollan. In **The Omnivore's Dilemma**, he writes that we don't know the most basic things about mushrooms.

"Part of the problem is simply that fungi are very difficult to observe. What we call a mushroom is only the tip of the iceberg of a much bigger and essentially invisible organism that lives most of its life underground. The mushroom is the 'fruiting body' of a subterranean network of microscopic hyphae, improbably long rootlike cells that thread themselves through the soil like neurons. Bunched like cables, the hyphae form webs of (still microscopic) mycelium. Mycologists can't dig up a mushroom like a plant to study its structure because its mycelium is too tiny and delicate to tease from the soil without disintegrating. ... To see the whole organism of which [the mushroom] is merely a component may simply be impossible. Fungi also lack the comprehensible syntax of plants, the orderly and visible chronology of seed and vegetative growth, flower, fruit, and seed again. The fungi surely have a syntax of their own, but we don't know all its rules, especially the ones that govern the creation of a mushroom, which can take three years or thirty, depending. On what? We don't really know. ...

"Fungi, lacking chlorophyll, differ from plants in that they can't manufacture food energy from the sun. Like animals, they feed on organic matter made by plants, or by plant eaters. Most of the fungi we eat obtain their energy by one of two means: saprophytically, by decomposing dead vegetable matter, and

mycorrhizally [like chanterelles and morels], by associating with the roots of living plants. Among the saprophytes, many of which can be cultivated by inoculating a suitable mass of dead organic matter (logs, manure, grain) with their spores, are the common white button mushrooms, shiitakes, cremini, Portobellos, and oyster mushrooms. Most of the choicest wild mushrooms are impossible to cultivate, or nearly so, since they need living and often very old trees in order to grow, and can take several decades to fruit. The mycelium can grow more or less indefinitely, in some cases for centuries, without necessarily fruiting. A single fungus recently found in Michigan covers an area of forty acres underground and is thought to be a few centuries old. So inoculating old oaks or pines is no guarantee of harvesting future mushrooms, at least not on a human time scale. Presumably, these fungi live and die on an arboreal time scale.

"Mycorrhizal fungi have coevolved with trees, with whom they've worked out a mutually beneficial relationship in which they trade the products of their very different metabolisms. If the special genius of plants is photosynthesis, the ability of chlorophyll to transform sunlight and water and soil minerals into carbohydrates, the special genius of fungi is the ability to break down organic molecules and minerals into simple molecules and atoms through the action of their powerful enzymes. The hyphae surround or penetrate the plant's roots, providing them with a steady diet of elements in exchange for a drop of simple sugars that the plant synthesizes in its leaves. The network of hyphae vastly extends the effective reach and surface area of a plant's root system, and while trees can survive without their fungal associates, they seldom thrive. It is thought that the fungi may also protect their plant hosts from bacterial and fungal diseases.

"The talent of fungi for decomposing and recycling organic matter is what makes them indispensable, not only to trees but to all life on earth."

From The Omnivore's Dilemma by Michael Pollan; published by Penguin (2006)

### ***A thought from Rawsome Coaching:***

*Be yourself. Everyone else is already taken. - Oscar Wilde*

Looking to recapture YOU? Wanting to feel alive and energized? **Rawsome Lifestyle Coaching** can offer you innovative ways to recapture what's at the heart of your passion. It may start with rethinking the foods you eat. It may start with aligning your values to your actions. It may be the start of something new.

To learn more and to sign up for my weekly blog go to [www.rawsomecoaching.ca](http://www.rawsomecoaching.ca)



## **Upcoming Workshops and Events**

**For more details visit:**

**<http://www.rawsomelivingfoods.ca/events.html>**

### **Coming in February and March**

- **Rawsome Living Foods will be taking a short break**

We are looking forward to a visit to Thailand to sample Raw Thai cuisine and explore a few raw retreats/cleansing facilities. In March Jim will be in Tokyo teaching Raw Food Preparation, desserts and pastries to raw food chefs and educators.

## **Transition Tip**

### **Making the move to RAW:**

#### **Setting Up Your Kitchen**

Inspired by Best of The Raw  
[www.thebestofrawfood.com](http://www.thebestofrawfood.com)

Making the transition from cooking to preparing raw food requires you to take a look at your kitchen appliances. Choices of equipment should be guided by the following criteria:

- Easy to operate
- Easy to clean
- User friendly
- Not too big (counter space is premium real estate)
- Not expensive
- Practical and Fun!

When it comes to getting your kitchen appliances together, ask yourself, "Will I actually use them?" Think about what kind of recipes you're likely to make most and that should help guide your decisions.

In raw food preparation there are some basic tools that will make preparing food quick, fun and a lot easier. Some kitchen appliances you could use a lot or hardly at all, depending on your favourite recipes, available time and budget.

Your first choice is a high-speed blender. This is to a raw foodist, what a stove is to a cook. It's used to make smoothies, shakes and soups in minutes and you'll

use it several times a day. The two most recommended brands of blenders are the Vitamix and Blendtec. They're equally good. The Blendtec is easier to find and more economical in Canada. It has a bigger motor and is programmable.

The best raw food juicer depends on what you expect to be juicing most. Carrots are easiest in a centrifuge juicer, whereas green leafy vegetables are best in a twin gear juicer. If you buy a centrifuge juicer, make sure you'll buy one where you can juice whole apples and carrots (so no precutting). The best centrifuge juicers are Breville and Solis and the best twin gear is the Greenstar Juicer (which will juice Wheat Grass). The Greenstar is great for making bread.

A dehydrator is a useful tool, but you can get by without it when you're just starting out. The appliance is big and takes up space. So select a size that works for you. As a last resort, you can use an oven. Turn it to its lowest setting and try to keep it at 115°F/45°C and the door left slightly ajar. It takes a bit of monitoring and turning it on and off (electricity cost). For intermediate to advanced raw foodists, the dehydrator is necessary and used to make "breads", crackers, cookies, and travel snacks. The Excalibur dehydrator is the most popular brand.

A water purifier is a must and more economical than buying bottled water. You can buy a good tap filter, have a water system installed, or buy a water distiller.

If you have a good blender, then a food processor is not really necessary. Cuisinart is a good brand.

A coffee grinder is great for finely grinding nuts, seeds and cacao beans in smaller quantities. A grinder is small and relatively inexpensive. This way you don't have to clean the Blendtec or Vitamix blender for just grinding nuts.

### **Other Great Tools**

You should have the basics such as a good 10" Chef's knife and a cutting board. Once you have the basics, you might consider a Mandoline and a nut milk bag.

## Recipe of the Month:

### Cream Of Mushroom Soup

A very quick and easy to make mushroom soup.



#### **Ingredients:**

- 2 cups cashew milk
- 1/2 onion
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 cup mushrooms
- 2 tbsp tamari
- 1 tbsp lime juice (optional)
- sea salt, to taste

#### **Directions:**

Process all ingredients in a blender or food processor until blended and creamy, or until desired consistency is reached. Garnish with extra diced mushrooms.

### Raw Cashew Milk

(non-dairy [milk substitute](#))

#### **Ingredients:**

- 1/2 cup raw cashews
- water
- dash sea salt, to taste

#### **Directions:**

1. Cover raw cashews with water and allow to soak for at least one hour. Drain and rinse.
2. Place soaked cashews and 2 cups water into a blender or [food processor](#) and process until smooth.
3. You can use more or less water to vary the thickness of your “milk”, depending on your personal preference, but in general a 1:4 ratio of cashews to water works well.
4. “Milk” may also be strained through a nut milk bag.

*“The content found on these pages are the experiences of one individual and are not to be construed as a substitute for professional medical advice.”*