



Newspaper

## From Page To Plate, For A Healthier You

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 Author: [Brawarsky, Sandee](#)

Good reading makes for good eating in new books about nutrition and prevention.

WHEN BLESSED WITH THE LUXURY OF HAVING TOO MUCH TO EAT, AND TOO MANY FOODS TO CHOOSE FROM, WE FACE THE HAPPY DILEMMA OF FIGURING OUT WHAT'S FOR DINNER.

Several new books help sort through the links between good eating and good health, based on the latest medical findings about nutrition and prevention. Two are cookbooks with creative vegetarian recipes, for those who prefer vegetarian Cuisine as well as for those who are new to it. All of the authors promote awareness of the food items we eat and where they come from.

"A person should eat only when he is hungry and he should drink only when he is thirsty," the Rambam wrote in the Mishneh Torah, a systematic code of Jewish law. Throughout his writing, the sage and physician emphasized caring for the body, with a healthy diet and regular exercise.

In a new book, David J. Zulberg presents a step-by-step guide to healthy living based on the teachings of the Rambam, also known as Maimonides, "The Life-Transforming Diet" (Feldheim). The book opens with pages of approval and recommendation from rabbis in Israel and the United States. Zulberg emphasizes emotional and physical health through this diet, with an enhanced! spiritual outlook and sustainable weight loss as possible results.

The author, who was born in South Africa, studied in Israel and now lives in New York, worked on the book for about five years, and has lost almost 40 pounds.

About changing bad habits, the author also turns to the Rambam, who has written that "one of the most powerful forces of human nature is habit, irrespective of whether these are actions or preconceived perceptions... For instance, a person might choose bad foods to which he is not accustomed over good foods to which he is not accustomed."

Zulberg presents a "Subconscious Accumulation Process," based on the way habits are formed and the possibilities of transformation and formulating healthier ones. His approach is gradual; among the suggestions on his diet plan are high-water content meals and one-concentrated-food meals, introduced in a systematic format, with weekly guidance. Zulberg also emphasizes exercise, as the Rambam did, and offers special advice related to Shabbat meals, when there is an obligation to enjoy food-but he does not promote overeating.

In "Nutrilicious: Food for Thought and Whole Health - Natural Whole Vegetarian Kosher Cuisine," (Nutcracker Press), Edith Rothschild tries to demystify health foods and help readers achieve a healthier lifestyle. Through dealing with her own health challenges, she has learned about the connection between fighting disease and using a plant-based diet for healing.

"What we eat can be our first line of defense," she writes.

She calls for ingredients that are fresh, unprocessed, whole and, whenever possible, organic. Admittedly a frustrated poet, she titles her recipes Velvety Zucchini Soup, Cleopatra Salad, Rootie Roast, Short-Shrift Risotto-Style Risotto, Corny Egg Salad and Chocolate Cake with a Difference, spices the pages with her own aphorisms and those of others, including the classic line from Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, "Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are."

The author's soulful approach to food comes across in her introduction and remarks throughout. She believes strongly that healthful eating, along with a sense of gratitude for food, can add a spiritual dimension to everyday living, and can help people age with grace and strength. On the book's final page, she includes a prayer for health, from Rabbi Chaim Yosef David Azulai, who lived from 1724 -1806, which concludes, "May we be at

rest and calm, vigorous, and fresh to serve and revere You."

"The Truth About Food: What You Eat Can Change Your Life" by Jill Fullerton-Smith (Bloomsbury/Discovery) is an attractive, straightforward book that helps readers make wise choices about their daily diet based on medical research.

The book is tied to a television series hosted by Dr. Mehmet Oz, co-author of "You: The Owner's Manual." In his foreword to the book, Dr. Oz affirms that food can make us smarter, thinner, faster, younger, sexier and healthier and can also make us fatter, slower, older and sicker.

Fullerton-Smith discusses getting rids of toxins, explains how the ways in which food interacts with your body is in part related to genetic makeup, and suggests that eating a diet high in nuts and fresh fruits and vegetables, similar to what our ancestors ate (going further back than Eastern Europe), can help cut cholesterol and reduce high blood pressure. She emphasizes the importance of portion size and slow eating in order to stay slim; advises about feeding families and accounting for taste; and recommends food that can reduce stress and improve memory. Informational sidebars and graphics highlight key facts, like the nutritional potential in spinach for protecting the eyes.

From veteran cookbook writer Martha Rose Shulman, "Mediterranean Harvest: Vegetarian Recipes from the World's Healthiest Cuisine" (Rodale) is an appealing guide to making dishes that are vividly flavored, relatively easy to prepare and good for you. The 500 recipes, drawn from countries with shorelines on the Mediterranean Sea, including Spain, Italy, Greece, Turkey, the Middle East and North Africa, can all be prepared in a kosher kitchen (some of the cheeses may be difficult to find in kosher markets, so substitution is simple.)

This is a cuisine linked with longevity. Selections are both light and hearty with a down-to-earth sensibility, emphasizing olive oil, herbs and spices, fresh produce, and grains. The recipes - many of which have been passed down from mother to daughter - include Lentil Minestrone with Greens, Pasta with Ligurian Artichoke Sauce, Balkan-style Moussaka, Provençal Chick Pea Salad, Tunisian Eggplant Omelet, Venetian Cornmeal Shortbread and Sweet Dessert Couscous with Citrus and Pomegranate, presented with style.

"Mediterranean food isn't supposed to be eaten in the car," as Shulman writes. These are foods meant to be savored and enjoyed in the presence of others.

#### **[Sidebar]**

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#### **[Author Affiliation]**

SANDEE BRAWARSKY

Jewish Week Book Critic

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