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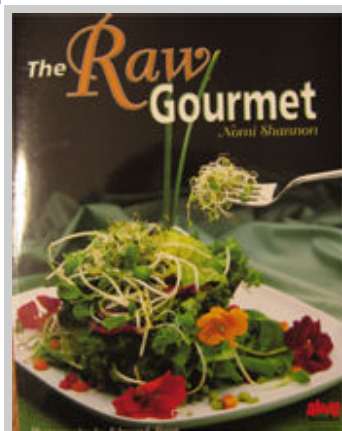
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'The Raw Gourmet' tells joys of uncooked food

The Daily Press

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By BECKY MCDOWELL

For The Daily Press

"The Raw Gourmet" by Nomi Shannon provides an introduction to the raw diet — in which food is never heated above 118 degrees Fahrenheit. The rationale for this diet is the belief that foods are healthier if they contain live enzymes, and enzymes are inactivated above 118 degrees. While most of us eat raw foods on a regular basis, few of us eat all raw food. This book will show you how to do that should you want to.

Lots of the recipes are for salads, juices, and other quite normal foods. The entrees are where more unusual foods come in. Many raw foods are at least somewhat dehydrated — using a dehydrator with a thermostat so that the important 118 degrees is not passed. "Burgers" are made from carrots, sunflower seeds, sprouted lentils, yams, etc. Generally they are processed with a variety of seasonings, made into patties and dehydrated. Then when it's dinnertime, you pull them out of the fridge and bring them to room temperature or slightly warm them.

Obviously, there are some changes to be made in how one "cooks" when using a raw diet. Shannon provides a list of 10 raw food kitchen essentials that will help make the transition from cooked food to raw. They include learning to make sprouts and having a couple different kinds always on hand and making a large batch of some of the recipes, so you can vary the seasonings and have food prepared for several days to a week.

Sunny Pate

makes 7-8 cups

3 cups sunflower seeds, soaked 8-12 hours, sprouted 2-4 hours

1 c. lemon juice

1/2 c. chopped scallions

1/4- 1/2 c. raw tahini*

1/4 c liquid aminos**



70

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2-4 slices red onions, cut in chunks

4-6 T. coarsely chopped parsley

1/2 t. cayenne pepper, or more to taste

Place all ingredients in a food processor. If yours isn't big enough, make it in two batches. Puree until the mixture is a smooth paste, scraping down the sides a couple times. Taste and adjust seasonings, keeping in mind that the garlic flavor will be stronger in a couple hours.

Variation 1: replace 1 cup of the sunflower seeds with 2 cups carrot pulp.

Variation 2: used soaked almond in place of soaked sunflower seeds.

I've made this recipe a number of times — it tastes great, and it keeps for at least a week in the fridge. (Since it makes a lot, sometimes I halve the recipe). If you aren't being a raw food purist, it can be eaten with crackers, or rolled up in a tortilla with lettuce, avocado, etc. I'm not precise about the soaking and sprouting times — soaking more than 12 hours is not a good idea, because the seeds will start to get scummy, but as long as they've soaked at least four hours it seems to work fine. I usually skip the sprouting time.

*Tahini is sesame seed paste — it can be found in both raw and roasted varieties.

** liquid aminos are an unfermented soy product.

The Chequamegon Food Co-op carries both of these products.

The Raw Gourmet was published in 1999 by Alive Books. It lists at \$24.95. On abebooks.com, it starts at \$11.90.

This column is sponsored by FEAST (Food security, Education, Access, Sustainable agriculture, and Traditions), a coalition of local organizations and individuals devoted to getting fresh, healthy, local food on our plates. If you have a cookbook you'd like to review or have reviewed in this column, please contact Becky McDowell (682-4031 or beckymcd@visi.com).

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