Introduction to Gut Health Cooking

Welcome back, everyone to the Gut Health and Longevity Summit. I am so glad you're here and today is a little different from our other sessions. So get comfortable because today we are heading into the kitchen every session you have seen this week about the science of the gut has been amazing, but today we're literally going to give you the spoon.

Our guest has spent nearly five decades proving that food is built for a healthy microbiome full of fiber, prebiotics, and color, and can be some of the most craven foods on your plate.

She is going to cook for us, and she's also going to answer some of the questions that we had submitted. My next guest has spent 49 years proving something most people don't believe as possible, that food with no added sugar or or salt can still be at its best and taste amazing.

Chef AJ has followed a plant exclusive diet for 49 years. She trained as a chef and culinary instructor, and served as executive pastry chef at Santee Restaurant in Los Angeles.

She is known for vegan sugar, all salt, gluten free desserts. Those are my kind of desserts, right? From whole fruit to nothing but the fruit. She's hosted Healthy Living with chef AJ on foodie TV and so many other things.

She's also the bestseller of a four books A Secret to Ultimate Weight Loss. Own Your Own Health, and many more. And oh my gosh chef AJ, what an honor it is to have you here today.

Welcome and thank you for having us in your kitchen. The first question I want to start with because I know you're a chef. So you're like, let's get cooking.

But before we even get there and chef AJ is so cool, she's like, can we start with the desserts first guy. So we will start with the dessert. She's going to start with her cinnamon vanilla bliss balls.

But before we get there I want to ask her a question. You've been teaching whole food plant based nutrition for over two decades. How has your philosophy involved evolved and what have you learned about making healthy eating sustainable for real people in real kitchens?

Yeah, I great question. And I think the main thing is it has to be pretty easy because most people aren't going to sit there with a complicated recipe.

Maybe they will on Thanksgiving or for a special first day or a holiday, but it has to be easily repeatable. It's got to be sustainable. And so I use tools such as an electric pressure cooker, an Instant Pot and air fryer, things that cut down the time, things that make it so much easier, even cutting tools, things like that.

Not that it's not great to have nice skills, but I learned a lot. Many years ago, I was a volunteer culinary instructor at the Royal Institute, and I taught the blind, whole food, plant based cooking.

And I realized if there was a hack, a trick on a piece of equipment that made it easier for a blind person. It would also make it easier for a sighted person.

So I'm all about shortcuts. I'm not about perfection. So, for example, I don't mind it for myself. I do it all the time. I buy onions already cut up to save time.

I buy shredded purple organic cabbage or carrots already shredded because I know that if I have to spend the time doing certain things that are kind of like menial, maybe I'll spend a few more pennies.

I'm not going to do them, and I want people to have permission to do that. Do your best. I mean, of course, organic is important, but you could get so lost in the weeds trying to do everything perfect that you actually end up doing nothing.

Now, I absolutely agree. Actually, I had an appointment this morning with one of my patients, and we were looking at her test results. And I'm like, you know what's really missing from here?

And mind you, she's already vegan. Okay. But and I'm like, you know, what's really missing is the abundance of dark, leafy greens. And she, like, kind of just rolled her eyes at me.

She's like, you know, it just takes so much to prep. And I'm like, what are you talking about? Right? So I agree, prep is like the easiest thing. And one of my favorite tools, I'll give you my favorite because I know you're going to tell us all about yours today is the Mezza Luna chopper.

Okay. So like the little handheld thing, I use that for everything. Meal prep, like all my veggies, everything. And I think as we age, just like the ease of that, like, you don't feel the pressure of having to cut with the knife and stuff.

It's super, super easy. But let's. I like that. Why not using it today? But I have one in the drawer and it's great for chop salad. And when you talk about prep, that's really another secret.

You know, whatever diet a person eats, this idea of batch cooking, cooking once and eating multiple times, having some and then freezing some, that's just a great system regardless of the diet.

And that's what saves so much time and actually so much money.

Cinnamon Vanilla Bliss Balls

Because if you have healthy food ready, you're less inclined to eat unhealthy food or go out. Absolutely. I did my meal prep on Sunday. I did an hour of grocery shopping.

Mind you, I went to two grocery stores, came back, did meal prep for the whole week. I've got lunch and dinner because I don't do breakfast, so I have lunch and dinner prep for the whole week in an hour and a half.

So that's 2.5 hours on a Sunday. And that keeps me from, you know, eating the wrong stuff. So let's get started. Tell us about your first recipe, the Cinnamon Vanilla Bliss Ball.

Well, even though I was a pastry chef and I could do really fancy desserts and cakes, I wanted something really simple. And where I live is 117 today, and the last thing I want to do is turn on my oven and bake a cake or a cookie or a cupcake.

But you don't have to, because you can have a really tasty, healthy dessert without refined sugar ready instantly. And I'm using almonds today. But honestly, if you were allergic to or didn't like almonds, any nut or seed would do.

Actually, even if you couldn't have any nuts or seeds, you could substitute rolled oats for this recipe. And so I'm going to start with my elements. These are raw and unsalted.

And I'm going to place them in my dry food processor fitted with the S blade. The S blade looks like the letter S. You want to make sure your food processor is dry, because if you're processing things like nuts or seeds or oats in it's wet, it will turn into a paste instead of I'm looking for like an almond flour.

You could probably use almond flour, but it's more expensive than just grinding the nuts yourself. And so when I turn the processor on, like I'm going to do right now, I'm going to mute myself.

All right. So while chef AJ is muted because she's doing the food processor so she did her almonds. Now almonds

provide fiber. They provide plant protein.

And they are a healthy source of healthy gut lining because they've got healthy fats in them. So that's why we love the almonds I know she's got some dates over there.

So let's see what she's going to do with the dates next. So my food processor it's called a sous chef I love it. It's 16 cups I always recommend when it comes to equipment get the biggest and best that you can afford.

So basically I've just kind of processed this for 20s into a flower like consistency. It doesn't have to be super fine. As a matter of fact, I like a little bit of toothsome this with texture.

And I'm going to next add my two ingredients. This is a four ingredient recipe, by the way. You don't want to overrun your food processor ever because it would turn into a nut butter.

So I have cinnamon, one of my favorite spices, and probably my favorite one, which is pure vanilla bean powder. This is different than the vanilla being the powder that you see.

Maybe the grocery store that white and has sugar or dextrose. This is just the vanilla bean that's been ground up. I like to use that rather than extracts because extracts add liquid to the recipe, which I don't want.

Plus extracts either have alcohol or glycerin, which is sugar. Now I'm just going to pulse this just so quickly rate it like that. And then I'm going to add my dates.

These are pitted organic law dates. Dates are probably a better tasting date if you're just going to eat it or a bar date, but I use so many dates in my recipes, it's just much more cost effective to use the date.

Glenora. There are about three times cheaper, so are about three times as expensive. And the piece I have found that has the best prices and I live in the date capital of the world.

Actually the desert and California is Costco. I've never found better prices. 229 a pound pitted dates even though they're pitted every now and then, there's a rogue pit, so I tend to cut them in half just to make sure so that I don't damage my blade.

So now what I'm going to do is I'm going to add these dates to the ground up almonds, cinnamon and vanilla. And I'm going to process it until it starts to slow down in a ball form.

So once again I am going to meet my son. Okay. So she mentioned the cinnamon we love about cinnamon is that cinnamon is anti-inflammatory. It's also great for metabolic health.

So for those of you guys dealing with obesity or diabetes, cinnamon is a great kind of powder to put onto your different foods. Now. Dates. My favorite.

She's lucky she lives in the date capital of the world here. But date is a soluble fiber and it's got polyphenols. So if you do need that sweetness, date is going to be the greatest thing.

This has got to be one of the easiest recipes that I think there should be. No reason you do not try this at home this week. So let's see what she's going to do and how this is going to turn out.

It looks like it is still mixing. We're probably looking for a specific texture, so it can be rolled into the little balls. So that was a minute on my food processor.

If your food processor is less strong it might take a little longer. So what I'm doing is I'm reaching my hand in here to see if I can smush the batter together and create a little ball.

If it's not smushed, for lack of a better word, then what I would do is run it a little longer. Or maybe just add a few

more dates for stickiness. But this is smush, and I don't really measure anymore.

I mean, I sometimes have jobs where I have to make 400 of these, but I just roll it into a little ball and you can roll it in more cinnamon if you want.

I feel like that might be sometimes like it's overkill, but since these aren't sticky, I'm not going to do that. They're they're very similar to something that's commercially available that you might have heard of called a Lara Bar, which is just a little treat that you can get at places like Whole Foods, actually regular grocery stores now.

And what I love about these is they stay in the freezer for a really long time. You can just pop them in your mouth. You don't need to eat many of them because they're so satisfying.

And when you have food, especially dessert that's made out of whole food with fiber and vitamins and minerals and phytochemicals and antioxidants and micronutrients, you don't need a very large serving.

I would say I probably wouldn't eat more than three of these. So I am not going to roll all of them now, but I'll probably get, gosh, I'm guessing at least 24 easily out of these, maybe more.

I have two questions on this recipe. First one is can we use a Vitamix instead of this food processor? Will it still work? Yeah. You know, the thing is Vitamix is are wonderful.

And I'm going to be using one today actually. But they're really more for making things that are going to be a liquid texture. You know, like they were great for hummus for example, in smoothies and sorbets.

I feel that it's it doesn't. They're so powerful. What I worry about is it's going to turn the nut into a nut butter quickly. Okay. These are going to get very I mean, you could try it.

It would not be my preferred machine for something like this. So okay. And then my other question for this recipe would be if somebody does not like almonds, what is another nut that they might be able to use instead?

Walnuts are fabulous in here. Walnuts have so many other wonderful benefits. High in omega three fatty acids you could pick. Hands are amazing in here.

Let's see what other pistachios. Oh, I think I'm leaning towards the pistachio one. You know, the thing is, the thing that's fun about this is like it's very rare.

Every now and then I've run it. I don't know how you can not like dates. They're nature's candy. But every now and then you run into a person that doesn't.

Or maybe very rare. It's a very rare allergy. I've met one person. You could even use a different dried fruit. Now, realize that dates are very sweet and they're like a caramel neutral kind of flavor.

If you use another dry fruit, it's going to taste like that dried fruit. So if you're using apricots or raisins or figs or prunes or cherries, you can do it.

Because what it is, is the dried fruit is providing the stickiness, the glue and the flour or the nut, meaning not the flour, but the like. If you're using oats or if you're using a seed, you could use pumpkin seeds.

By the way, you could. Here's the thing. You have the template in your recipes. It's basically two cups of almonds. You can mix it up. You can use a lot of that.

So you can use hemp seeds and you know it will. This is the beauty of it. You can really make a recipe like this your own. You don't like cinnamon. Maybe you like another spice.

Maybe you want to put in a little bit of lemon zest or lemon juice. And that's what's the cool thing about this. But

this is a really simple recipe. And it actually came out of the fact that I teach at a spot in Mexico called Rancho La Puerta, where nothing can come from a can of box, a bottle or a bed.

So we make our own almond milk, which is really easy, which is just basically almonds and water in a blender and string through a bag. And then we have that pulp leftover, and I didn't want to throw it away and they didn't have a dehydrated.

So we used the Allman Pulp instead of the elements. And they were fabulous. So of course up here because I'll finish these later. But you can see I've already got one, two, three, four, five, six, seven and there's quite a bit less.

And so I'm going to just save this and do this a little bit later so I can move on to the next recipe as soon as I wash my hands. Wonderful. Okay. So while you're washing your hands, next question is many people know you for recipes with no added sugar or salt.

And when most people hear that combination, they assume the food is pretty bland. What are your favorite techniques for making whole plant foods flavorful?

Self? There's lots of answers to that question, so let's we'll split it up into savory and sweet. With sweet, it's not that hard because basically people just want sweets to be sweet and tastes good and maybe, maybe taste luscious.

So instead of all and this works for savory recipes, to boil is fat, but it's fat without fiber. And really, if you think about it, it's also fat without flavor.

How many people just eat all by itself without salt or bread that has solved or vinegar which has flavor. So for the fat, which people like that mouthfeel nuts, seeds, avocado, and maybe even a little coconut, sometimes unsweetened flake coconut.

So that's how we get the fat is from its whole food source with the vitamins and minerals, phytochemicals, antioxidants and micronutrients. So that I think that's the easiest part, is to be free.

The salt is the hardest part. The sugar is actually pretty easy, to believe it or not, because there's really very little. And I almost want to say there's nothing that I can't do with dates or fruit that anybody else can do with sugar.

I mean, okay, you could argue, maybe, you know, that thing they do over the creme brulée and they have the maybe you probably could do it with sugar, but you really don't need sugar.

You can use dates. And that's why we're a whole cookbook called Sweet Indulgence, with over 150 recipes of just date sweetened desserts. And I just prefer the taste of dates to sugar.

I have a little bit of sugar now and then in my diet if I go out, you know, to a restaurant and vegan ice cream. But I always come back to dates I have just left, and I'll be able to easily roll those when I'm done.

I need my food processor for another recipe. That's why I wanted to do dessert verse. Also, there's an old saying life is uncertain. Eat dessert first, but I would agree.

So what? What is the next recipe we're going to be working on? We're going to do is I'm going to actually show you how to make my very favorite vegetable in an electric pressure cooker.

And my favorite vegetable is the artichoke artichokes. They're so healthy and they're just so delicious. But they can take an hour to cook on a stove at least 15 minutes.

I remember my mom used to make them when I was little, and it was such a production because just to get a plant that big, boiling took forever. So I love the pressure cooker.

And for your patient that said, it was so hard cooking greens, well, you could probably cook greens in about a minute. And oppressor cooker bring over electric pressure cooker right here.

This is the April court I am, I always believe, and the biggest and the best that you can afford. And yes, I've got that insta pot. I've got the eight court and I've got the four court, and I do both at the same time.

Okay. And I have an eight and two threes. I used to have a six. This is optional. You can do this without the basket quite honestly. Normally I throw the artichokes in.

The nice thing about the basket is you could just pull it out. You don't have to wait. You don't have to burn your hand or anything like that. So. I've got my artichokes here.

Usually I cook for but I'm going to cook two. And again I got to tell you, Costco boy, when it comes to organics and prices at their unbeatable because I paid $3 for each of these.

They're organic from Trader Joe's. And then when I went to Costco yesterday and like, oh my God, four of them were like less than that, you know? So I'd love to get them there.

So how do you how do you prep artichokes? Because I have only eaten them when somebody else has prepared them. That's well, here's how I am going to be surprised.

I literally not going to do very much. I am going to just type this stamp because it doesn't need to be this long, because I'm not going to eat this anyway, and I'm just going to cut a fear to the base.

She's not the buffer knife of this didn't work. Real nice. There we go. I'm just going to cut this off just to make it fit better. I know a lot of people cut the leaves and it's like, why spend time doing that?

Unless you're doing it for some kind of presentation, like maybe you're doing the stock. Hope this came up much easier. That's it. Rolling in the basket.

If I don't use the basket, I can actually fit for jumbo artichokes in there. And what I'm doing is you this little things a lot of people have those little tea kettles where you can boil water very quickly.

Turn my nine and you can start with cold water room temperature water. But the nice thing is with the pressure cooker if you start with hot water it just goes faster.

I don't even measure. You just want some water on the bottom you can put up to a cup. Basically we're just steaming and then we're going to place the top on.

Sometimes people have trouble putting the top on if they realize that if they look at the front of their pressure cooker as if it were a clock and this were 12:00 and they took this and put it at 11:00, it easily closes.

There's a little valve sealing or venting. We want it sealing. And then of buttons here. I only have ever used one button called pressure cooker. Right now it's three minutes but I need ten.

Pressure-Cooked Artichokes

Do you have it at the high for pressure cooker? High pressure cooker? I can do this in seven minutes, but I can. And then it's going to make this little deep that says hey, is this.

Means I got you? And I'm just going to decide out of frame to go on. All right. So the artichokes are cooking. We like the artichokes because now we're getting our prebiotic fiber for the day.

I mean, this is just getting easier and easier really. We like the prebiotics because prebiotics are going to feed your gut microbiome. That's what you're feeding your gut bacteria with.

So I love that. All right. So once again that is a great starting recipe. Well take a look at what's going to happen as that comes out in ten minutes.

Where are we headed next chef. Yes yes we're going to do my favorite. This could be an entree if you eat enough of them. But it's my favorite appetizer.

Everyone loves these whether they're healthy eaters or not. These are mini polenta pizzas. But I just want to make a point. It's not going to be ready in ten minutes.

From this moment in time. The way a pressure cooker works, it's ten minutes. Once the internal pressure comes up to pressure, which I believe is boiling, is 212.

I think pressure cooking is something like 247, so it's still going to be very quick, but it's not ten minutes from this, ten minutes from when it beats, just so people know.

But when you think about compared to the amount of time you spend boiling a huge pot on the stove, cooking it for 15 minutes or something like steel cut out, which takes about 15 minutes on the oven, take five minutes in a pressure cooker.

Corn on the cob takes zero minutes. You're still saving a lot of time. Plus, we don't have water splitting ring in our face. We're not heating up our house, which is the biggest benefit, especially if you live somewhere very hot like I do.

And it's just you don't have to babysit it because it turns itself off. That's what I think I love the most. What I do with my Insta pot is I will do a lot of curries and dishes in there.

I'll throw it in, walk the dog and then come back and the dinner is ready. That's all the spices. Everything goes in there all at once, I love it. Take a bath, walk the dog, whatever you.

It's so cool. All right, so now we're going to make the pesto part of the mini polenta pizzas. And I can make pesto. Okay, I was saying, just because you can do something doesn't mean you should.

I know how to make polenta when I teach at Rancho. Nothing from a bag, a box, a bottle. We have to make it. But it's just so much easier to buy it. And they do sell organic to it.

Really? Every grocery store, including the healthier ones, the Whole Foods sprouts and treatment in this little tube. And it's basically just polenta water and a little salt.

Would that be in the fridge freezer section or where would that be? Just on the shelf is shelf stable. It's that easy. And I cut it into 12 pieces. You really don't have to cook it if you don't want to.

You can just use it right like that. But I do like to cook it for a little bit, just so it's just a little bit firmer and easier to pick up. So I've got 12 pieces here.

And now I'm going to when you said cook it, did you boil it toast it. How did you cook it? I basically took this silicone tray because I liked using this.

So I don't have to use parchment paper every time it's oven safe to 450 degrees. And I cut it into 12 slices, and I baked it for 20 minutes at 350. And then I turned it over and baked it for 20 minutes more.

Okay, that's how I do it. On the tube it says only 20 minutes. I like to double side and bake it, but I know people that don't take it at all and it's fine.

You know, it's just it's preference. I like things a little bit drier and easier to pick up because this is going to be an appetizer. So and I'm going to get my I just want to show you I'll serve it out of subliminal giving.

I'll serve it on a college you know. All right I'm taking the plane and coming over for dinner after that. So I'm going to make way more pesto than I need for this recipe because I practice what I preach about batch cooking.

Because most can be frozen, it can be used in other recipes, whatever you use pesto for. So for example, pasta, it even people that are like raw food people, you will use pasta.

This is the first. That recipe that I first made was a raw food recipe. And so is this one because there's no cooked ingredients and I like to keep it in the freezer.

I always have the polenta on the shelf and for last minute company I can always pull it out. So again, very few. There's a theme to my recipes. I try to do very few ingredients and simply you can find.

So these are pine nuts and you could use other nuts. We've used pistachios. We've used cashews for people with nut allergies. We've even used garbanzo beans.

But this is the best and creamy. Not for this if you can do it. I know it's a more expensive nut, but it really is unparalleled for pesto. And again, these are not toasted.

These are raw unsalted pine nuts. And I'm just placing them in my food processor with a little bit of miso paste. This is low sodium miso. This is my salt component.

What color miso was that. Because we can get white brown and red miso. I think I indicated in the recipe white I couldn't find white this I love it and unless you want it to look red so I would use the yellow or the white.

And so if somebody can't have soy they have chickpea. Me so now they have brown rice me so there's different kinds of measles and then lots and lots of fresh measles or basil, however you pronounce it.

And then my lemon juice, one other ingredient got to take it out. In and barley. And I ever since the pandemic I don't always have fresh garlic on hand, but I always have the same thing with the ginger and these cuts that I do with garlic.

You know, there's an old saying you measure with the heart, so I'm putting in a heaping tablespoon. It's your preference how much you put in. But I find that this is just a such a great thing to have because it's it stays in the fridge for a really long time and then you don't have to worry about it.

I'm going to meet my volume now so I can process this in the food processor. All right. So you can see when she was making this pesto there was no all involved.

What I love is okay, we've got the garlic. Once again another source of prebiotics for our gut microbiome. Especially because guess what? The bacteria Bifidobacterium loves garlic.

So that's really good to have. Then we've got the basil. And basil is going to contribute more to those greens the polyphenols protective metabolites.

And then pine nuts is what's going to add that plant fat without any of that added all. So that's kind of kind of helped make that creaminess of what we see, usually with a pesto.

So this recipe right here of the pesto that's going to go on there gives you a range of both the prebiotics and the polyphenol rich plants. A so I at one point I stopped the food processor just to scrape down the sides where I had a few rogue pine nuts, and now I have my beautiful basil pesto.

And so what I'm going to do is with a little spreader spoon, I'm going to, you know, fairly generously spread each piece of to with this pesto. Now, this pesto is very versatile because let's say you don't want to or don't like corn. There's other things you can do with it.

So one of the things I like to do with this pesto is make stuff mushrooms. And you make them, you hollow out a little bit, you take off the stem and then you bake them for about 20 minutes.

Or if you want to put them in the food to hydrate. Or you can do it that way too. If you don't like mushrooms, you can do the same thing with zucchini.

Stuff it with this pesto. But this is so yummy and it's so pretty because when you see what we top it with, with the red and all the other four, there's four toppings that I'm putting on because these are the toppings I like.

It's going to look super pretty once I make these. These are good to go to eat, but what I like to do for an extra step is right before the company comes.

I just stick them in my air fryer for five minutes. It just kind of makes them nice and toasty on top, and then I drizzle it with a little bit of reduced balsamic vinegar, and I might shift in on a little bit of fresh basil on top.

Just just to be pretty. Now you said that the extra pesto you freeze. How do you prep that. Like what are you putting it in and how long can we freeze it for.

Several months I'd say for at least three months. I will put it in a piece of Tupperware that is freezer safe. Or honestly, a freezer Ziploc bag also works in that takes up less room in your freezer, and it's fun to have it already ready when you want to make these.

I've made. I almost always served these for Thanksgiving, and so I will make all my pesto in advance. Also, people that grow their own herbs. You know when the basil is fresh, this is when you want to make the pesto.

Because you know, basil, in my opinion, fresh basil does not freeze well by itself. But when it's in something like this, it's absolutely fine. And so that's a great use of when you have like, I'm going to actually have some leftover basil from this recipe, but unfortunately I don't have any more pine nuts.

Otherwise I would make a lot more and maybe I will go to the store. Actually, that might not be a bad I just to make sure that I use up all my basil Haskell is another great place for pine nuts.

It's. I don't know why pine nuts, I guess because they have to take it out of the the thing. But you can see I have enough here to make 24 more pizzas.

Yeah. To have in the freezer. Just kind of if you want to take this you could move this to the side.

Mini Polenta Pizzas with Basil Pesto

And now let's see what are the toppings that you were talking about that you like to put on yours. I like to put on pizzas is what I like to eat on pizza.

So I'm going to show you my four favorite toppings for pizza. Now, if somebody didn't want to make pesto pizzas for whatever reason, they could use marinara sauce.

Make sure it's a very thick one, though, because you don't want it running off when you know, but there's no reason you couldn't do that. So my favorite toppings are olives, but only kalamata olives, artichoke hearts, sun dried tomatoes, and roasted red bell peppers.

And so now how are you finding olives that have not been soaked in? All? Because I just got back from Greece, and all the olives that we could buy at the store were sitting in. All right.

So I'm very lucky. Now they will have salt. Now you can get salt free olives on the internet. I've seen them. I don't know, it's like but Trader Joe's and Whole Foods, at least where I live, have kalamata pitted olives with no just salt if you want.

If you want to grab it from the fridge, I will double check that. That's correct. But I certainly don't feel any oil on these. But we're going to look we're double check these ingredients.

Here we go. It says Greek pitted kalamata olives, Kalamata olives water salt red wine vinegar okay. So no all in those windows right. I often like if you go to Whole Foods that they're Olivar.

You will see lots of boil in me. I'm doing one and a half olives on these. You can do one, you can do two. I've cut them in half. The fact that they're pitted makes them go even faster.

And this is just a very pretty festive dish. Yeah, it looks like a good holiday or a good dish for like when you have company over. Absolutely. I think it would go very far in the taste profile.

I have six artichokes here. Artichoke hearts. I get them frozen at Whole Foods or Trader Joe's. There's no and I'm just going to put a half an hour to choke on each one.

You could make, you know, a whole one I think would make it a little bit harder to get everything on. But I want to I want to put as many toppings on this pizza as I can now.

Artichoke hearts. They happen to be one of the richest sources of inulin, a fiber that really fuels a diverse microbiome. I will admit I didn't start eating artichokes until I was an adult.

It was not something that, like as a kid, that that I really grew up eating. So definitely now adding in the artichokes. And then, we've got the olives.

We all know olives are a great source of nutrients. They actually contain something called oil opinion, which is really good for your skin health too.

So olives is great. What else do you have on the on that pizza of yours? We're going to put on some sun dried tomatoes and these boil at all. These are just sun dried tomatoes I mean yes often they do come in.

But I get the bags that Trader Joe's actually. But even at the local, you know, regular market called WinCo, they come with no real if you were and then just a little piece of sun dried tomato over the top.

And then the last thing is roasted red bell pepper, which you can now buy in jars. They will contain some salt, but you can easily roast one yourself, especially if you have a gas stove.

Just by taking it like and putting it right over the flame. Or you can roast them in the oven. But again, these are things, these extra steps that the people that want to be absolutely perfect do.

That's fine. But that would enable me not to want to do it because it's just too much work for me. Well, I think you made a good point here is because we're not always looking for these things that don't contain all.

Like most of the time we just when we look at olives, we're like, oh, we just grabbed them and not even look that is there one sitting right next to it that's all free or is there something that's not drenched in like excess ingredients?

So I think this is a very good point to just start kind of looking at the labels a little bit, but then at the same time don't make it too complicated.

So again, this is, this brings this what I like about the red bell pepper is it just brings a lot of beautiful color to this. And really it's like when you eat these, it's kind of an explosion of flavor, like a party in your mouth of all these deliverance, different flavors.

And if you don't like one of these ingredients, use what you like on your pizza. But I'll tell you these I've never had a complaint. The biggest problem with these is people want to eat more than like, I figure like three per person, boy.

People want more. And it's like, it's just the way it is because they're really that good. And, you know, I would say you could probably do like a large pizza, but this is a pretty rich filling, the pesto.

So I really don't know how many you could eat. So that's what we're going to do. Just make them look pretty. And then like I said, we can eat them now.

But if you can spare that extra five minutes under the air fryer, it just makes it really, really beautiful. And these are ready to go in. Yep. Those look delicious.

Now that to me looks like a great source of dietary fiber for gut health. When you have when you're looking at your meals and you're creating recipes and stuff, are you, you know going, oh do I have enough fiber in this recipe?

Don't I really? Don't worry. I'll tell you why. Because almost every plant food, every plant food has some fiber and even plant foods we think about like, well, they don't have enough fiber, like white rice, for example.

Still has more fiber than any animal product, which has fiber or any processed food that has zero fiber. So I look through taste and color more than worrying about that, because as long as you're eating enough in a wide variety, you're going to get enough fiber.

That's it's I never met a whole. Vegans sometimes don't get enough fibers, junk food eaters. But if you're eating a whole plant diet, you're going to get enough fiber.

Actually, sometimes people feel at the beginning they're getting too much fiber. Imagine that. I don't know if there's such a thing as too much fiber, but I do love all the colors I'm seeing on there, because for me, it's always about eating diversity, eating the rainbow.

So you've definitely got the colors going in there. So that looks like another easy dish that really did not require, you know, turning on that oven behind you.

So where are we headed next on this plant journey? Well, while we were talking, the pressure cooker beat ten times, which means it's. But in the end, we're just going to leave it alone.

We don't need to eat these right now. So what I'm just going to do is unplug it. No, husband's going to unplug it for me, and it'll come down to pressure naturally.

And then I'll show you what we're going to do with them. So our pizzas away, and I'm going to make the entry of the meal. And this again, I really try I try to make things that everyone will like, not just people that are healthy eaters that.

So I teach in schools and they're not vegan, and I'm really blessed that they'll take me because it's it was a hard sell. It took years to get in there with all the stakes, with all the chefs that are grilling their state and doing all that stuff.

So very few of the people coming here, so it has to taste good or I'm not going to be invited back month after month. Right? It's really, really important.

So I just did a class last week called Eating Without Heating. And this is what we made as the entree. And they loved it. So first thing we're going to do is I'm all about quick and easy.

And any if there's an easier way to do it or cheap a way to do it, I'm hoping that I would be able to pass that on to you. As we mentioned with the artichoke, sure, you can boil them on the stove.

I don't have 50 minutes, I don't I have a lot to do. I can't be thinking about what's on the stove. Is it going to boil over the amount of time it takes to boil water?

So I figured out hacks like how to cook all my Costas in the Instant Pot. But I found this product that it rose my mind. And it's available for sure on the internet.

I mean, always on the internet, but I can get into stores like Cost Plus and Whole Foods. Basically it's rice noodles, instant rice noodles. I use those actually a lot.

I use those a lot. I found them also sometimes in World Market and found. Yeah World Market, I found them, I even found them sometimes in like TJ Maxx and HomeGoods.

You just gotta look. So yeah. So all we're going to do and basically the ingredient is rice. And all we're going to do is for boiling water over this for literally three minutes.

And it it's just so mind blowing. And so what we're going to just put this in a bowl. My little kettle is what is doing this this for these. Once it starts to soften I like to cut them up a little bit.

Just because everybody that's going to eat this tonight is American. I'm the only one that knows how to use chopsticks. They struggle. So I cut the noodle a little bit smaller just to make it easier for them in.

My water is boiled and all I'm going to do is pour over the top. I'm going to look at my clock, and in three minutes it's going to be ready. I could have used a little bit more water.

I'll get these. You know what? It's so hot here. We're ready to do that sink is just about boiling. But I do want to come. Yeah, I make pad Thai all the time, but I was not making it with these noodles.

Those noodles I usually use to put into my veggie spring rolls, like my rice paper rolls. But I think I'll try the pad Thai after watching you. Well, I, I find that these noodles are game changing, and so we'll just set these aside for now, and then we'll move on to the sauce.

So read the sauce I'm going to be using butter. You want to use peanut butter. You can. It's fantastic. With peanut butter it would probably be great with tahini I haven't tried it but I don't see why it wouldn't. And you could use roasted almond butter.

I probably I, I don't know if I would use a pistachio butter for this necessarily because I think if it's more like for sweet. So we're using the element butter because we already have almonds in some of the other recipes.

And I've already measured it out. That's another trick. Tip or trick is even though I'm cooking for you right now is a presentation, I measure everything out, even when I'm just doing it myself.

It just means. And plus we love our mes implores set up. That's that's how it makes everything so easy. Let me ask you the almond butter. This is one thing I've noticed is sometimes you might buy some almond butter and then it's really thick.

I just saw that come out really easy. Is there a way to soften the almond butter a little bit? Oh, yeah. Right. Now, it's so funny that you mentioned this because I know it's because it's a hundred something degrees where you are, but when it's winter time, how do we stop there?

Almond butter. This really helped. So then I'm all this tool at the kitchen store where I teach. And when you first open your jar, get it really, really well stirred, the other thing you can do, it wouldn't be raw, but many of the stores have these machines where it grinds the nut butter for you right there, but it's going to sit.

Or roasted peanuts that will stay soft. That doesn't get hard. But yeah, well, if you don't have a tool like this, just take a big, thick spoon and really, really get it from the bottom.

And that's that's kind of my favorite. So I'm going to add my liquids to this. And by the way, we could go right into the cooking of this. I just find it's just a little easier and quicker if I do it in the blender.

First you can just call these ingredients and just cook it in the pot, which we're going to do. I've got all my liquid ingredients pre. There was water in here.

There's tiny bit of maple sirup. You can use date sirup if you don't want to use maple sirup. There is a very low sodium coconut amino which is only 90mg of sodium per 2300 for salt.

If you didn't want to use this, there are sums for this, like there's a vinegar called California balsamic that you can use, and we have some rice vinegar in here.

And then I have my garlic and my ginger. And again you saw me use the garlic from the jar. That's what I'm using. And I buy the ginger in those little frozen cubes because I, but I don't love it enough to always have it fresh.

And so this works really well. One thing that I forgot to get is the red pepper flakes the recipe calls for, I believe. Let me look at it as a half. Yeah, a half. It's half a teaspoon.

I'm going to put in a quarter because my husband doesn't like things spicy. And so this gives it a little bit of a kick without being overly spicy. But remember you can always add to a recipe you can't take away.

So we're just going to use a quarter of a teaspoon. And I probably shouldn't say this publicly, but I'm terrible. I other than the first jar, I've never bought crushed red pepper the rest of my life, you know?

How come I just get it for free of every Italian restaurant I ever go to, and I just. We're going to be checking chef AJ's purse from now on. She's got some crushed pepper in there.

I just take it from there. And then we're going to blend. I'm just checking on my oh, my rules are ready. You got to excuse me for one minute. I've got to drain these because. Hey.

All right. So while she's working on that. Right. So we've got the almond butter in there. Once again that was the plant fat that can help slow digestion.

Feed that gut bacteria. Further down the path, we had the garlic and ginger, both which have been associated with a healthier gut microbiome composition.

We are going to get to the vegetable shortly after this source gets blended up. So this looks like, once again, a much easier way of doing a Pad Thai than, and much healthier than ordering it from a restaurant when you do not know how much all and fat and all other ingredients are going into it.

In fact, I've had a number of vegan patients who are like, oh yeah, I'm eating vegan. And I'm like, well, you know, your test results are showing a lot of fish items in your food allergy testing.

And they're like, but I don't eat fish, I don't eat any of this. And I'm like, well, are you eating at Asian restaurants? Because usually even if you say vegan, they might put fish sauce in it, unless you're very specific.

So keep that in mind. You don't really know what's going in your food when you're outside, unless you're being super specific. And you can see how easy it is to cook one of these recipes at home.

Easy Pad Thai Salad

So yeah. So we're I definitely was not cutting up these noodles. I think I will do that next time to I'm the one who takes my fork and spins them around and makes fun with them.

You're having company. Sometimes they feel self-conscious. And so what I'm doing is, as well as it's sitting in the water, which is unfortunately never gets cold here, but it's less hot.

I'm just cutting them up. It just makes it a little bit easier, you know, I think for people to eat them. But again, you

don’t have to do this. And you know, it’s so true what you say about when you order tired or restaurant, it is literally swimming in its glistening.

And that’s because they just they don’t understand and they don’t know how to cook without a well. And the fish thing was I ordered recently at a restaurant, I said, hey, I’m vegan.

And again, they still are so hard. They gave me, you know, something and it wasn’t. So you just you got a really? Yeah. I think it’s really hard for them to flavor it properly because it’s I’ve used sometimes tamarind to get the flavor in the tamarind pod to get that kind of tangy flavor, because they’re so used to using the fish sauce to get that pet Thai flavor.

So this looks like a good combination here that you’re showing us how to save vegan fish sauce. Have managed to get it on on Amazon, but there was a vegan restaurant where I used to live in Roseville, and they did sell and use something called vegan fish sauce.

So I’m just trying to get this a little bit drained so that it’s not going to make the sauce diluted. So we’ll just put this to the side for now. And then we’re just going to quickly blend the sauce.

Well, whoever the guests are that are coming over tonight are in for a treat. I must say I do a cooking demo for a doctor or a summit I always invite.

Myself just one. Okay. All right. So, so far, just to recap what’s been going on if you are just following up with us. We started with dessert. Chef AJ made some cinnamon vanilla bliss balls.

Then we moved into cooking some artichokes in the Insta pot, which we are going to get back to in a second. Her appetizers were the mini polenta pizzas with free basil pesto, and now we are in the process of making the source for the main dish, which is the easy pad Thai noodles, where she used the quick rice noodles that cook quite instantly.

And now we’re moving on to looks like adding the sauce with the noodles. And let’s see what chef AJ is going to do, because I see the rainbow of veggies behind her so I know what’s coming.

So the sauce is pretty. You don’t have to cook this sauce, but it’s pretty liquidy. And when I have my friend who’s raw over I just chill it. And she she doesn’t want anything cooked.

But if you can take the time and you didn’t have to use a blender for this, it just I find it’s just a little easier than stirring it from the pot. I’m just going to put this in my pot and stir.

Now, this is just like a little camp stove, so it’s going to take maybe a little bit longer than if we did it on the on the real stove behind me, then you wouldn’t be able to see me.

So we’re just going to take my little I don’t know what this is called, but it’s great. Potato potato masher. It’s really cool. It’s like all squiggly. Oh.

Oh no, that’s something different. That’s a neat tool. So it’s kind of something between a potato masher slash like baking like whisker something that’s a new one.

I have not seen that one. You know, if you have, coated pasta, whatever, it just doesn’t. It’s just it’s for me. It’s just starts to heat up. I’m just going to start and I’ll be ready very quickly and let’s get the rest of our.

So that does not mess up your pasta is what you’re saying exactly. It’s it’s a couple word thing. I have a lot of Tupperware, as you can see, and I really want to get and most of it has a lifetime guarantee.

I’ve gone back to them 20 years later and gotten my moles replaced, and it’s pretty cool. So I’m going to put them when I serve it. I’m going to serve it in a very pretty bowl.

But for mixing it's just going to be in a regular bowl. So what we did is we took our noodles and our source, which is cooking, and I'm literally add 2 pounds of vegetables to this dish.

And what's cool about it is not only just adds a lot of fiber, but it also has a lot of flavor and a lot of color. So my purple cabbage and my shredded carrots both are organic.

They both came in eight ounce bags. I steamed them in a little tool that's a microwave steamer each for six minutes. And I'm going to pour it just so pretty.

I don't even want to put it in the bowl. Well, okay, so it looks like she's got the purple cabbage. Plus I see there the broccoli. So that is both going to be sources of cruciferous fiber because it's going to have the casino lights in it that's going to support that resilient microbiome.

And then she added those carrots. And I also see bell peppers. So that's going to add your carotenoids right. So now we're back to eating the rainbow.

You know they say that you want to eat 30 different whole plant foods in a week for the best diversity in your microbiome. If you're looking at this, we pretty much hit, if not half more than a half of it in one meal with chef AJ I you know you know, it's funny because when you first invited me to be a guest and I'm so honored to do that, I was like well what am I going to make that's going to, you know, be favorable to the microbiome?

And then I realized, hey, it's not that hard. I just pick my the recipes I like and we're going to get there. So there's 2 pounds of steamed vegetables.

And now take my little tool with the name that I don't know, but it's starting to bubble up and we're just going to stir it around. This is going to get thick very very quickly.

All right. So while you're working on that, let me ask you another question. Because you did mention this earlier. You spoken about letting go of perfection around food.

How can people build a way of eating that's both healthy and enjoyable enough to last a lifetime, not just a 30 day reset? Maybe don't think about it as a lifetime right away.

That's the thing. I mean, that's, I think, the benefit of 30 days because I think, you know, think about like if you think about like an absence program for drinking, if they take one day at a time and that's, you know, can you imagine, like if they went in there saying, okay, you're never going?

It's psychologically very hard to tell somebody that they have. By the way, this is ready. Look how quickly it fixed up to tell somebody to do something that's difficult or that they may not want to do that, they have to do it the rest of the light.

So I think of it as a meal at a time. Each meal is a chance to make a choice. You know, the thing is, is one of the other things I say is think about having more healthy meals than unhealthy meals.

And I think when you tell people they can never have something unhealthy again, they shut down. But the idea is, and I still do this myself, I have become much more flexible with my diet, but I it's like ingrained in me that if I'm going to eat something, that's a treat.

I always eat something healthy first. Or like I never start with the most hyper palatable, you know, the thing that I'm going to be doing. So this is completely ready.

And so now what we want to do is get our noodles. You know what? I sometimes like to do it a little bit this way is to put the noodles in the pan to make sure that all the noodles get covered, you know, get covered with the sauce.

Get the sauce. Yeah, yeah. So I'm going to put the noodles. Usually I'm using a bigger pan but that would not sit

on this little stove. So I'm going to put the noodles in the pan.

And then I'm going to get a stir. Stir. It's a spatula. Try to get these covered up. Oh and this sauce by the way let's say you don't want to do noodles.

This is just a wonderful sauce. You could just put it over steamed broccoli you know. Or you could even do like the chini noodles if you don't want to do rice noodles.

What I said in the recipe that if somebody did you could take the zucchini noodles or might even be better. What's called cuddles where you take peeled cucumbers and make noodles.

Oh that could be really cool. So let's get this going. All right. So now let's pour it over this I still want to get it all mixed in. The thing is is we want to chill this for a few hours before serving.

So do you serve it cold. I do I think that this, I think that this particular dish tastes better is a cold chilled noodle salad. That's why I called it pad Thai salad instead of traditional pad Thai.

So. And would you garnish it. Are you going to add something to it later. What I'll do is right before survey and I could do it now I suppose I'm going to add lots and lots of green onions.

The the green part of the scallion. And on the table I will have some sesame seeds and some chopped elements. So if it's peanut butter I use chopped peanuts elements, chopped onions.

And I'll have for people to if they like. Want to mix this all together. And then I'll put it, you know, this would this would be a great time to use food service gloves.

And if it's not too hot, I think I'm going to do it because then I can really get. Yeah, you can get get it all covered up. Okay. So let me see for the people who are watching right now which and they're maybe not so comfortable in the kitchen.

Which of these recipes would you say to start with first. Like if that's all they were going to do, which one recipe that we do next which is the fennel.

All right. Ingredients in lemon juice. That's what I would say. Start with that one okay. The date shape which is going to be what we end with okay. So we're starting with dessert and we're going to end with dessert.

So this is this is the best way to learn to eat your plants. So we're just okay. So having some gloves in the house is also helpful really because you don't want to be that one person with a noodle that's not coated.

Especially since that sauce looked so good. It's me. And you know, you know, when I do taught this at this school, people wanted extra sauce. And I'm like, really like this.

I mean, but everybody's a little different. So I had to make a little extra source for them, but that's fine. But I think if I had used the food service gloves, they wouldn't have noticed that because everything would be equally distributed.

And I want to grab a pretty dish. I have some clear, some clear Tupperware, which and by the way, I use the ingredients I like maybe something in here don't use it.

You could use a yellow bell pepper. You know it does. Or an orange bell pepper. You know, there have been times where I've made this like for example, for like a plant based potluck and to stretch it out.

I've added even more vegetables. I've added chopped cucumber, you know. So I would add personally I would add sprouts on it. Yeah. Because I just like for garnish I always like adding that extra round of green.

So I would add sprouts on it. I have people had tell me that they add edamame to this. More okay. So protein you could add tofu edamame. So people have told me they have done that.

So these are just you know templates make it your own. But yeah I, I can see a big difference using gloves that everything is covered evenly which is so nice.

Oh this I, this is such a I mean people this can tell you I'm not saying it because it's my recipe. I'm saying it because it's true. This is just yummy.

I could have used the. It seems like I have less bell pepper and the red is so pretty. I wish I had gotten a second one or a bigger one, but this will be fine.

So this is pretty good. And with the gloves you know I didn't lose very much chef product, but I want to see where are my pretty glass that things I have.

Luckily this is not a kitchen that's sanctioned by the what's a much of a call. Because there are some bushes that are walking around looking for things that are on the floor.

Where we have it. So I'll take a prettier roll like this. You know, that's the other trick is if you're trying to enroll somebody in healthy eating, get the prettiest one you can make it pretty.

Oh, I've got so many pretty dishes. I just love, like, having dishes of food. So here we go. Okay, I'm just going to transfer it. And then we've got really.

The next two recipes are so quick and easy. Very very easy recipes. The reason I did two desserts is because my husband is helping with the filming, and I feel like he should be paid in a date shape because he find them commercially.

They're like $12. Thank you, thank you. Charles, you're getting bribed with a date shake. I love that that you didn't do stuff. So I'm going to do a real quick salad, which is just so yummy, but okay, so now we're going to do the good and plenty fennel salad.

Oh, look at that. That looks beautiful. I see broccoli, the peppers, all of that serve a lot of people. And we're going to place it in the refrigerator now for about least 3 or 4 hours to get it nice and chill for our dinner.

So good. And plenty fennel salad. Tell us about this recipe that you created. You know, I think that is a really underused vegetable. It's a, you know, it's like celery, I don't care.

I'm not a pretty. But I'll be honest, I don't care for Salvi, I just don't. Oh, that's like it. But Sam has such a wonderful taste. It tastes like. And said tastes like licorice.

May not like that. You won't like that taste. But I always knew I wasn't a kid that liked to read who I liked. The black. I'll take your wonderful piece.

And by confining it with some days it actually tastes like a childhood favorite. Sandy, which is. I guess they still make it a good one. And so three ingredients fennel digs and lemon juice.

Or you could use lime juice. And this is one of those salads that I have added things to on what's in the house, and especially if I'm trying to extend it.

Or maybe I have trouble getting settled. I can usually find in most first restores, especially ones like even Trader Joe's, I added things like shredded or cut off apple Harris.

Really? Anything you like? I'm basically just moving out my blender now, but when I'm going to make the date shake, which is going to be very, very soon.

So now.

Fennel Salad and Date Shake

Though, so there's three. I'm excited about this one because I love licorice and I will eat fennel salad when I go out, but I don't really know how to prep it properly.

So I'm excited about this one because you also said it's one of the easiest one way sandalwood is really delicious is roasted or air fright. It's just phenomenal that wait, if you can do it, you can eat it or put it in soups.

There's three parts to the fennel. There's the fonds, the kind that kind of looks like, do you know the the fuzzy part, which is completely edible work.

If you're not going to eat it, at least maybe consider using it as a garnish. And then there's the harder big green fronds, which I've already cut up.

I will eat these. Some people don't. But there's nutrition in here and they're super crunchy. But this is the part most people are familiar with. And that's what's going to be the heart of ourselves.

Cold and the live. What I love about this one is I can't cut myself even without a glove because, well, actually, I spoke to him. This is too small for this.

So where is my older man? So I was just doing some math here and looking at your recipes in today's meal, what you're going to be serving these guests, you're at about 23 plant ingredients.

That's like more than somebody eats in a week, and you're doing it in one lovely meal. One meal. Isn't that amazing? I know it's cool, That's cool. Right?

The mandolin got to be really careful. And the best way to be careful is to always wear a glove. I know so many chefs that just don't. But once you've got the tip of your thumb off, you'll promise.

I promise you'll learn. So I'm using the mandolin because it's easy. It's easier than a knife. And so then I get really cool, fine little pieces like this.

You want it, you can. It's just smells like candy. Get out all the pillars and gluten and sugar and overall kids. And I liked them. I figured out how to make licorice just out of dates and fennel.

It's amazing. But you do need a hydrate for that. So we're just going to. Well, that sounds like a good recipe. Can you tell us how you would do that?

I have a dehydrator summarized, but it's a raw recipe you do. You can only make it in a dehydrator, but it's basically fennel. Round up dates and a little bit of carol powder.

Not for taste, but just to make look black, that's all. Okay. And that's it happening to give you that. So you wouldn't do lemon in that one. Not in not in my true licorice.

Okay. So there's this little thing, the little piece in the middle that sometimes is a little hard to eat. So I take that out, kind of like, I guess you would call it the core.

You've seen those probably stuff. So when they come out, I just take those out because those are, those are hard to eat. And then I'll do the other one.

A Trader Joe's is nice. They sell it in a two pack and it's all cleaned and everything. You don't have all the all the frogs, but I, I think it's fun having this what I think.

And then I'll do the other one. And then all I'm going to do is cut up my dates and I'm going to add to taste. And I like to use Deadwood in order for these, because the jewels are wonderful, but they're so sticky they're hard to come, whereas the Norse are not so sticky and they're pretty easy to cut up.

And I'm going to be using a dedicated as well as time. So just wanted to be careful when you get down there, even if you have a one on. That's good. Okay.

This these mandolins are great for cutting things. You know, like onions and, you know, things that you want sliced really thinly taking that, you know, that little circle that's in the middle, just taking it out because it's it is very tough.

The core. Should probably get a bigger bowl for mixing. Yeah. That this will be a great bowl for serving but I'll need a bigger one in. Okay. I'm just going to pour it in my bowl.

It says 20 days. Just do as many as you want. I like to cut them into small little rings. Them throughout this is almost I don't want to say it is a dessert but it's almost dessert like just or even in there though once again if somebody does not like the dates can they use dried apricots or dried figs or something like that?

I absolutely I think what goes good with liquids, what would be what would be the most date like thing. Oh, but you know, I give unless it's an allergy, give dates a trial because they really are nature's candy.

And you know, that's that's what allowed me to stay away for sugar from so many years was just discovering dates. And I just think there are just a wonderful, wonderful food.

And there are so many kinds most people are familiar with just in a jewel in the North. But there's there's so many times that I can't even name them all.

But for eating, my favorite is called the Bari. It's still be a I and it tastes just like eating a caramel. And when you freeze them, there are amazing.

A lot of people like to stuffed dates with nut butter like pistachio butter or almond butter. Yeah. In Morocco and like Middle East you'll find like desserts with a date just filled with a walnut like nothing else.

It's just like real whole food. And I've tried some dates from Saudi Arabia and I don't remember what the name of them is, but they're more like a yellow color.

They literally melt in your mouth like you put them in and it just like, dissolves. So it's not like the dried measure that we find here. So there is definitely a good variety to try.

So there are so many. So I'm not I'm just looking visually at how much fennel I have. And then you can always add. So that looks pretty good. And I'm just going to use my clean hand and mix it around.

Make sure I got enough deep to fennel ratio. Well I think we need more. You know it depends. I have a feeling dates are your favorite. Magical. And they are this wonderful I mean.

And think about it. Compared to sugar all the all the I mean what does sugar have? Nothing. It has no fiber. It has no nutrients and sugar. I mean, dates are much lower in what we call caloric density because they're a whole natural food with fiber.

They have so many minerals and they're just wonderful. I can't say enough about them. Okay, we'll stop here. And then I don't just mail lemons because I found that it's just cheaper to go to Costco and get the organic lemon juice. You.

I have found lately that lemons and lions are so stingy. And to get the amount of juice you need, you're spending more money. So I just get get it lemon juice and lime juice in a bottle and I'm just not put it in.

You can always add more, but it's nice to have a little bit of time to, you know, for the flavors to melt. Get a little. Why didn't I think of what this is called right now?

Those are your tongs. Hello. Often a bitch is not going to get super soft and it's just smell. It's just smells like freshness in a bowl. That's a that's a great summer salad.

Three ingredients fennel, lemon juice and dates. And this one you're going to serve at room temperature as well right. I it's funny I guess I guess maybe because it's so hot where I live you could serve it at one temperature, but I am going to chill it.

I'm okay. Maybe you're right now and I'm going to go. This is proof that a three ingredient recipe can still be a serious gut health recipe. Yeah, three ingredients in the fennel salad, four ingredients in the truffle.

And so I'm going to take my little fronds here. That over look let's decorate it in the middle. Look how pretty that is. Look at that. That is lovely. Another good one. All right.

So we've got one left. And and this one is really for your husband because he's been helping out. This is how we pay the cameraman. We're going to need the blender back.

I'm just going to show you my pressure cooker has come up. Pressure I release. I didn't release the pressure. I just on plugged it. It came down for naturally I'm just going to open it.

And now I have two perfectly cooked artichokes, which hot. But I do prefer them till for me, artichokes. And then this is so soft. The heart is soft. I just, I like him playing a lot of people, you know, do some kind of tofu mayonnaise or cat cashew mayonnaise or even a cauliflower mayo.

I love these so much. I can eat these plain. Once they're chilled, they're too hard to deal with. Hot because the heart, you know that you need, right?

But I will eat artichokes every day. I never, and sometimes I'll even eat two of them so you can. So when you're eating them, you're basically peeling back each of those peels and then just do it's, you know, it should make a video.

Really. I'm serious on how to eat it. Yeah. Take one. I know it's hot for you right now, so I'll do it. You take one leaf at a time. Go past the white part.

You don't want to eat this. There's nothing good. And you use your teeth and you just scraped, okay, it's so good. And then when you get to the heart, then you got to kind of get all the get around it.

Yeah. And that's usually what we get in the jar is, is the artichoke hearts. So now we, we it's a little bit of work. But what I like about this is this is more for mindful eating.

Right. So now you're paying attention to how like you're eating instead of just shoveling food in your mouth so that that's a good test. Eating artichokes eaten artichoke quickly.

No you cannot. You don't let me see if I can. You don't go past the part. That's that's white. Okay, you got it. And they have to be soft. I don't think you can eat an artichoke raw, I really don't.

Okay, so let's make our date shake. Well, got the blender plugged in. So one of the things I do is we talked about how to make it sustainable, to make it repeatable.

And so everybody has their favorite recipes I would imagine whatever they are. And you know that you're going to eat a certain thing maybe a few times a month or a few times a week since I know I'm going to make this a lot, I just measure out all my ingredients in a jar, and then I'm just pulling it out and it's so much easier, you know?

Okay, so those ingredients that you're talking about is your vanilla bean, your cinnamon, your nutmeg. Cheers. All of that is in one jar. Yes. And then I also have oats. Okay.

So it's kind of like having a spice blend for your smoothie is what you need. And I do that for soup so I may not right now it's this five. But I make the same soup over and over my cauliflower this on my black bean mushroom chili.

And I do the same thing. And I usually put tape on it and label what it is. So you know what the spices are. Yeah. So I do that for any recipes that I know I'm going to make in this.

There we go. So let's get let me just I have the milk the almond milk in the fridge. I've already measured it out and I have my dates soaking in it because I know not everybody has a high powered wonder.

I just want to pour it in my Vitamix and I'm going to add my seasoning jar. I'm going to smell it even though I made it myself. Yep, that's everything I want.

And then I'm going to add two bananas frozen that are saying bananas, right? Even really quickly in the desert. And if I take them and I put them peeled in a Ziploc bag, I freeze them so that they're not clutching.

And then you can lose and you can make, you can make, you know, just sorbet in the Vitamix. It's amazing. I wanted to close this and put this back for me.

Okay. So now we're just going to blend. And we're going to put it in a pretty glass. Hopefully we found a straw. Oh look at this. Look at how crazy. Now.

All right. So I redid the count on chef AJ's meals for today. We are at 25 different whole plant foods. And if you are the overachiever that I am I would bet you could make it to five more with just adding a few garnishes on top of these dishes, which personally I would attempt to do.

So we already made it to 25 in 1 day of meals, and it's not about the quantity you're eating, it's about the biodiversity. So really she hit the mark here with 25 different ingredients.

So it's really also fun to serve it in a jar like this. But since we already have these milkshake glasses already, I don't know if you can see how thick this is, but it's super thick, almost like ice cream.

And if you wanted a thicker, you could add a little bit of ice. Look at that. And the other thing you can do is we don't do caffeine here, but there are herbal coffee substitutes.

So if we want it like a coffee date, shake reconnects with those powders. It's really good if there's leftovers, which there is. If you have a Ninja Creamy, you can freeze it.

You can put this in popsicle rolls and you can have a date. Look how thick it is that the straw just stands up. Just like that. Dollars at the juice up shack.

All right. Beautiful. Oh my goodness. Okay, so all these recipes are going to be available for you guys that have been watching. I think this has just been amazing to just show that one.

You don't need to be a chef to know how to cook. You just really need to learn just a little bit. So now last question for you chef. And I want to be a little bit concrete here because people are probably watching this and going oh my gosh she can do it because she's chef AJ I walk in my kitchen and I just stare at everything and then I walk out the other way.

What would you say that they like? What would you say would be something concrete they can do? We already gave them the recipe, but something concrete they can do to prepare them on this beautiful journey.

That is their relationship with the kitchen. Make friends. Somebody that likes to cook, maybe, or cook with friends. You know, this is the more you can enroll other people and healthy eating.

Don’t do it alone. Get your kids involved. Get friends involved. Make these. Make this a meal, but invite three friends over and make it together, you know?

Absolutely. Absolutely. I think that sounds like a great idea. Get the kids involved. Get your friends involved instead of just sitting around drinking wine and gossiping like just everybody in the kitchen, and learn to explore different foods.

I love this chef. AJ, thank you so much. You proved that food was built for your gut and that’s the best thing on your table. I don’t think anybody that’s watching is going to look at a potential a polenta round the same way.

Again. They’re going to look at it and go, I’ve got an idea about this. Chef AJ can be found at chef aj.com. And she’s also got her broadcast across her YouTube channel Facebook Instagram.

Oh my gosh look at this. This was in the air fryer. Not yet. Yet okay don’t forget to check out all of her books. Now, is there anything else you want to add, chef?

Do your best. You know, it’s about progress. It’s not about perfection. And just, you know, just the more healthy meals you can add and the more plants you can invite to every meal, the better you’ll feel, better your gut will feel, and I think you’ll really enjoy the food if you give it a chance.

Absolutely. Well, here’s the key takeaway today, guys, is the food that is best for your gut. And the food that tastes the best are not two different plates.

Today chef AJ showed us that they can be the exact same plate, so stay tuned for another one of our episodes and I will see you all very soon. Thank you so much chef.

Thank you. Best of health to everyone.