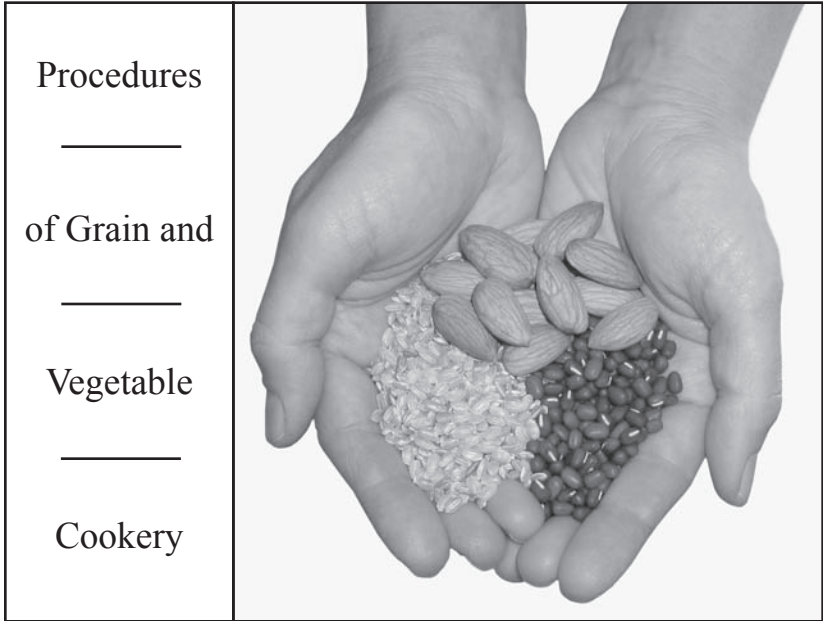


Revised and updated

Basic Macrobiotic Cooking

Twentieth anniversary edition



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Chico, California

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Preface

Many people are concerned about food. Everyone wants to be healthy and information abounds on ways to eat to have more energy. Advice ranges from “eat more veggies” to “avoid salt” and “reduce fat” to “increase fat, lower carbs.” Furthermore, many people are seeking ways that food can help to prevent diseases or support in the recovery from illness.

Macrobiotics is one way to address these concerns. It is suited for anyone wanting to take care of themselves and willing to take the time and effort to learn. While macrobiotics often begins with an approach to diet that emphasizes whole grains, beans, and fresh vegetables, it includes principles that encourage flexibility and adaptability and learning how to increase self-knowledge.

Macrobiotics has been around for years, maybe as long as modern-day vegetarianism. Like vegetarianism, many misconceptions have arisen. Both are associated with severe adherence to food choices and restrictions. Other assumptions include that one must devote long hours in the kitchen or learn complicated Asian ideas. While much of the origin of macrobiotic thought came from Japan, there is no requirement one must change one’s thinking or habits to Japanese customs. In fact, many people lead happy and enriched lives through the simple suggestions offered through macrobiotics without mastering Asian terms or utensils such as chopsticks.

This book seeks to open the door of macrobiotics to make it available for anyone eager to learn. Its emphasis is on cooking. Chapters are organized according to food groups. Within the chapters, information is presented by the procedures or methods of cooking. Practical information such as menu planning and how to use a pressure cooker is included, as well as theoretical information such as yin and yang and acid and alkaline.

This book grew out of my desire to see a beginning macrobiotic cookbook that anyone could use. When I began macrobiotics in 1980, I was single, worked 40 hours a week, and often lacked time or energy to cook. I would page through the available cookbooks for inspiration, but would end up preparing the same old rice and vegetables. When I studied with Cornelia Aihara, I learned different techniques and how to apply these techniques to a variety of foods.

Techniques are the procedures or methods of cooking that allow one to make a complete meal out of brown rice, pinto beans, and carrots. Techniques provide creative ideas by which one can enhance food, balance a meal, experiment. Techniques are the tools of the trade. Foods and choices of food matter, yes, but techniques make the difference. It is one thing to buy healthy food. It is another to know what to do with it. Cooking techniques provide the foundation for healthy eating.

The original *Basic Macrobiotic Cooking* was published in 1987. Four kids and almost twenty years later, I began the revision of the original text. I thought it would be simple. What I didn't foresee was that I would relearn the power of macrobiotics.

The power of macrobiotics lies in its application and whether or not it can be done easily. Dietary theories are fine, but if not practical, make no difference in anyone's life.

When I reviewed the book to see where it needed revision, I was pleasantly surprised. Typos, yes. Format changes, yes. Quantities of water or salt, additions of herbs and spices, yes. Techniques, no. The techniques needed no revisions. I am still using the cooking, cutting, and balancing techniques as written twenty years ago. These techniques have sustained and nourished me and my family with the passing years. They have provided variety for holidays, birthdays, and ever-changing tastes. What a revelation!

I am an everyday cook, preparing simple foods for my family each day. I hope you too enjoy the simple things in life.

This is an everyday cookbook. May this book offer you techniques and guidelines on your journey of taking care of yourself. And may you be blessed as you cook for yourself and your loved ones, everyday.

Julia Ferré

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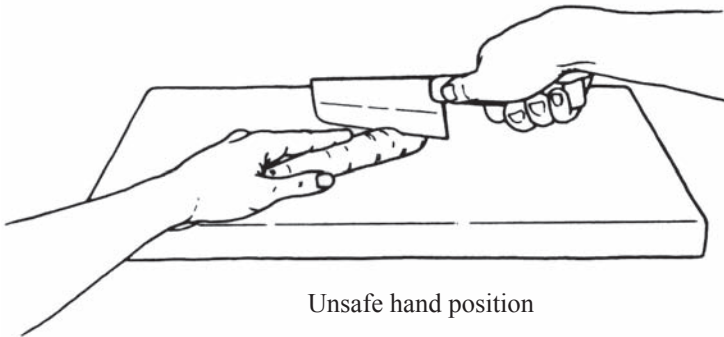
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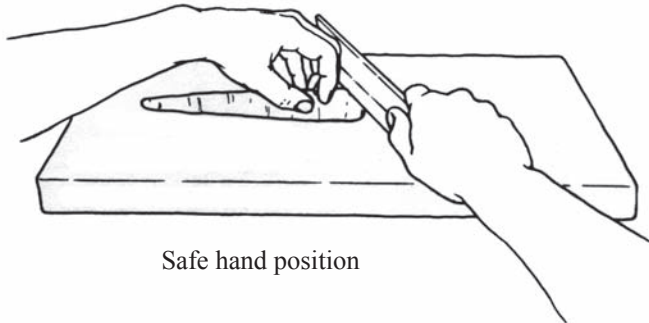
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Using a Knife

Rocking Method – Upon purchasing a rectangular vegetable knife, I began to cut vegetables following various cutting diagrams shown in cookbooks. I held the vegetables with fingers out. I held the knife loosely at the end of the handle and cut by rocking the knife, keeping the front of the knife on the board and using the back of the knife to cut. The cut used a down, back stroke. It took a long time to cut vegetables, and the pieces were uneven.

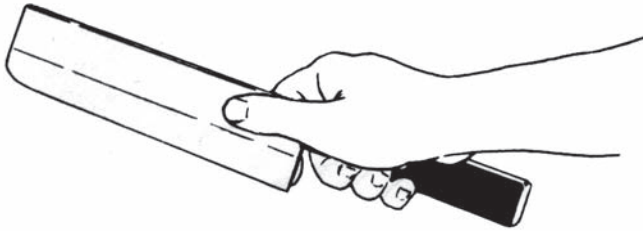


Whole knife method – In cooking classes, Cornellia Aihara used a different method of cutting. She cut fast and evenly. She held the vegetables with curled fingers, using the tips of the fingers and nails



to keep the vegetables from moving and to protect the fingers. In this way, the upper part of the knife blade comes in contact with the knuckles, and the cutting edge is far from the fingertips. After each cut, the knuckles move back ever so slightly, measuring the distance of the next cut.

Cornellia held the knife differently, too. She held it firmly and grasped the knife at the junction where metal meets handle. This way of holding the knife allows more control when cutting. To cut, the whole knife is picked up, and then sliced down on a forward stroke. The upper arm and body move forward with this cut, and the blade meets the board evenly.



Learning this whole-knife cutting was awkward for me and gave me cramps for a few days. After ten days, it was comfortable; and in one month, I was cutting faster and more consistently. If you desire, learn this method by practicing slowly.