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Cooking

Cultured Food for Life: How to Make and Serve Delicious Probiotic Foods for Better Health and Wellness
Donna Schwenk
Hay House
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Dig into this fun, easy, and smart cookbook and guide to discover how you can grow your health by growing beneficial bacteria-enhanced food.

A rainbow of inviting food photographs and a title that looks like a cartoon marquee advertise from the start that *Cultured Food for Life* is going to be a fun and easy introduction to the world of probiotic edibles. From that perspective, author Donna Schwenk does not disappoint.

The cookbook is wisely broken into two parts. Part one is the DIY of home probiotic farming, which begins with the "what" and "why" of a probiotic diet and includes myriad testimonials and scientific facts to support her findings. While this part feels a little like listening to a motivational speaker, it succeeds in leading to Schwenk's next question, "how?" Detailed one product at a time—from kefir and kombucha to fermented fruits and sourdough—the process of growing your own bacteria-laden foodstuffs is revealed. Not only are the recipes for these cultured building blocks easy to follow, each section also highlights frequently asked questions such as "Can cultured vegetables develop botulism?" or "My tea has a terrible odor. Is it safe to drink?" If these seem like frightening questions to ask about your food, Schwenk would have you know that home cooks have been safely producing fermented foods for thousands of years.

In part two, Schwenk catapults into a glorious array of tasty and easy-to-follow recipes which are accessible enough for beginners but also provide an incredible variety of uses for those who are already familiar with these foods. Conveniently, many of the necessary ingredients are available in natural food stores, saving home cooks the time and space required to keep these cultures alive in the cupboard or fridge. With a full offering of entrées, side dishes,

desserts, and smoothies, there's enough in this one cookbook to explore dramatically changing a diet or to experiment with just a few new dishes.

Schwenk's experiences with her own health and particularly as a mother trying to unlock the mystery of her daughter's constant illness and fatigue are substantial. Her genuine desire to share her secret to healthy living is evident through the conversational nature of her writing and her prominent resources and contacts. She clearly wants her readers to succeed as she has, and *Cultured Food for Life* is just the right road map.

Sara Budzik