

MODULE 2: SHOPPING & STORAGE | TRANSCRIPT

LESSON 1

Whole Foods

When we use the term “whole foods,” all we mean is plant foods that are almost entirely unrefined and unprocessed. The closer we can get to eating only foods Mother Nature designed for us to eat, the healthier we’ll be.

But most whole foods stump home cooks. Many know how to prepare chicken breast or a burger, but put a raw red pepper or dry lentils in their hands and you may get a blank stare, panic in every blink. Whether you eat the lentils and the pepper with your burger is up to you, but you should still know how to cook them in a way that’s delicious and satisfying. Healthy food and comfort food are not mutually exclusive. The only difference between what most of us think of as “healthy food” and “comfort food” is the skill of the cook. So, right now, we just want to help you get rid of any whole-food hesitation you might have. Less panic, more “I got this.”

To start, we need to have a good understanding of our new, whole-food friends. Cooking confidence starts with familiarity!

Lucky for you, we’ve created an interactive Ingredient Index that details everything you need to know about these individual whole food ingredients: recipe ideas, storage tips, how to cook it, enjoy it, and even substitute it if you need to. No more scratching your head at the grocery store wondering what certain fruits and veggies are or what to do with them—the Ingredient Index is your good food cooking co-pilot. So, we’re going to cover a lot in this lesson, but feel free to skip ahead to the recipes if you’re ready to start cooking. You can come back to this video at any time, or refer to the Ingredient Index.

Alliums

In the simplest terms, alliums have a bulb at their base and an onion-like taste. They're essential for bringing depth of flavor to all kinds of dishes. Some alliums you may be familiar with are:

- Chives
- Garlics
- Leeks
- Onions
- Ramps
- Scallions (aka green onions)
- Shallots

Berries

Plump, juicy, delicate berries are best enjoyed fully ripe and fresh-picked. They can be cooked down into compotes and jams, swirled into cereal, smashed and whisked into dressings, and added to baked goods, too. Some examples of berries include:

- Blackberries
- Blueberries
- Raspberries
- Strawberries

Brassicas (aka cruciferous vegetables)

These plants are actually in the mustard family, and here are a few you may be familiar with:

- Bok Choy
- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts

Cabbage (red, green, savoy, napa)

Cauliflower

Chicories like Belgian endive, escarole, Frisée (aka curly endive), and radicchio

Citrus

These fruits come in all shapes and sizes and add brightness and acidity to many dishes.

Sour citrus fruits include:

Grapefruit

Lemons

Limes

Sweet citrus fruits include:

Clementines

Kumquats

Oranges

Tangerines

Grains

There are a wide variety of grains (aka cereal grains) available to cook sweet and savory dishes with, and while some of them are called “grains,” they’re actually seeds that cook up like grains, so you may hear the term “pseudo-grains” used to describe some options like buckwheat or quinoa.

Amaranth

Buckwheat

Millet

Oats

Quinoa

Sorghum

Teff

And, remember that, while grains like wheat, einkorn, emmer, spelt, farro, and corn, all belong to this family of whole ingredients as well, we're only going to focus on varieties that are friendlier to anyone who may have food allergies or sensitivities.

Hearty Greens

Hearty greens can be enjoyed cooked or raw. Oftentimes, they're on the bitter side, so if you want to enjoy them raw, sprinkle with a little sea salt and massage them for a few minutes until softened. This step reduces bitterness and tenderizes the leaves.

Collard greens

Kale

Mustard greens

Turnip greens

Beet greens

Chard

Lettuces

Tender, light leaves great for topping tacos, or being the foundation in vibrant salads.

Butterhead (aka Boston, bibb, or butter lettuce)

Green leaf

Mixed greens (aka mesclun)

Red leaf

Romaine (aka cos lettuce)

Mushrooms

Mushrooms are the edible “fruit” or “fruit bodies” from fungi. They come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and flavors—they add earthy, substance, and texture to many dishes.

Maitake

Oyster

Portobello (and it’s earlier-in-the-growth-cycle version, baby bella, cremini, or common brown mushrooms)

Shiitake

White button

Nightshades

These fruits and veggies prefer to grow in shady areas, and some even flower at night.

Eggplant

Peppers

Potatoes

Tomatoes

Pome Fruit

Pome fruits grow on trees and have a core with several small seeds surrounding that core.

Apples

Pears

Quince

Pulses

Simply the edible seeds from plants in the legume family. They're super versatile and can be used in soups, stews, curries, salads, and both sweet and savory dishes of all kinds.

- Adzuki beans
- Black beans
- Black-eyed peas
- Cannellini beans
- Chickpeas (aka garbanzo beans)
- Kidney beans
- Lentils
- Mung beans
- Pinto beans
- Split peas

Rice

Did you know that rice is the seed of grass? There are many varieties of rice coming in several colors and cooked textures, with short-, medium-, and long-grains.

- Black Rice (aka Forbidden Black Rice or "Emperor's rice")
- Brown Rice (short-grain, long-grain, jasmine, basmati)
- Red Rice
- Wild rice (actually the seed from an aquatic plant that's unrelated to other rice, but it looks and cooks like rice)

Roots & Tubers

This wide variety of plants grow partially or completely under the soil. Roots are part of the plant that grows down into soil—one root veggie per plant. Tubers actually form at the base of roots and function as energy storage for the plant—multiple tuber veggies can grow from one plant. Here are some roots and tubers you may have seen around:

- Beet
- Carrot
- Celeriac
- Jerusalem artichoke
- Jicama
- Kohlrabi
- Parsnip
- Potato
- Radish
- Rutabaga
- Sweet potato
- Turnip
- Yams

Stone Fruit

Simply a juicy, soft fruit with a stone-like pit in the middle.

- Apricot
- Cherry
- Peach
- Plum
- Nectarine

Summer Melon

Sticky-sweet fleshy fruit with a high water content.

Cantaloupe
Honeydew
Watermelon

Summer Squash

Thin-skinned squash that's light and mildly sweet—enjoyable raw or cooked.

Eight-ball zucchini
Green zucchini
Patty pans
Yellow squash
Zephyr squash

Tender Greens

These greens have a thick yet tender leaf that can be enjoyed raw or cooked.

Arugula (aka rocket)
Spinach
Watercress

Winter Squash

Thick, sometimes waxy-skinned squash that's rich and earthy—usually cooked.

Acorn

Butternut

Carnival

Delicata

Hubbard

Pumpkin

Red kuri

Spaghetti

Lesson Actions

Confidence-Building Challenge

Choose a simple favorite recipe (2–6 ingredients only) from your existing collection—a weekly favorite, Grandma's cobbler, or something from Pinterest you've been pining over. Choose something that uses one of the produce items we've discussed in this lesson.

Now, make that recipe this week BUT swap out that ingredient and use another one from the same group it's in. For example: Grandma's cobbler calls for 2 cups of peaches (Stone Fruit Group). Try it with 2 cups of plums and/or apricots instead. (But skip the nightshades group for this exercise. They're an exception where swaps don't quite work.)

Share with friends, family, or the course community what your plan is and why (and share some cobbler if you go there). Be sure to ask any questions you have in the course community and document the entire experiment in your cooking journal.