

eat right boston

SUMMER 2020



Land Ho!

So, there's a story that goes along with the picture of this dolphin. It was taken by a friend of mine as she and her husband crossed the Atlantic Ocean in their sailboat. For three years, they sailed thousands of miles and sailed into different ports of the world. Sounds very idyllic, but it can happen to regular folk. Post college, they had a family, built a business, and worked hard. After much deliberation, they made a life altering decision to sail into the proverbial sunset. There's no fairy tale ending of sailing into the sunset, as their journey just ended, and they are back on land once again.

I'm sharing this story because I am in awe of the decision they made and in what they accomplished, which inspires me to seek my own new adventures in the future. There's no doubt, we have entered our own Twilight Zone over the past four months. I am not so sure the next six will be any less dramatic, so I encourage you all to (cautiously) step outside of your comfort zone and take advantage of the nice weather, and have a lovely summer with family and friends!

Be well,
Sophie

www.eatrightboston.com



Uncured Bacon. Naturally?

I just recently learned what I am about to share with you. It's never too late to learn, right?

In the days of yesteryear when there was no refrigeration, people primarily used salt to preserve or cure their meats. Salt prevents food spoilage through a process known as *osmosis*, which draws moisture out of the bacteria's cells and destroys them by dehydrating them. Curing slows down fat oxidation, which reduces rancidity and suppress the harmful bacteria in processed meats; most notably the toxin that causes botulism. Bacon and hotdogs are popular cured meat products. Today, foods have a longer shelf-life thanks to preservatives and curing processes that include the use of *nitrites* versus salt.

Let me refer to science (again) to explain the process. Nitrate is a naturally occurring chemical compound that is made up of one nitrogen atom and three oxygen atoms. Add an enzyme to nitrate, and you can make nitrite, which has two oxygen atoms. Add nitrite to a protein (i.e. a piece of meat) and you get nitric oxide, which is actually the curing agent that we recognize on food package labels. We have all heard that cured meats and bacon are full of (man-made) nitrites and to avoid them. But is there a better way to cure meat without all of those nitrites?

Well, there's the "genuinely" uncured foods where NO sodium nitrite is used but those meats take on a grayish color; kind of looks like the raw meat in your bin that is past its expiration date. Those products will say "uncured" on the label.

But there's another kind of nitrate. The one that is touted as a natural form. Celery and beets are naturally rich in nitrate. Actually, any plant that is grown draws sodium nitrate out of the soil and will be a good source of it. When we consume dietary nitrate (i.e from plants) our body converts it into nitrite. Celery curing has been around for decades. Today, it comprises over 90% of the veg-cured products on the market.

So, what's the difference between man-made nitrite and vegetable nitrite? The answer is "Regulation." Sodium or potassium nitrite (i.e man-made) is regulated by law (allowable levels will vary by product), while there is no limits for nitrite from celery powder. If a manufacturer cures their bacon with celery rather than sodium nitrite, they are required by law to label that bacon as "uncured." The label must also contain the statement "no nitrates or nitrites added." And, that statement is further qualified by "except for those naturally occurring in [add in the name of natural source of nitrite, such as celery powder]." Yup, kind of confusing!

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Uncured Bacon. Naturally? (cont)

So, what's the problem with all of these additives? Back in the 70's, some studies linked nitrites (that were converted to nitrosamines when exposed to high temperatures) to an increased cancer risk. The International Agency for Research on Cancer (part of the World Health Organization) has classified processed meat as a carcinogen, something that causes cancer. And it has classified red meat as a probable carcinogen (something that probably causes cancer). Dr. Dariush Mozaffarian, dean of the Friedman School of Nutrition Science & Policy at Tufts University feels that there is no difference between man-made and celery nitrite; that any type of processed meat is not the healthiest choice. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) considered banning sodium nitrite, but never did.

Ketogenic Diet 101

Most of you already know how I feel about trendy diets. I thought I would re-visit the ketogenic diet briefly, since I have been getting more questions about it. Ugh. I'm going to keep it as brief and succinct, so you all understand why it is not a good approach to weight loss. Not only is the biology all wrong for you, but it is not a sustainable lifestyle approach.

The macrobiotic breakdown of a ketogenic diet is approximately: 70-75% fat, 15-20% protein, and 5-10% carbohydrate. Macronutrients provide calories (and energy!) but some energy sources are harder to access than others. Biologically, carbohydrates get stored in two major organs in your body—the liver and muscles. This form of stored energy is called glycogen. Mother Nature figured out that we might need said energy stores in moments of crisis (hmm...stuck in a cave and can't get out because a dinosaur is blocking the entrance?). We get about 2000 calories from stored energy. But, once that is gone and not replenished, then you depend on fat storage, which isn't as quick acting as the carbohydrate kind.

Folks, science tells us that too much fat in a diet is not healthy! Not only is it bad for your cardiovascular system, it wreaks havoc on your intestinal system. Restricting carbohydrates does not support a healthy gut microbiome. In fact, a fiberless, keto diet disturbs the ecosystem of your microbiome. The good bacteria of the gut depend on fiber to ferment in the colon and to thrive. When fiber and carbs are gone, you get a lot of bad bacteria that can lead to inflammation (due to poor gut junctions and leaky gut) and eventually can lead to metabolic syndrome. Furthermore, when carbs are low, insulin demand is low. When insulin is low, the kidneys release sodium and water. These losses can lead to dehydration. When there are no carbohydrates, there are also no glycogen stores. Glycogen holds onto water in the body, so no glycogen means no water stores, and further increases your risk for dehydration. Being dehydrated will also increase one's risk for kidney stones, as minerals like magnesium, calcium, and potassium are also affected. Be kind to your body. Just say "NO" to keto!



Homemade Salad Dressings

Bottled salad dressings can be high in sodium, sugar, and preservatives, so why not enjoy your salads with freshly made salad dressings, instead? The vinaigrette bases will last about two weeks in your refrigerator. The yogurt ones are probably good for a few days, as the whey begins to separate out and they get watery. Simply mix the ingredients in a bowl, whisk until the ingredients are mixed, chill, and serve.

Red Wine-Dijon Vinaigrette

1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
2 tsp Dijon mustard (omit if you don't want a mustard base)
3 Tbl red wine vinegar
1 Tbl water
1/4 tsp oregano
1/4 tsp minced garlic
Salt to taste

Honey-Lemon Vinaigrette

1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
1/4 cup lemon juice
2 tsp honey
1 tsp Dijon mustard
Dried parsley, thyme, salt to taste

A vinaigrette is made by mixing an oil with something acidic (such as vinegar or lemon juice)

To make **Lemon-Garlic** version, omit the honey and add 1 teaspoon minced garlic.

Honey Balsamic Vinaigrette

1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
2 Tbl balsamic vinegar
2 Tbl honey
Salt and pepper to taste

Lemon-Dill Yogurt Dressing

1/2 cup plain yogurt
1/2 tsp minced garlic
2 tsp fresh lemon juice
1 tsp fresh dill (can add more if you like)
Salt and pepper to taste

Apple Cider Vinaigrette

1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
2 Tbl apple cider vinegar
2 tsp granulated sugar
Salt and pepper to taste

Cider Yogurt Dressing

1 cup plain yogurt
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
1 Tbl apple cider vinegar
2 Tbl fresh lemon juice
1/2 tsp dried parsley
1/4 tsp garlic powder (optional)
Salt and pepper to taste

Citrus Vinaigrette

2 Tbls fresh lemon juice
2 Tbl fresh orange juice
2 Tbl fresh lime juice
2 Tbl extra virgin olive oil
1 tsp Dijon mustard
1 garlic clove, minced
Salt and pepper to taste

*Dijon mustard adds
flavor and helps the
dressing emulsify
(blend better)*

*Adding different
flavors and textures to
a salad can make it
more satisfying*

*Experiment with the
recipes and modify
ingredients to your
own taste. Get creative!*



Sophia Kamveris, MS, RD, LDN
22 Mill Street-Suite 105
Arlington, MA 02474
(P): 617-515-8984