

Macrobiotics America

David and Cynthia Briscoe

Basic Macrobiotic Menu Planning

When you are getting started with macrobiotics, it is best to focus on simple menu plans until your understanding grows and your repertoire of macrobiotic recipes and cooking styles increases. By attending even a few classes given by an experienced macrobiotic cook, you can quickly learn how to expand and supplement basic menus.

A basic macrobiotic menu is built around the basic macrobiotic food categories.

Whole Grain is the main food of almost every meal, comprising approximately 30-50%. (This can be achieved by using a whole grains as main dishes by itself, in soups, in grain-vegetable salads, stews or cooked together with beans.) In some cases a person may need to reduce the amount of whole grains and increase vegetables and other dishes. A macrobiotic counselor can guide you in this.

A **Whole Grain Condiment** is regularly served to sprinkle lightly on top of the whole grain before eating it. There are many whole grain condiments such as the famous gomasio or "sesame salt," shiso powder, goma-wakame and many other mineral-rich macrobiotic condiments. Most of them can be made at home, some can be bought already made.

Organic Vegetables are served as a compliment to whole grains. Most meals will contain a couple of vegetables, and there can be more. The majority of vegetables will be served lightly cooked. Some can be prepared longer, using cooking styles such as "nishime" or stew. Also during the week, uncooked vegetables can be served such as "pressed salad" or raw salad if these are recommended for your current health condition. For fine tuning vegetable use, it is recommended that a person consult with a macrobiotic counselor.

Vegetable-Wakame Soup Seasoned with Miso (Miso Soup) is usually served daily, 1-2 cups. When served, it usually is eaten at the beginning of the meal.

Sea Vegetable side dishes are served as a compliment the whole grains and vegetables but in much smaller amounts than regular vegetables. As a good place to start, consider using 1 tablespoon of cooked sea vegetables daily. They can be served at lunch or dinner as part of the meal.

Condiments as mentioned above are served to sprinkle over the whole grains before eating. Be careful not to overdo condiments. They are tasty but salty. As a starter, consider using no more than 1/2 teaspoon per meal.

Pickles are used in macrobiotics as a digestive support and alkaline booster. But be cautious: pickles are salty! So use thin a few thin slices with 1-2 meals per day. Macrobiotic pickles are not spicy or made with artificial ingredients. The most famous macrobiotic pickle is the "takuan" or daikon radish pickle din rice bran. There are also other pickles, including organic sauerkraut.

Kukicha Twig Tea is the famous daily use tea of macrobiotics. It is taken at the end of meals and between meals if a person is thirsty.

Additional Foods: To the above categories will be added beans, tofu, tempeh and other protein-supplementing foods throughout the week. Also, noodles, seeds, naturally sweetened desserts, fruits and other macrobiotic foods can be incorporated into menus as one's understanding and condition permits. The information provided on these pages is simply the very basics of macrobiotic menu planning to help you

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Not every meal each day needs to contain all of the food categories listed above. But the basic ones should be used during the course of a day.

A Typical Macrobiotic Breakfast Menu Pattern

Main Food: Whole Grain Porridge with a light sprinkling of condiment
Main Food Compliment: Quickly cooked Dark Leafy Greens (not spinach)
Vegetable-Wakame Soup Seasoned with Barley Miso (Miso Soup) (optional)
Kukicha Twig Tea

A Typical Macrobiotic Lunch Menu Pattern

Main Food: Whole Grain with a sprinkling of condiment
Main Food Compliment: 1-2 Cooked Vegetables
Vegetable-Wakame Soup Seasoned with Miso (Miso Soup)
Sea Vegetable cooked with Vegetables (2-3x weekly)
Beans, tofu, or tempeh dish (2-3x weekly)
A few slices of Pickles
Kukicha Twig Tea

A Typical Macrobiotic Dinner Menu Pattern

Main Food: Whole Grain with a sprinkling of condiment
Main Food Compliment: Cooked Vegetables
Uncooked vegetables: 2-3x weekly or even more often in hot weather (pressed salad, raw salad if condition permits)
Vegetable-Wakame Soup Seasoned with Miso (Miso Soup). You can have it at dinner if you didn't already have it at two earlier meals. In other words, keep miso soup to 1-2 cups daily but not used at every meal.
Sea Vegetables cooked with Vegetables (2-3x weekly for dinner on days when you don't have it for lunch)
Beans, tofu, or tempeh dish (2-3x weekly for dinner on days when you didn't have it for lunch)
Or fish 1-2x weekly in place of beans, tofu or tempeh
A few slices of Pickles
Kukicha Twig Tea

The above menu patterns are suggestions only. They are intended to help you get started. Soon you will need to solidify your understanding of macrobiotic menu planning and cooking by attending classes with an experienced macrobiotic cooking teacher. By attending in-person classes, you can learn short cuts, special dishes, more variety, flavoring and seasoning tips, cooking on a busy schedule, cooking for a family, cooking for a specific health condition, etc. Our monthly *Steps to Health* course is designed to help students learn in a short time and then go home and implement macrobiotics successfully in their personal circumstances.

It can't be stressed enough the value of receiving individualized macrobiotic recommendations from an experienced macrobiotic counselor. This will help you to move quickly beyond a basic "getting started" phase and discover how to adjust the use of oil, seasonings, special vegetables and special dishes for specific health conditions.