

Sustain your diet, sustain your life!

By Vina Abi-Fadel



Diet is such a dirty word – we’ve all had our share of dieting, having some success and failing miserably – only to start back up again. To really shake up your eating habits once and for all, you need a plan that’s fun and easy to stick to, right? A new eating pattern that can motivate you to healthier heights. You also need a diet you can't "break"—one that's flexible enough to adapt to any changes, from your activity level to the company at your table. Here are six steps to get you on your way.

1. Baby steps. Changing everything all at once never works. Instead, go through your refrigerator and pantry and weed out a few empty-calorie traps: foods you reach for when you're rushed or bored, that don't nourish your body. Then substitute fresh, seasonal foods. Keep whole grain bread and cheese handy to grab instead of chips. Add a salad every day, at lunch or dinner. Try fruit at snack time or a fistful of raw almonds, walnuts or cashews and I mean a fistful!

2. Locals only. Visit LocalHarvest.org or EatWellGuide.org. Type in your zip code for a list of products grown and made in your community, from honey, cheese, grass-fed meat, and pasture-raised eggs to lettuces and herbs. Went to a local cheese farm recently – what a treat! Family owned and operated for over two decades.

3. Make 'em green with envy. Visit your local farmers' market. While there, talk to farmers and sample food that's been recently picked-within 48 hours. Most farmers eat what they grow, so they're also a great source of tips for preparing, serving, and storing the foods they sell. (*editor's note: For produce, Richard and I use Bountiful Baskets Food Co-op in Arizona.*)

4. Go out on a limb. Try a fruit or vegetable that you didn't think you liked when it's at its peak. I've seen people converted to foods from asparagus to zucchini just by tasting them freshly picked and simply prepared. You might surprise yourself and your family! Fresh Fava bean anyone?

5. Get behind your food. When you connect with the produce farmers who grow what you eat, it tastes all the better. They are usually families that run local farms. Kids especially become more courageous when they know what went into the food they have for dinner, which can add variety to your meals – an essential factor in good nutrition.

6. Reap what you sow Seeing the miracle of a seed turn into a delectable ingredient instills an appreciation for all it takes to grow great-quality food. If you don't have a green thumb, try a simple container garden: Cultivate a few herbs or cherry tomatoes in pots on your windowsill or patio. I'm in tomato heaven as I click away on my keyboard – just picked yellow and heirloom tomatoes from the garden for our dinner salad – amazing!

About the author...

Vina Abi-Fadel, food and nutrition expert, lives along the coast in Southern California and specializes in developing and preparing healthy, delicious recipes for the trade, restaurants and loved ones, of course. You can contact her through our website at www.chrysalisclear.com and click on [Contact Us](#) to request her to contact you.