



The Total Whole30 Guide

by Cheryl Malik of 40 Aprons

The program, tips, recipes, restaurant ideas, and meal plans for a badass Whole30

About This Book

Your meal plans were emailed to you in the same email as the download link for this book. Refer back to the email to download the meal plans or simply [click here](#).

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Hi! I'm Cheryl Malik, the author, recipe developer, and photographer over at [40 Aprons](#). I've put this ebook together to help guide you on your first (or twelfth) Whole30! I've been vegan, vegetarian, "whole" or "clean", and everything in between, but going on a [Whole30](#) for the first time was a totally different ballgame. I learned so much about eating and cooking a (strict) paleo diet, how to eat on a Whole30, what helps and what hurts, and why you'd want to do this to yourself... so I wanted to share my knowledge.

Before we go any further, you're encouraged to [join our Facebook group](#) for support and motivation! Having a support system is *completely critical* when you're on a Whole30, and I probably

wouldn't have made it through mine without my cousin to constantly text. And that, fam, is the point of this book: let's do this, together. Let's give ourselves 30 days, and let's focus on our health. We'll probably drop physical ailments, lose weight, sleep better, and feel better than we've felt in years... Ready?! Oh, *but you're actually not ready*. Let's make sure you plan ahead, stock up



on the stuff you need, avoid the stuff you really won't actually eat, and make this Whole30 as easy to dominate as possible. Preparation is the name of the game when it comes to this program, so don't skimp here. That's what I'm here for!

About Me

I've been slightly obsessed with healthy eating since I was itty bitty, and I've been vegetarian and vegan off and on since then. It wasn't until a couple years ago that I realized that veganism wasn't the right thing for me. I had a variety of symptoms that led me to believe that I needed a bit more protein and fat in my diet, and that processed sugars and flours weren't working for me.

I'd heard about the Whole30 here and there, but it wasn't until I was visiting some family in California that I really looked into the program. They were preparing to do their first round when I was there, and considering how much they love their trips to Napa and wine clubs, I figured there was no way they could complete the program! A couple weeks after I left, though, my cousin texted me and raved about how incredible they were feeling, how much weight they had already lost (although, you'll see it's technically against the rules to weigh yourself during the program, but shh), and how we really needed to seriously consider doing one of our own.

I'd been complaining of the TMJ and jaw pain I'd developed since starting a new job and how I *just couldn't lose the baby weight*, no matter what I did! She assured me that a Whole30 could very well help what ailed me, and I figured that if they were that passionate about the program, even though it meant giving up their wine, then it must be good.

I convinced my husband to start one, albeit reluctantly, and off we went. I experienced a pretty textbook Whole30 timeline, from the headaches on day 2, the fatigue of day 7, and well, the bad mood of pretty much days 1-30 (I'm not going to beat around *that* bush). By the end, I felt much slimmer, lighter, and more vibrant. I completely lost a few physical ailments, some I hadn't even really been actively aware of until they were gone, and developed this incredible state of mental chill and stability.

My husband experienced even more drastic changes and has become a Whole30 evangelist, always pushing to do new rounds. Considering he dragged his feet to the program, convinced he would cheat on the reg, I've been pretty amazed at just how differently he feels about the program, eating a paleo diet, and food in general now. Oh, and did I mention he ran a marathon in under 3 1/2 hours shortly after a round? He shaved a full minute off his already solid pace, changing nothing about his training program except for his diet. *Pretty impressive*, I must say.

I'll cover the full list of benefits and improvements in a later chapter, that you might want to refer to regularly during the program. It can be a challenge to go 30 days without so many foods on the standard American diet (yep... the SAD), but it's so worth it. I'm here to remind you of that!

So kick back, read through the book, and get ready for your Whole30. [Join the Facebook group](#) and strengthen that support system. Give us 30 days, and you'll simply love what happens... I promise.

Disclaimer: Some of the links in this book are affiliate links, which means I get a very small portion of the sale if you buy anything. Affiliate sales cost you nothing additional, and I use affiliate sales to keep my blog going, buy ingredients for the free recipes I provide, and allow me to keep writing Whole30 recipes!

1

What Is the Whole30?

What's the Whole30, how long does it last, what can you eat, and what's the point?



The Whole30 is a 30-day elimination diet (that means cutting out certain food groups to pinpoint an ailment or sensitivity) that focuses on resetting and restoring your physical health and mental (and emotional!) approach to food. The program is based on the books [*It Starts with Food*](#) and [*The Whole30: The 30-Day Guide to Total Health and Food Freedom by Melissa and Dallas Hartwig*](#).

The Whole30 absolutely revolutionized my family's approach to food, weight, and health, and I'll cover that in more detail shortly. As you'll see when we go through the list of forbidden foods, I

know you'll question why any sane person would eliminate so much, but I'll tell you... it works! Our starting conditions were really relatively mild, being just a bit heavier than we'd like, with a few relatively minor physical complaints. However, the result was so drastic, we've become Whole30 superfans. Even more impressive is the list of ailments that Whole30-ers have testified to the program helping - anything from weight loss to PCOS, lupus to high blood pressure.

I say all this, because... the program is restrictive. It is an elimination diet, seeking to cut out the most

common known allergenic foods, allowing you to basically start over from scratch. You can see-- really see--how food affects you when you start with a blank slate (after those 30 days), so it's important to get these foods out of your diet (completely) for a long enough period of time to allow a real reset.

I'll remind you that I'm by no means a representative of the program, nor am I an expert. I've simply read the book, done the program, and been blown away by the results. If anything you read here conflicts with what you see in the book or any rules that come out, please always go with the official recommendations. Some of the rules are complex, and they change occasionally, too!

Now, I know you're interested, so here's that list of foods you'll be saying bye-bye to for 30 days:

- dairy (with one exception: clarified butter or ghee)
- grains (all wheat, rice, oats, farro, and even quinoa)
- legumes (like peas, peanuts, and lentils)
- sugar (of all forms, including frequent additives to packaged foods like dextrose, or even natural sugars like maple syrup, coconut sugar, etc.)
- artificial foods, especially things like MSG and sulfites
- carrageenan

- alcohol (yep, even red wine and even for cooking or baking. Even white wine in your Dijon mustard!)
- using compliant ingredients to recreate no-no foods, like paleo breads, cookies, or pancakes

So this means...

- no peanut butter
- no gluten-free pasta
- no paleo date caramel
- no vanilla extract (yep... it's strict)
- no sweetened creamer in your coffee
- no tofu

Think of all the Whole30 advocates you've seen, heard, or read about, and think about how amazing they must feel to give up all of these things. Must be pretty darn good, right? Right.

So are you still with me? Good!

With that fat list of 'no's, it's important to remember what you can have:

- meat and seafood, including beef, chicken, fish, lamb... whatever
- eggs
- veggies
- fruits

- seeds and nuts
- ghee (Rejoice!)
- tea and kombucha (as long as there's no sugar added)
- coffee
- bacon, if there's no sugar added
- potatoes, even white potatoes
- canola/sunflower/safflower oil, when you're eating out
- almond, sunflower seed, and cashew butter
- coconut oil, olive oil, avocado oil, etc.
- olives

[Click here for the The Official "Can I Have..." Guide to the Whole30.](#)

You can have coffee, but you can only lighten it with a compliant creamer, like [Nutpods](#), coconut cream, or almond milk. You can have white potatoes, too, though you couldn't in past programs. You can have canola oil when you're eating out, but not at home. Er... why?

Well, you are *going* to have to eat out when you're on the program. It's just (most likely) going to happen! It would be impossible to do so without eating vegetable oils, but they're by no means

encouraged. There are, indeed, a few restaurant choices where you can eat totally approved foods, but in general, you'll come across canola oils.

Here's what else is forbidden:

Cheating and weighing yourself.

When I finally convinced my husband, O, to try a Whole30 with me, he said, "OK! I'll just cheat!" Um... no, honey. Not how this works. Again, to really cleanse your body of these potentially troublesome foods, you have to actually abstain from them. Say you have a major sensitivity to gluten, but you keep sneaking bites of bread here and there. Your body will never have a chance to truly rid itself of the food, and you'll never be able to eliminate any gluten-related symptoms you might be having. Make sense? Good! And yes... I know it's intense. But trust me; it's worth it.

But what's the deal with not weighing yourself?

You might go into the Whole30 hoping to lose a few pounds, and the odds are that you will. But the focus should not be on losing weight, but rather on returning your body to health and stability, cutting out foods that might be making you feel less than awesome. So if you step on the scale, hoping you've lost weight after however many days, and you haven't? You can imagine how demotivating that might be, right? Not weighing yourself also allows you to really focus on

your health and your mental approach to food, rather than nurturing an obsession with solely how food affects your physical appearance.

Lastly, the “no paleo/compliant recreations” rule seems a bit odd, doesn’t it? There’s approximately 43 references to paleo pancakes in [the book](#) and how these are off limits! They’re just bananas and eggs, so what could be bad about them? Well, a huge part of the Whole30 is the mental and emotional reset that happens, as well. It’s not just your body purging itself of inflammatory foods, but your mind loosening the emotional ties you have to certain foods.

Do you snack because you’re bored or rifle through the pantry for sweets when you’re feeling stressed? The Whole30 works to reset that relationship. Even if you don’t eat out of stress or emotion, you certainly have emotional ties to certain foods... hence the no-pancakes rule. It’s a little frustrating that you can’t have any form of bread or cookie or pancake for 30 days, but once you reach day 30, you’ll get it. You’ll have eased the reins on those relationships and will be capable of eating foods because they’re great for you, instead of because of emotional or mental reasons. You won’t need dessert after each meal; you won’t need to snack. You’ll be in control of what you eat and why, and it’s a beautiful thing.

I know there are a lot of rules, and I know the entire program is a bit intense. But keep in mind: this

is a temporary reset, and you only have to eat this way for 30 days. At the end of the 30 days, you’ll reintroduce certain foods back into your diet and see how they affect you physically and mentally. Eat a salad with feta and feel fine? Awesome! Eat a sandwich with whole-wheat bread and feel painfully bloated for 2 hours? Sounds like you might have a gluten sensitivity. Indulge in cappuccino with whole milk and feel like your insides are being wrung out 45 minutes later? Yeah... that dairy, though. It’s truly enlightening just how food affects your body, your mood, and your health, and this reintroduction is the perfect way to pinpoint trigger foods.

Lastly... why 30 days? Well, the Whole30 founders believe that 30 full days away from these foods will allow your body to really reset, totally purge itself of these foods. That way, when you reintroduce certain food groups back into your diet, you’ll be starting with a clean slate and will be able to better pinpoint exactly what makes you feel how. If you only detoxed for a week or so, you might not have given your body proper time to rid itself of anything inflammatory, so you might not ever start to feel fresh or free from those symptoms. 30 days is long enough for a reset and a commitment but not so long that it’s a long-term overhaul. Give yourself one month to really focus on your health and how food makes you feel, and I promise, it’ll be a month very, very well spent.

2

Why the Whole30 & My Experience

Why do the Whole30, what should you expect during the program, and what should you expect after it?



Taking on a Whole30 can seem like a no-brainer if you're suffering from major physical ailments, like migraines or Crohn's, or if you're trying to pinpoint a severe allergy for one of your kids. The total elimination of the common allergenic foods helps reset your body to set the stage for a majorly enlightening reintroduction program, once you've completed all 30 days.

For others, like me, you might think you feel pretty good but could feel better. Perhaps that baby weight simply won't budge, and for the first time ever, you're having trouble dropping those extra pounds. Maybe you used to eat healthy, but you've gotten off-track and want a reset. The Whole30 is an amazing way to do that!

And finally, for that third group of people, you might feel like you already eat “pretty healthy” and might be wondering *why in the world* you would do something so restrictive. You might even eat a whole-foods diet and exercise regularly, so why go extreme?

Well, the intensity of the program does a few things for each of these groups: it truly resets your body and allows for that reintroduction and identification of inflammatory foods, and it completely resets your mental and emotional relationship to food. I’ve mentioned these benefits before, but they’re so important, they’re worth repeating.

You might even find that you drop symptoms you didn’t even realize you had... like the poor sleeping I was experiencing, the heavy feeling in my entire body, the fog, and the headaches. Once I finished the program, I felt so *light* and oddly neutral, whereas before I was feeling always slightly symptomatic. I certainly suffered from stress before the program, and that impacted my physically. No doubt! But I would even argue that my stress during and after the program was worse, and yet my physical symptoms were better. My emotional state was calmer. My mind was clearer. It became clear quickly that it was largely due to food and my relationship to it.

Again, we ate quite healthy before starting the program. We’d been vegan and vegetarian off and on for years and usually ate a whole-foods,

unprocessed diet. It was the total elimination of dairy and grains (and booze, if we’re going to be honest) that changed everything.

I only have my firsthand experience to really share with you, but there’s an impressive list of ailments and conditions that participants testify the Whole30 either improved or totally cured. Are you ready for this?

- high blood pressure
- high cholesterol
- type 1 diabetes
- type 2 diabetes
- asthma
- allergies
- sinus infections
- hives
- skin conditions
- endometriosis
- PCOS
- infertility
- migraines
- depression

- bipolar disorder
- heartburn
- GERD
- arthritis
- joint pain
- ADD
- thyroid dysfunction
- Lyme disease
- fibromyalgia
- chronic fatigue
- lupus
- leaky gut syndrome
- Crohn's
- IBS
- Celiac disease
- diverticulitis
- ulcerative colitis

There's really only one appropriate reaction now:



My own experience is a little milder on paper, but nonetheless transformed my own life, relationship to food, and body. I'd never had much trouble sticking to a healthy diet in the past, nor with losing weight if I wanted to. But after I had my son, I was so stressed that I tended to eat *just whatever* and would eat to relieve that stress. On top of that, when I *did* make small efforts to lose weight, by eating a clean diet and doing yoga, the weight wouldn't budge. I didn't get it... at all. It was unlike anything I'd ever experienced, and I wasn't comfortable at that weight. But it seemed that, really, nothing could be done.

When my cousin texted me during her first round and told me about the weight she'd lost, I have to admit... it was extremely tempting. Of course, sleeping better, feeling better, having more energy, all of those were delicious add-ons, but it was the prospect of finally getting my body to the point where it would shed the weight that really did it for me. Are you supposed to do a Whole30 *solely* for that reason? No. And I didn't! But I'll admit it was a big reason; it was tangible proof that it was working, at least in some respect, for her. And you know what? It *didn't* disappoint.

During our first Whole30, I could tell I'd lost weight but didn't weigh myself. I stuck to those rules and didn't weigh myself until day 30, knowing that I would certainly be one to lose motivation if I hadn't lost the weight I was expecting. And on day 30, I stepped on the scale and saw

I'd lost 7 pounds. After months of fighting to lose a half a pound, losing 7 in 30 days felt magical. As a side note, after a couple months of eating mostly paleo (without being too strict with myself), I'd lost 13 pounds and was only 4 pounds away from my high school weight. The weight I had *not* been *since* high school, either. Whoa.

What else did the Whole30 do for me? Well, I actually started *sleeping through the night*, which sounds insane but began to truly illuminate just how terrible my sleeping had become. I started closing my eyes when we turned off the light and opening them again once my alarm went off; not hovering in this half-asleep state all night, not suffering from anxiety dreams, nothing. I completely lost my TMJ symptoms, and I also dropped the nightly mental battle that I'd developed with wine. Would I drink wine that night? How many glasses? Should I have another glass? And then the next morning... Is this headache from wine or is it its own thing? Am I feeling slugging because of that Merlot? Am I not able to lose weight because I'm drinking two glasses of Cab a night? *This* stopped completely, and I felt clear all the time. I was never bloated or gross and gassy, never had the nightly stomachaches I'd developed (What up, cheddar.), and felt stronger in and more motivated to get to workouts.

My husband experienced similar results, but possibly more intense. He's an extremely active marathon runner but had been carrying around 25 or

so extra pounds for years, despite his frequent and intensive activity. He was less than enthused when we started our first round but did it anyway. He didn't read a single, solitary word about the actual program, so I spent 70% of our conversations during the 30 days reminding him that *no he can't have peanut butter*. Which might make his results even more amazing...

He lost well over 10 pounds during the 30 days, but since then has slimmed down to thinner than when we met. That's over 30 pounds in a few months, without restricting calories at all or limiting his intake (in terms of volume, of course). On top of that, he sleeps much better and *ran a marathon in under 3:30*. His last marathon (and this was before we had our little one!) took almost 3:50, which means he shaved almost a minute off his pace.

Unfortunately, he's gone from Whole30 denier to Whole30 evangelist, so he's *always* wanting to do one these days, but can you blame him?

3

Preparing for the Whole30

How to prepare your mind, meal plan, and kitchen for a successful Whole30.



The #1 thing you can do to ensure a successful Whole30 is prepare. Prepare everything: your mind, your game plan, your pantry, your meal plan, your friends, and your family. Your Whole30 maxim should be, “Always be prepared”, and you’ll quickly learn why. I’m talking like... day 1, hour 1.

Prepare Mentally

The authors of [It Starts With Food](#) and [The Whole30: The 30-Day Guide to Total Health and Food Freedom](#) tell you it’s not hard, not if you compare it to having cancer or having a child with cancer... But it is hard. No, it’s not as hard as a lot of other things, but *it is hard*. You will want to quit. You will wonder what is so wrong with you that you would do this to yourself. Or, well, you might

not be so dramatic, but you will certainly urge day 30 to come sooner than later, at some point during the month.

Knowing this--that it's hard--will help prepare you mentally for the process. You'll know you'll want to quit, and so when you do want to quit, you can say, "Oh, this is just the *it's hard* part. No biggie." Here's what I think: If you go into it thinking, *this is nothing compared to other things*, you'll cave. Real talk.

You'll also want to prepare yourself mentally for the fact that, even if you keep it simple, you're likely going to be spending a bit more cash on food this month. I really thought that, considering I wouldn't be buying any wine, we might actually save money, but hahahahahahaha. We did stock up a bit more than we probably needed to, but you're buying *so much fresh and real food*. So much produce. Dropping all the Benjamins on the produce, my friends. Prepare yourself for that and realize you're investing in your health, and you'll feel better about the whole deal, I promise. I mean, I'm pretty sure...

Create a Game Plan

It's important to know how you're going to approach the Whole30, both in terms of meal planning and preparation and in terms of moments of temptation and stress. You need to plan for...

- how you'll create your meal plan (weekly, monthly?)
- how you'll stock up, or if you will at all
- what you'll do and where you'll go when you have to eat out
- what you'll do when you feel stressed
- what you'll do when you get pressure from friends, family, or coworkers
- who you'll use as your support network

Planning Meal Planning

One element of the Whole30 that can make it challenging is that you really have to cook pretty much everything. If you're not a big fan of the kitchen, this can be a turn-off to the whole program, but you can absolutely find ways to make it work for you. Maybe one day a week, you'll prep a ton of ingredients and meals and eat off of that for the rest of the week. Or like us, maybe you'll plan a few easy lunches and make extra-large batches of your dinners to supplement work lunches the next day.

Figure out what will work for you in terms of prepping for your meals. Some people like to plan their meals for the entire month ahead of time, but we preferred to go week-by-week, knowing we'd get sick of certain dishes in time. We went on a

big shopping trip before starting the program and stocked up on things we knew we'd eat anyway, simple ingredients that would work as easy meals or side dishes.

We'll work together to create a meal plan, but make sure you figure out your *game plan* around your meal plan first.

Planning for Stress

Next, you'll need to figure out your game plan for temptation and stress. There *will* come a time when you think you need to cheat, or you're so stressed that you *just want the brownie dammit*. So what will you do in those situations? What will you do in social situations with friends who don't "get it"? Will you eat beforehand or do research to know what you can order that's compliant? Will you opt for a cup of your favorite tea when you're feeling stressed, instead of uncorking a bottle of Pinot? Will you simply avoid *those friends* this month, the ones who always want to see you give in and will encourage you to cheat? Figure out how you'll handle those times when you're feeling weak and like it really doesn't matter anymore. Keep in mind why you're doing this... and harness that for the future when you need it.

Read the Book

I very much encourage you to purchase a copy of [It Starts With Food](#) or [The Whole30: The 30-](#)

[Day Guide to Total Health and Food Freedom](#). I still consult my copy of *The Whole30* book on a regular basis for the recipes and the reminders, even when we're "just paleo." You'll love having everything in one place (with this book to support it!) and a total reference for your 30 days.

On top of recipes and lists of approved and non-compliant foods, it's important to read the *why* that starts the book. You'll learn so much about why certain foods are cut out, why you might be feeling how you're feeling because of those foods, what you should expect, and what you should do when you're finished. The book provided me with so much motivation, as a constant reminder that I was doing this for myself and for my health.

Bookmark the Timeline

One of the resources I found so helpful during my first round was the [Whole30® Timeline 2.0](#). It's found in the book and on the Whole30 website. The timeline covers how you're likely to be feeling, mentally and physically, day by day during the month, and it's eerily accurate. You'll feel a hangover on days 2 and 3, you'll want to rage at the little old lady crossing the street *super slowly and totally on purpose* on days 4 and 5, and you'll get that "Tiger Blood" around week 3. When I was feeling off or annoyed, I'd consult the timeline and find some immediate comfort. Phew, I'm normal.

Stock Up (or Not)

Especially if you're currently eating a standard American diet (SAD) or otherwise aren't paleo, you might be a little overwhelmed with how many special ingredients paleo and Whole30 recipes call for. You'll see recipes calling for coconut aminos (huh.), [one extremely specific brand of sugar-free fish sauce](#), paleo-approved bacon (\$7 for 12 ounces... get ready.), and Aidell's Chicken Apple Sausages. If you're a stocker-upper, it can be tempting to *buy all the things* in preparation for your round. We did this... and we spent a lot of cash. But we used the [coconut aminos](#) daily, [the fish sauce a ton](#), and we still have a package of those chicken apple sausages in the freezer.

I highly encourage you to go ahead and stock up! You'll feel prepared to whip up any ol' Whole30-compliant recipe that you find on your favorite blog and won't have to make a special trip or place an entire order on Amazon just for that one Whole30-compliant bottle of [ranch dressing](#).

However, if you're trying to keep it easy and cheap, you can also truly keep it simple. The beauty of the Whole30 is that you *don't* need any fancy ingredients: you eat only the simplest foods with the fewest ingredients, foods that were around as the human stomach was evolving. You can always, always prepare a simple protein alongside some fresh veggies, a nice complex

carb or starch, and a little bit of fruit or nuts on the side. Simple, non? You definitely don't need any of these fancy Whole30-compliant ingredients, and I know that feeling like you do is a source of stress for many people who would otherwise dive into a Whole30. Do what works for you, your personality, and budget.

When you're ready to do your shopping, make sure you check out the Whole30 shopping list!

All the Selfies

I didn't take a great "before" photo, so I had to rely on one from a little bit before we started our Whole30, but my "after" picture was *righteous*. I was feeling great, and I knew the scale reflected some physical changes, but when I saw that after photo compared with the before? It was a serious *whoa* moment. I looked, um, how do I put this? Hawtt.

Having a baby turned me into a potato for sure. A wrinkly potato. And wrinkly duck fat roasted potatoes are delicious, but I'd prefer my abdomen not favor them, ja? So as I saw my tum tighten and my waist whittle, it was a great and undeniable reminder that I was doing the right thing and eating the right way.

So take that before picture! Get down to your skivvies or workout gear, stand in front of the mirror, toothpaste splatter stains and all, and document

where you started. It will make where you get all the sweeter. And we should share them in [the Facebook group](#), don't you think?!

4

Shopping List & Stocking Up

You're almost ready... time to shop, baby.



Remember our Whole30 maxim, “Always be prepared”? It’s time to take some action, fam. I’m sharing with you a basic shopping list to help you stock up on basic items that you’ll find yourself reaching for over and over on a Whole30, and a few extra “fun” items that make the whole deal a lot more fun. Remember, you don’t *have* to stock

up at all, but you do want to make sure you have a pantry full of Whole30-compliant foods, so you’re not forced to take a trip to Whole Foods every time you get hunger pangs.

On that note, I’m a big, big, BIG fan of Thrive Market. Thrive Market offers thousands of the

best-selling organic foods and natural products at 25-50% below traditional retail prices. Uh, not only that, but they DELIVER TO YOUR DOOR. So literally no trip to the grocery store even required. [Click here to check out my Whole30 must-haves and get 25% off your first purchase](#) (For real - 25% extra off!) as well as a free 30 day trial. If you'd prefer to piece together your own [Whole30 musts, just click here to get 25% off and that free 30-day trial!](#)

Once you've stocked up, you simply make sure you have enough fresh produce, meat, and seafood on hand to cover what you'll need to eat in the next few days, and you're set.

Make sure you download and keep this page open on your phone when you hit the store!

- fresh veggies, like broccoli, kale, zucchini, lettuce, mushrooms, green beans, tomatoes (OK... I know they're a fruit)
- avocados, which deserve their own line item
- fruits, like berries, apples for dipping in almond butter, bananas, etc. You know what fruit is.
- starchier veggies, like butternut squash, acorn squash, sweet potatoes, yellow potatoes, rutabagas, etc.
- light-tasting olive oil or [avocado oil](#) for making mayonnaise

- full-fat coconut milk((without carrageenan)
- eggs and lots of them
- ghee or butter, [if you're up for making your own \(It's easy!\)](#)
- La Croix flavored sparkling waters, which will essentially replace your blood during those 30 days. We like the Curate line, especially the Mure Pepino (blackberry cucumber) and Cerise Limón (cherry lime).
- a variety of tea bags, like cinnamon, Earl Grey, chai, or whatever you like. I replaced wine with tea, so I prioritized this purchase!
- creamer for your coffee, [Nutpods](#), [Califia](#), or [full-fat coconut milk](#)
- [ground beef, pork, chicken, turkey](#)
- grilled chicken slices
- no-sugar-added prosciutto slices, in bulk from Costco (Get a prosciutto-only credit card, because that stuff is *delightful*, especially wrapped around apples slices and dunked in almond butter.)
- [coconut](#), [avocado](#), and [olive oil](#)
- guacamole, which you can stock up on at Costco prepackaged from Wholly Guacamole

- nuts and seeds, like [cashews](#) for cashew cream, walnuts, almonds, sunflower seeds, chia seeds
- [almond](#) and [coconut flour](#), for dredging (Close out of that paleo bread recipe on Pinterest ASAP!)
- [apple cider vinegar](#)
- [jarred salsas](#)
- [coconut aminos](#), called a soy sauce replacement, but not as salty and much sweeter
- [Red Boat fish sauce](#), a compliant brand, for adding umami and saltiness to savory dishes
- [mustard](#) (but make sure your Dijon does not contain white wine)
- plenty of frozen veggies
- [frozen shrimp, fish, chicken breasts, burgers, and other proteins](#)
- Whole30-approved bacon, like Wellshire or Pederson's
- [Epic bars](#), for emergency meat/jerky bar needs
- [Epic uncured bacon bites](#) (MARRY ME.)
- Whole30-compliant dressings and condiments, especially [ranch dressing](#), [buffalo sauce](#), [ketchup](#), and [Caesar dressing](#)
- [Whole30-compliant Lara bars](#), like Cherry Pie and Pineapple, Kale, and Cashew (for food emergencies only!)
- Whole30-compliant hot sauce, like [Yai's Thai Chili Garlic Hot Sauce](#), Frank's Red Hot, Cholula, or Tabasco
- no-sugar-added raisins and [dates](#)
- canned or cartoned stocks, like [bone broth](#) or [regular chicken stock](#)
- [canned tuna](#) and [salmon](#)

Special Equipment

Lastly, you don't need anything special to do a Whole30, but ours was a whole lot more fun with a few pieces of special equipment.

- [immersion blender](#). I use mine multiple times a week to make homemade one-step ranch dressing, from-scratch-mayo, even Caesar dressing! They're also fab for puréeing soups and sauces in their very own pots and saucepans.
- [food processor](#). Does anyone else live without one of these? I'm pretty sure I use mine every single day, often multiple times a day. You'll be

making your own sauces, chopping nuts, etc., so invest in a great food processor. It'll change your kitchen life, I promise.

- [a good spiralizer](#). I used a handheld spiralizer for months, but it wasn't until I invested in a better piece that I started spiralizing *everything*. You're giving up freaking carbs, basically, for a month, so let yourself have the zucchini noodles. Get a spiralizer!
- [high-speed blender](#). Cashew cream, beautifully smooth soups, creamy sauces... enough said. But seriously, my husband uses our Vitamix every single day to make super smooth smoothies. While smoothies are not technically encouraged on the Whole30, he managed his 30 days with a smoothie each morning. I use our Vitamix to make almond butter, cashew cream, and smooth sauces and soups very regularly.

What could you skip stocking up on?

You could survive without:

- [No-sugar-added fish sauce](#). We do eat a LOT of Thai food, and I love fish sauce to probably an unhealthy degree. But if we didn't, I would just skip this. It usually requires a trip to a health-foods store and is much more expensive than what you get at the Asian market. That being

said, what you get at the Asian market *does* usually have sugar.

- [Epic bars](#). We ate a few of these, but I personally didn't like them. You're also discouraged from eating this sort of prepackaged snack type food on a Whole30, so they should really be for emergencies. I ate a few when I was on a work trip, but I wouldn't necessarily invest in a whole box or anything.
- [Whole30-compliant salad dressings](#). I stocked up on like 4 premade salad dressings before we started our round, but we ended up making most of our dressings. We still have the bottles in the fridge, and I don't think they'll be used up too soon. If you eat a lot of bottled dressings otherwise, though, you might want to stock up on a few of these.
- Packaged guacamole. This worked well in sending my husband to work with taco salads, but I wasn't a big fan otherwise. If avocados are cheap (and sometimes they're really not), it's a lot easier and tastier to just mash one up with some salt and lime when you need to.
- Anything that you think you might "start doing" or "start eating" on the Whole30. Yes, it's a very different way of eating for most. But you're not going to suddenly start eating loads of totally new foods that you never liked before, so be careful in stocking up on these ahead of time.

Invest in the foods you know you'll eat and wait until you have a better feeling for things to stock up on items that are different for you.

5

The Experience & The Timeline

You're going to hate me, and then you're going to love me.



That's you. You're mad at me because I told you this is a good idea, and you're drinking your coffee black because you didn't make that unsweetened paleo creamer you saw on Pinterest. It must be day 3 on the Whole30! Welcome.

Again, I'm going to tell you it's not easy, especially for the first few days, because I feel like you'll be better prepared going into it that way. Can you do it? Abso-freaking-lutely. In relative

terms, it's extremely easy. You have to eat real, whole, healthy foods to prioritize your mental and physical health and your relationship with food? Not a tough life. *But* you will be challenged, and you will want to quit, and I'm here to tell you that you shouldn't. And you shouldn't because *you can do it*, and what you're going through is totally normal.

I cannot stress enough how much the [Whole30 Timeline 2.0](#) helped me in feeling like my experience was normal. Make sure you dogear the page in your [book](#) and bookmark [the page on their site](#). You'll reference it often!

My Experience

I definitely suffered from "the hangover" from approximately days 2-4, rolling with a headache almost the entire time. Remembering that I had a headache because of the food that was leaving my body, though? That was enough to encourage me to keep at it and that I was doing the *absolutely right thing*. You don't detox from salmon and raspberries, do you? No. You detox from damaging ingredients and qualities of your food, so hold on to that nugget when you're angrily emailing me behind a pounding headache.

After "the hangover", I experienced the bloat that's promised in the Whole30 timeline, but it wasn't quite as bad as I was expecting. I slimmed down pretty quickly, to be honest, because I was holding on to baby weight still and was far from my "happy weight."

After the headache and the bloat, all that lingered was my perpetual bad mood. Maybe it was the stress at work, maybe it was the stress of selling our house... I don't know. But I was in a bad mood pretty much *the entire time*. Was it worth it?

Yes. Should you ask my husband if it was worth it? Maybe...

It wasn't that bad, honestly. I was just slightly annoyed the entire time, *but* we did put our house on the market at the same time, we planned and celebrated our little one's first birthday, and I was extremely stressed at work, traveling and dealing with a heavy workload. Can I blame it entirely on La Croix? I don't think so, not after everything La Croix has done for me.

Which brings me to a tip that helped me immensely...

Develop Healthy Rituals

So much of our emotional relationship to food has to do with our rituals around it. I was so used to pouring a couple glasses of wine at night and indulging in dessert all weekend that when I took that away, I felt like I was missing *more than I was actually missing*. I was missing the ritual in addition to the objects. So what I did was simply replace the objects with healthy alternatives.

At the end of the night, I'd make a cup of my favorite tea and sit down to catch up on Westworld with my husband, rather than slurping down my second glass of wine. On the weekends, we made big breakfasts we ate together and no longer missed pancakes.

Keep your rituals; they can be important. But they don't have to rely on the foods or drinks that don't serve you physically or mentally.

Use Your Support Network

Having friends and family I could vent, complain, or worry to during the Whole30 was critical, so I started a [Facebook group](#) for that very purpose. [Click here to join](#), and we'll make sure to approve you right away so you can get your support on!

In terms of telling your entire network of friends and family whether you're doing a Whole30... that's up to you. You know them best, and many of us are surrounded by people who, though they might mean well, take pleasure in seeing you "indulge" or give in, or basically break the diet you've set for yourself. If you bring up the program, you'll likely have to debate its validity, and you'll feel like you needed to prepare notes before leaving the house. We kept it pretty quiet, in general, but found it helpful to let people know so they wouldn't suggest erm, pizza places for dinner when we had plans.

6

Favorite Recipes

Main courses, soups, salads, and side dishes you'll want to pin.



Take advantage of these amazing, free recipes out there. These are all paleo and Whole30, so start drooling.

Condiments / Basics / Drinks

[Easy Gravy](#)

[One Minute Mayo](#)

[Dump Ranch](#)

[Instant Pot Bone Broth That Gels](#)

[Sriracha](#)

[Ketchup](#)

[Brown Butter Ghee](#)

[Best Chimichurri Recipe](#)

[Caesar Dressing](#)

[Coconut Oil Mayonnaise](#)

[Harissa Paste](#)

[Best Restaurant Style Salsa](#)

[BBQ Sauce with Chipotle](#)

[Strawberry Refresher](#)

[Creamy Balsamic Dressing](#)

[Ranch Dressing](#)

[Smoky Guajillo Salsa](#)

[Roasted Salsa Verde](#)

[Coconut Butter](#)

[Avocado Salsa](#)

Breakfast Recipes

Of course, make sure you eat veggies with each of these recipes if they aren't included in the dish.

- [Hashbrown and Sausage Breakfast Casserole](#)
- [Breakfast Bake with Sausage, Eggs, Spinach, and Mushrooms](#)
- [Breakfast Burrito](#)

- [Easy Breakfast Sausage](#)

- [Sweet Potato Breakfast Bowl](#)

- [Breakfast Sandwiches \(Whole30 "McGrid-dles"\)](#)

- [Sweet Potato Apple Breakfast Bake](#) (Best eaten just occasionally and with a side of veggies as it's fairly sweet from the sweet potatoes and apples)

- [Mushroom, Spinach, Bacon Egg Muffins](#)

- [Spinach Artichoke Breakfast Casserole](#)

- [Breakfast Casserole with Bacon, Sweet Potatoes, and Brussels Sprouts](#)

- [Whole30 Quiche Lorraine with Hash-brown Crust](#)

- [Baked Eggs in Avocado: Two Ways](#)

- [Sweet Plantain Apple Bacon Breakfast Hash](#)

- [Sausage Pizza Egg Muffins](#)

Lunch & Meal Prep Recipes

- [Buffalo Chicken Ranch Meal Prep](#)

- [Chicken Salad](#)

- [Greek Healthy Meal Prep](#)

- [Healthy Mexican Chicken Meal Prep](#)
- [Perfect Instant Pot Tomato Soup](#)
- [Cup Zoodles](#)
- [Fuji Apple Salad with Chicken](#)
- [Chicken Salad Boats](#)
- [Chili Lime Tuna Cakes](#)
- [Turmeric Tahini Loaded Chicken Salad](#)

Dinner Recipes

Chicken & Turkey

[Instant Pot Chicken Tortilla-Less Soup](#)

[Mexican Chicken Stuffed Sweet Potatoes](#)

[Coconut Curry Turmeric Chicken](#)

[Buffalo Chicken Casserole with Ranch and Cauliflower Rice](#)

[Creamy Tomato Artichoke Chicken](#)

[Chicken Curry](#)

[Crockpot Carnitas with Pork Tenderloin](#)

[Best Ever Tom Kha Soup](#)

[Perfect Pan Seared Chicken Thighs with Pan Sauce](#)

[Best Damn Chicken Tikka Masala](#)

[Slow Cooker Roast Chicken and Gravy](#)

[Creamy Bacon Mushroom Chicken Thighs with Thyme](#)

[Instant Pot Turkey Breast with Gravy](#)

[Leftover Turkey Tortilla Soup](#)

[Casserole with Chicken, Broccoli, Cauliflower Rice, and Mushrooms](#)

[Perfect Turkey Breast and Gravy](#)

[Chipotle Chicken Stuffed Sweet Potatoes](#)

[Indian Saag Chicken](#)

[Chipotle Ranch Chicken Burgers](#)

[Cranberry Chicken](#)

[Chipotle-Style Carnitas Bowl](#)

[Indian Butter Chicken](#)

[Sesame Chicken](#)

[The Best Instant Pot Chicken Tikka Masala](#)

[Bruschetta Chicken](#)

[Crispy Coconut Chicken with "Honey" Mustard Sauce](#)

[Chicken Thighs with Raspberry Balsamic Sauce](#)

[Chicken Zucchini Poppers](#)

[Curry Turkey Bites + Apricot Ginger Sauce](#)

[Peanut-Free Chicken Satay](#)

[Cranberry Apple Chicken Thighs with Rosemary](#)

[Chicken Tikka Masala Chili](#)

[Cracklin' Chicken](#)

[Chicken Nuggets \(Chick-Fil-A Method\)](#)

[Strawberry Basil Chicken with Avocado](#)

[Thai Chicken Zoodle Bowl with "Peanut" Sauce](#)

[Chicken Bacon Ranch Poppers](#)

Beef & Pork

[Egg Roll in a Bowl with Creamy Chili Sauce](#)

[Healthy Lettuce Wraps – PF Changs Style](#)

[Chili with Sweet Potatoes and Chocolate](#)

[Healthy Zuppa Toscana](#)

[Chimichurri Meatballs with Swiss Chard](#)

[Instant Pot Chili with Butternut Squash](#)

[Crockpot Carnitas with Pork Tenderloin](#)

["Spaghetti" & Meatballs](#)

[Stuffed Acorn Squash with Sausage, Apples, and Cranberries](#)

[Instant Pot Beef with Peppers](#)

[Perfect Instant Pot Carnitas](#)

[Chilaquiles with Sweet Potatoes](#)

[Enchiladas with Poblano-Pork Stuffing and Creamy Avocado Sauce](#)

[Prime Rib Recipe with Au Jus and Creamy Horseradish Sauce](#)

[Loaded Sweet Potato Fries](#)

[Instant Pot Brisket Taco Bowls](#)

[Chipotle Beef and Avocado Bowls](#)

[Grilled Ribs \(from a Memphian! - Hi!\)](#)

[Pork and Pineapple Bowls with Plantains, Coconut Cauliflower Rice, and Avocado Lime Mousse](#)

[Steak Salad Steakhouse-Style](#)

[Easy Oven Baked Meatballs](#)

[Steak Taco Bowls](#)

"In N Out Burgers"

Seafood

Bang Bang Shrimp

Fish Taco Bowls with Mango Salsa, Chipotle Aioli, Coconut Lime Cauliflower Rice

Quick Chimichurri Shrimp Skewers

Shrimp and "Grits"

Healthy Jambalaya with Sausage and Shrimp

Shrimp Cobb Salad with Lemon Garlic Vinaigrette

Sushi - Spicy Salmon Roll

Coconut Shrimp with Orange Sauce

Shrimp Boil with Potatoes, Sausage, and Garlic Ghee

Tuna Zoodle Casserole

Vegetarian / Sides

Cheesy Broccoli Soup

Carrot Raisin Salad

Crockpot Mashed Potatoes

Potato Skins with Guacamole and Bacon

Herb Roasted Sweet Potato Salad

Grilled Potato Skewers with Ranch Dressing

Instant Pot Mashed Potatoes with Garlic and Herbs

Sweet Potato Casserole with Pecans

Instant Pot Cranberry Sauce with Apples and Rosemary

Sriracha Deviled Eggs

Bacon Garlic Green Beans

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Simple Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner Ideas

Easy meal ideas that don't require a real recipe, because you've already cooked all the things.



I'll be super straight with you: you're going to get *tired* of navigating to my site. Or, you know, to your other favorite real food blogger's site, but I choose to ignore the fact that you might prefer my friends over me. Either way, you'll get tired of following recipes every single time you want to eat, so I've included a few simple meal ideas that

don't require lists of ingredients or complicated directions. Keep it simple, sister or mister!

Easy Breakfast Ideas (Including Breakfast Veggies!)

- Scrambled eggs in ghee

- Fried eggs in more ghee with compliant hot sauce (or my Whole30 sriracha)
- Sweet potato home fries fried in coconut oil
- Crisp bacon
- Sautéed spinach
- Slices of ripe tomatoes with olive oil, salt, and pepper
- Baked acorn squash with ghee and cinnamon^
- A steamed sweet potato topped with a poached egg
- Soft-boiled eggs with sea salt and cracked pepper or togarashi (spicy Japanese spice blend)
- Sauerkraut
- Sliced avocado with Tajin and lime juice
- Carrots roasted with coconut aminos

Easy Lunch Ideas

- Lettuce wraps with turkey, bacon, tomato, and Whole30 mayo
- Tuna salad over lettuce
- Aidell's chicken and apple sausages (or other compliant sausages) fried up and dipped in whole grain mustard or dump ranch

- Crab salad (a can of crab + mayo + a squeeze of lemon + salt and pepper) stuffed into avocado halves
- A big salad with lots of veggies and a can of salmon
- Easy eggs in purgatory: heat compliant salsa in a skillet over medium-low heat
- Burger patties (from frozen is great) cooked in a skillet, topped with guacamole and bacon
- Frozen broccoli tossed in olive oil and your favorite seasoning blend, roasted at 425° F for about 25-30 minutes
- "Lunchable": prosciutto, hard or soft boiled eggs, nuts, olives, a handful of berries, and a veggie on the side
- Leftovers! I mean, hey!

Easy Dinner Ideas

- Seared steak with chimichurri
- Skinny chicken fingers: cut chicken breasts into strips and cook in a little avocado oil over medium heat. Serve with dump ranch
- Shrimp scampi: sauté garlic in a little olive oil then add shrimp and a squeeze of lemon juice. Serve over zoodles

- Sauté scallops in a little ghee over medium-high heat until a beautiful golden brown crust forms on the bottom. Flip and repeat, making sure you don't overcook. Serve with mashed cauliflower
- Roast a couple handfuls of butternut squash cubes and shaved Brussels sprouts. Massage some Caesar dressing into sliced dinosaur (lacinto) kale. Toss the roasted veggies with the kale and top with sliced, cooked chicken breast
- Sear thick pork chops in a bit of avocado oil in a cast-iron skillet over medium high heat. Serve with roasted red potatoes and sautéed kale

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Eating Out on the Whole30

Not pictured: you, nursing your soda water and lime. Where to eat out and tips for dining success on the Whole30.



It's going to happen: you're *going to have to eat out on a Whole30*. And when you read [the book](#), you're going to feel like this means certain doom. Sure, they allow for certain vegetable oils, like canola and safflower/sunflower, when you're

out, but you're going to feel like there's a demonic chef back there sprinkling sugar on your bunless burger laughing maniacally just to get you. At some point, you have to live like a normal, busy, working, parenting human and try your best, dam-

mit. I never said *screw it* when we were out, but I also didn't throw on a hairnet and go investigate each kitchen we visited, either. So do your research, prepare, and make a plan, and then just live your life, even though you're Whole30ing.

Here's a few places we ate out and what we got + some suggestions for other joints and orders. I can't be sure about every single item at each of these places, so make sure you ask about any sneaky non-compliant ingredients, such as fats in which items are cooked, presence of any sugar or soy, etc.

Chipotle

Oh, Chipotle. Oh, how I never, ever want to eat at Chipotle again, ever. This is our go-to on Whole30s, because they have a compliant order! You'll want to get the carnitas salad with lettuce, all 3 salsas (no corn salsa, of course), extra guacamole, fajita veggies, no cheese, no sour cream. NO CHIPS, SHARON.

Mexican Restaurants

I always ordered fajitas and ate them with fresh, real guacamole ("Guacamole dip" usually has crema in it, and we've *talked about this*. If you're at a seriously authentic place, I'd ask, "Hay crema en el guacamole?" but my Spanish no es muy auténtico.)

Fancy Burger Places

The Burger Joint offers lettuce wrap buns at no extra cost, with burger options like typical beef, chicken breast, salmon, sushi-grade tuna, and lamb. These sorts of fancy burger bars often offer several different types of patties, along with loads of toppings, many compliant. You can add avocado, grilled jalapeño, grilled pineapple, fried egg, etc.

Steakhouse or American Restaurants

Most places offer a simple Whole30-compliant meal, like a simple steak or other protein with simple side items, like steamed broccoli or a salad with compliant oil and vinegar. Make sure you ask to keep sauces off and have everything cooked in a compliant oil or grilled.

Whole Foods / Prepared Foods Bars

The hot or salad bar can be a good option during a Whole30, since you can read the ingredients on each dish. I was surprised at just how few were compliant, but we found enough to make it work. Bonus: you can buy whatever compliant ingredient or side you want, like guacamole or coconut aminos, if they're lacking what you're looking for on the bar!

Tips for Eating Out

There are a few things you'll need to do to successfully eat out on a Whole30. They are...

Prepare

Your Whole30 manifesto: prepare, prepare, prepare... yes? Ahead of time, scour the menu and see what you could eat or modify. I did this before going on a work trip and ate very well! I knew what to ask the waiter to work with me on and what to totally avoid. Read those menus and get creative ahead of time, and you'll feel less frantic and stressed when you're there.

Ask a Million Questions

My family knows this well; I begin almost every order with, "I'm sorry, but bear with me..." I cook so much that I know what I like, but I also know that I really don't want to be obnoxious. Be nice about it, and your waiter is a *lot* more likely to be patient with you in answering what type of oil the chicken is cooked in or if the burger has any type of seasoning in the patty or if there's any sugar in the curry.

Bring Your Own Whatever

You'll likely get super tired of oil and vinegar on your salad, like... *real fast*. Who cares if it's dorky? I don't care; I think you're cool. Bring your

own dressing, because if you're making home-made ranch, it's stinkin' *delicious*, and you totally know it's made with approved ingredients. Bring your own hot sauce (in your purse, of course), because you know it's compliant. Bring your own *whatever* it is to help make dining out stress-free and delish.

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Good luck!

I've shared my knowledge, my experience, my favorite recipes, shopping list, tips, and tricks, and I hope it's been of value to you! I hope you'll keep this ebook open throughout your Whole30 and that you reference the meals and restaurant ideas often. I also hope that the program does as much for you as it did for us and that you share your experience, challenges, and support with us on [the Facebook group](#)! If you have any tips or tricks you'd like to share with me, I'd love that! [Get in touch anytime](#).

Meanwhile, I wish you the best of luck! Whole30s can be hard, but they are so worth it. Remember that we're here for you when you feel like this is *the worst idea ever* and that we've all felt that way before. I feel strongly that you'll come out the other end with a healthier mental and emotional approach and relationship to food, a few pounds lighter, sleeping better, and going into workouts with more strength and endurance.

Make sure you subscribe to my blog and follow me on [Facebook](#) and [Pinterest](#). I love to share Whole30 and paleo recipes often, sprinkled with a few less-than-healthy recipes here and there for good measure.

Share your Whole30 experience on Instagram by tagging me [@40aprons](#)!