

The Basic Macrobiotic Diet

Understanding the DAILY MAIN FOODS and the SUPPLEMENTAL FOODS

The basic macrobiotic diet is based on the use of DAILY MAIN FOODS. Then, along with these daily staple foods, certain SUPPLEMENTAL FOODS are regularly used, increased or decreased according to the individual needs and health condition.

DAILY MAIN FOODS

DAILY: WHOLE GRAINS

Whole grains are the daily main food, 30-60% by weight daily (cooked in ways that are acceptable to the person's digestion and appropriate for the current health needs). Almost every macrobiotic meal is centered on whole grain. Sometimes, though, certain individuals may need to decrease the amount of whole grains and increase the vegetables and other daily foods. A macrobiotic counselor can help you determine this. If an individual is allergic to gluten or has other reactions to certain whole grains, then these will need to be avoided and whole grains that can be tolerated would be used instead. It is still possible to practice a macrobiotic diet even when a person has to temporarily minimize or avoid some of the macrobiotic foods.

DAILY: VEGETABLES

Vegetables are an important part of daily macrobiotic meals, usually 30-40% daily by weight (mostly cooked, though some can be raw if the person has healthy and strong digestion) It is good to use dark leafy green vegetables daily in addition to other vegetables. Of course each person is unique and will need to discover the most beneficial way of using vegetables. An experienced macrobiotic counselor can help. Some vegetables like potatoes, tomatoes and eggplant, are known to contribute to conditions such as arthritis and other health problems. These may need to be avoided.

DAILY: BEANS and/or OTHER REGULARLY USED PROTEIN-CONCENTRATED FOODS

5-10% beans and/or other protein-concentrated foods like tofu, tempeh, dried tofu, natto
(A variety of these protein-concentrated foods are used in meals throughout the week, not the same one each day. Not every meal has to include one of the protein-concentrated foods, but at least one or two meals per day, usually lunch and/or dinner.)

DAILY: SEA VEGETABLES

Approximately 1 Tablespoon daily of cooked sea vegetable is a general recommendation.

DAILY: MISO SOUP

1-2 cups of miso soup (usually vegetable-wakame soup seasoned with barley miso) is recommended each day, especially in the beginning months of a macrobiotic practice.

DAILY: CONDIMENT FOR SPRINKLING ON COOKED WHOLE GRAIN

Condiments such as gomasio (sesame-salt) can be sprinkled lightly on cooked whole grains before eating them.

DAILY: MACROBIOTIC PICKLES

A small amount of macrobiotic pickles (approximately 1 Tablespoon total daily) is recommended with meals to aid digestion.

DAILY: MACROBIOTIC TEA

Kukicha "twig" tea or Bancha "twig & leaf" tea or unsweetened Barley tea are the daily beverages in a traditional macrobiotic eating practice.

Macrobiotics America

David and Cynthia Briscoe

SUPPLEMENTAL FOODS

Depending on the person's health condition, many of the following supplemental foods may be included daily in small amounts or used less than daily, or in some cases even avoided temporarily.

SUPPLEMENTAL: BREAD, PASTA and OTHER PRODUCTS MADE FROM CRACKED, CRUSHED or ROLLED WHOLE GRAINS

Bread, pasta, crackers, rice cakes, cous cous, cornmeal, tortillas, chapatis, pita bread, bulghur, oatmeal, cracked wheat, rolled oats, cold cereal, steel cut oats, 7-grain cereal, cream of wheat, etc.

SUPPLEMENTAL: COOKING OIL and OTHER OIL-CONCENTRATED FOODS

Sesame oil and other vegetable oils, tahini (sesame seed butter), nuts, seeds

SUPPLEMENTAL: FISH and OTHER OCCASIONAL PROTEIN-CONCENTRATED FOODS

Fish, nuts, seeds

SUPPLEMENTAL: FRUITS, DESSERTS, SYRUPS and OTHER SWEET-CONCENTRATED FOODS

Fruits, juices, dried fruits, plain-flavored amasake (a sweet rice concentrate), brown rice syrup, barley malt syrup, macrobiotic desserts

SUPPLEMENTAL: OTHER TEAS and BEVERAGES

A person in robust good health can use additional natural teas and beverages without sugar, corn syrup and other concentrated sweeteners.

SEASONINGS

DAILY SEASONINGS

The following seasonings can be used daily, but lightly, in macrobiotic cooking:

Miso, shoyu (natural soy sauce), sea salt, umeboshi vinegar, brown rice vinegar

SUPPLEMENTAL SEASONINGS

There are other seasonings that may also be used by those in robust good health or when recommended by the counselor.

The previous information provides a brief outline to the basic macrobiotic diet. You are encouraged to learn more by attending classes with experienced macrobiotic teachers.