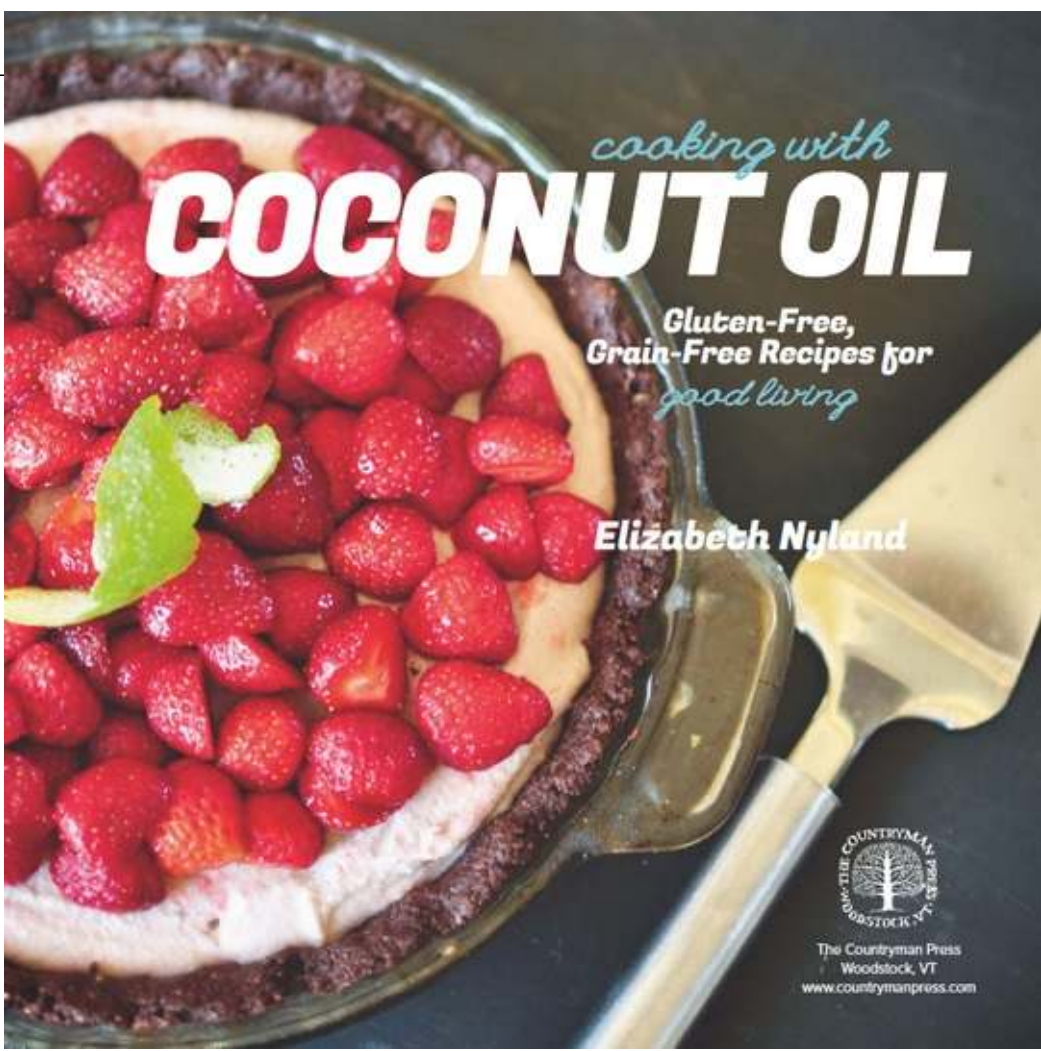




cooking with
COCONUT OIL

**Gluten-Free,
Grain-Free Recipes for**
good living

Elizabeth Nyland



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To Adrian, Cohen, and Isla.

Without your undying support, unmatched taste-testing abilities, and willingness to try any weird combos I could think of, this book would never have happened.

I thank you all from the bottom of my heart.



Contents

PREFACE

The Health Benefits of Coconut Oil

About the Ingredients

BREAKFAST

Coconut Pancakes

Waffles

Black Forest Smoothie

Apple-Maple-Bacon Granola

Poached Eggs over Portobello Caps

Sweet Potato Cups with Baked Eggs

Caveman Porridge

SALADS AND DRESSINGS

Apple-Fennel Slaw

Avocado-Pesto Dressing

Roasted Butternut Squash Salad with Lime and Cilantro Dressing

Caesar Salad

Coconut Oil Mayonnaise

Fennel and Citrus Salad

Jicama and Mango Salad

Zucchini Noodle Salad

Roasted Broccoli, Bacon, and Sunflower Salad

Salt-Roasted Beet Salad with Honey-Lemon-Vanilla Dressing



SIDES

Caramelized Carrots
Cinnamon Fried Plantains
Curried Cauliflower Steaks
Hasselback Sweet Potatoes
Sweet Potato-Coconut Casserole
Italian Cauliflower “Couscous”
Mashed Fauxtatoes
Roasted Garlic Fennel
Zucchini Pancakes

MAINS

Cauliflower-Crusted Pizza
Fish “Tacos” with Coconut-Flour Sopes and Pico de Gallo
Crispy Almond Chicken Thighs
Perfect Roasted Chicken
Sweet Potato-Crusted Quiche
Bacon and Sweet Potato Meatballs
Baked Salmon with Blueberry Sauce
Creamy Almond Butter Pork “Pad Thai”
Pork Chops and Apple Compote

Pulled Pork and Sugar-Free BBQ Sauce

Primal Burgers

Primal Chili

Beef Stew

Slow-Cooker Short Ribs

Bison and Kale Wraps

Spaghetti Squash Bolognese

Grilled Skirt Steak with Chimichurri

Braised Lamb Shanks



SNACKS AND STARTERS

Avocado and Shrimp Canapés on Endive Boats

Avocado Mousse in Cucumber Cups

Crispy Chicken Wings with Preserved Lemon Aioli

Deviled Guacamole Eggs

Lemon-Cashew Dip

Roasted Beet and Cauliflower Hummus

Scotch Eggs

Roasted Butternut Squash Soup

Chocolate Coconut Protein Cookie Balls

Chocolate, Fruit and Nut Energy Bites

Herbed Crackers



DESSERTS AND BAKED GOODS

Dark Chocolate Brownies

Chocolate Brownie Caramel Cups

Chocolate-Coconut Cake

Coconut Frosting

Carrot Cake

Coconut Faux Cream Cheese Frosting

Chocolate-Avocado Mousse

Dark Chocolate Cherry Muffins

High-Protein Lemon-Coconut-Poppy Seed Muffins

Blueberry Muffins

Vanilla-Bean Ice Cream

Grilled Pineapples

Dark Chocolate Ice Cream

Chocolate, Avocado, Coconut, and Lime Pie

Chocolate-Strawberry Icebox Pie

Pear Tart

Lemon Meringue Pie

Maple-Bacon-Chocolate Chip Cookies

Dark-Chocolate Coconut-Orange Truffles

[Chocolate Peppermint Patties](#)

[Roasted Banana Bread](#)

[Sandwich Bread](#)



[Paleo Tips](#)

[Resources](#)

[Index](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)



Preface

My website, GuiltyKitchen.com, has been around since the summer after my first child was born. As a newly minted stay-at-home mom, I found that I needed something to expend my creative energy on that wasn't a wriggling, screaming baby or a constantly hungry toddler. I had been a trained chef and had worked in the food industry for about ten years, so I knew I could come up with new recipes for eternity if I needed to. Plus, it had been my dream to write a cookbook since I was a very little girl in my mother's kitchen.

When I started my blog, I didn't know how to take or edit a good picture, how to write a blog post, or even how I was supposed to get people to find my site and read it! Over the course of three years, I went from a standard-issue food blog to a health blog. I did raw food, vegetarian food, completely guilty food. But then, through years of experimentation, I settled on a way of eating that made me feel so amazing, I could never consider eating any other way.

We rented a house in a little neighborhood on the Saanich Peninsula on the South End of Vancouver Island. We raised chickens, grew our own fruits and vegetables, and reveled in our ability to grow our own food, but we struggled to find a way of eating that everyone in the family enjoyed and thrived on. One day we met our neighbors. They were "Paleo."

Huh? What's Paleo? I asked a lot of questions about it, we had dinner together, we shared tips and recipes, and they lent me a few recipe books I could try. All the trendy "diets" I'd ever read about—no processed food, gluten-free, dairy-free, grain-free—they were all rolled into this one "diet."

I fell in love with this style of eating. I ate what I loved the most: grass-fed or pastured meats, wild-caught fish and seafood, fresh fruits and vegetables, eggs, nuts and seeds, and healthy fats such as coconut, avocado, and extra-virgin olive oil. I began experimenting with various flours, fats, spices, nuts, fruits, meats, and other tasty things. In my recipes for baked goods, I substituted coconut flour and other gluten-free flours. These ingredients added nutrients, protein, and fiber. Who knew desserts could actually be healthy for you?

The fact that fats are good for you was a turning point in my relationship with food, and coconut oil is one that kept appearing in recipe after recipe. Saturated fats could be good for you?! I was flabbergasted. I spent hours researching scientific articles and then just started making recipes, my favorite way to experiment: on myself.

Coconut oil is a lovely addition to any kind of recipe, from savory to sweet, as it is a bit of a nutritional chameleon. With its slight tropical scent and creamy consistency, coconut oil has become the most used ingredient in my pantry. Because it is semi-hard at room temperature, it makes a great replacement for butter in baking but is also quite useful in salad dressings, frying, and general cookery. All the recipes in this book are technically Paleo, but they are also all-around healthy dishes that anyone, on any diet, will love.

My health (and that of my family) and also my passion for cooking have been completely renewed with this new lifestyle and I hope you will feel the same way once you try my recipes.



P.S. Just in case you want to try it, here are some more specifics about the Paleo diet:

With an emphasis on whole, unprocessed foods, the Paleo diet (or lifestyle, as I like to put it) is based on eating the most nutritionally dense foods, while avoiding those foods that promote inflammation, hormone imbalances, or chronic disease. With that in mind, we avoid dairy, refined sugar, grains (including corn), legumes (including peanuts and soy), refined vegetable oils, and processed foods.

So what is allowed?

Grass-fed or pastured meats (beef, pork, chicken, lamb, game meats, etc.), wild-caught fish and seafood, fresh fruits and vegetables, eggs, nuts and seeds, and healthy fats such as coconut, avocado, and extra-virgin olive oil.

The Health Benefits of Coconut Oil

- Filled with lauric acid (boosts immune function and heart health)
- Contains high levels of **medium-chain triglycerides** (MCTs) shown to help burn abdominal fat
- Rich in polyphenols (an antioxidant)
- Helps fight wrinkles, sagging skin, and age spots by warding off free radicals that cause premature aging and degenerative diseases
- Shown to lower bad cholesterol
- Helps boost thyroid function, which can lead to weight loss
- Helps control blood sugar levels and improves insulin secretion
- Contains antimicrobial lipids, capric acid, and caprylic acid, which have antifungal, antibacterial, and antiviral properties
- Helps humans absorb more nutrients during digestion
- MCT oils are easily converted into fuel used by brain cells for improved brain function and have been shown to have therapeutic effects on several brain disorders, mainly Alzheimer's and other neurological disorders



- Increases energy and endurance by providing a quick source of energy from the MCTs
- Reduces inflammation
- Dramatically reduces rate of seizures in epileptic children

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF COCONUT OIL

- Helps in the healthy growth of hair, and aids in the control of dandruff.
- Great as a conditioner

- Makes an excellent skin conditioner on all skin types, especially dry skin
- Helps relieve dry, itchy skin
- Speeds up wound healing
- Can help fight infections because of its antifungal, antiviral, and antibacterial properties.
- Reduces symptoms of psoriasis, eczema, dermatitis, and other skin issues
- Has been shown to block about 20 percent of the sun's harmful UV rays
- Has been used as mouthwash in India (called oil pulling) for centuries

COCONUT FLOUR BENEFITS

- Gluten-free
- High-fiber
- High-protein
- Low in net carbohydrates (most of the carbs come from the fiber)
- Low glycemic index (great for diabetics)

About the Ingredients

Some of the ingredients in *Cooking with Coconut Oil* might not seem familiar to you, but with a little careful exploration of your local grocer, health-food store, or specialty shops, you should be able to find every ingredient.

AGED BALSAMIC VINEGAR

Traditional Balsamic Vinegar of Modena and Balsamic Vinegar of Modena are two different substances. The former is the real deal, even being protected by the European Union's Protected Designation of Origin. Traditional balsamic vinegar is aged for a minimum of twelve years and is made from a reduction of pressed grapes. They go through a succession of different wooden barrels (each becoming smaller as the years go on). The resulting thick vinegar is sweet and sour with notes of wood and grape, and is equally delicious drizzled over ice cream as it is mixed into dressings. The latter is thin, very vinegary, and best left to be used in salad dressing only. You can find aged balsamic vinegar at any fine food shop.

APPLE CIDER VINEGAR

Raw, unfiltered apple cider vinegar is made from apple juice that is fermented into hard apple cider, then fermented a second time to apple cider vinegar. The healthiest versions will say "contains the mother" on the label. The mother is a colony of beneficial bacteria that forms in the vinegar during fermentation. Apple cider vinegar not only tastes great in recipes and helps create a leavening effect (when combined with baking soda) in some of the baking recipes in this book, but it also has almost unlimited health benefits. It's good for everything—it can be used as a face toner, as an acid reflux and heartburn remedy, for lowering blood pressure, for relieving bug bites and sunburns, as hair conditioner, as aftershave, and as a weight loss aid. I add it to my water every day for a little extra flavor.



COCONUT AMINOS

Coconut aminos are made from the raw sap of the coconut tree that is exuded from the flowering blossoms (which will eventually turn into coconuts). It is naturally aged or sun dried and is usually blended with sea salt. Coconut aminos are a soy-free alternative to soy sauce and contain much less sodium as well. If you cannot find coconut aminos, a wheat-free, gluten-free soy sauce (known as tamari) will do.

COCONUT BUTTER

Coconut butter, also known as coconut manna, coconut spread, coconut cream concentrate, and creamed coconut, is the dried whole flesh (both the meat and the oil) of the coconut that has been pureed into a dense, smooth, nutritious spread. You can make your own by putting a minimum of 4 cups of dried, unsweetened coconut flakes or shreds into a food processor for 15 to 20 minutes until extremely smooth. Coconut butter is perfect in baking, in sauces, as a topping, and eaten straight out of the jar!

COCONUT CREAM

Coconut cream is the thick white cream that floats to the top of a can of coconut milk (if you don't shake it). It is also available as a standalone product. Coconut milk is usually 53 to 55 percent coconut extract, and coconut cream is much higher, usually 70 percent or more. Both are made from the grated flesh of mature brown coconuts; the only main difference is more water is added to coconut milk. Look for cans of coconut milk that have no stabilizers (guar gum) added or simply refrigerate a can for 4 hours or more and scoop the cream from the top. Drink the water that is left in the bottom or use in smoothies.

COCONUT OIL: VIRGIN, RAW, ORGANIC, COLD-PRESSED, REFINED?

What kind of coconut oil should you buy? In this book, all the recipes were made with organic, cold-pressed, unrefined coconut oil. For the most health benefits, always choose unrefined, "virgin" coconut oil, preferably from organic sources and either "expeller-" or "cold-pressed." Refined coconut oils can be treated with various chemicals and processed using very high heats, thus compromising all the health benefits we've talked about. The color should be white and the ingredient list should read "100 percent coconut oil" and nothing else. The flavor will be mild and almost sweet with a slight hint of coconuts.





PASTURED EGGS

Pastured eggs are the eggs from laying hens who have been allowed to roam free with unlimited access to the outdoors. They eat grass, bugs, plants, greens, and vegetable trimmings and are usually supplemented with grain-based feeds. Because there is no regulation behind the use of the terms “free run” or “free range,” it is best to find pastured eggs by speaking with neighboring farmers, visiting local farmers’ markets, or asking your grocer about the eggs sold in your grocery store.

SWEET POTATOES OR YAMS?

Sweet potatoes are a starchy tuberous root. They come in many variations, from orange to yellow, purple, red, brown, pink, and even beige. Sweet potatoes are not yams. Yams are a completely different species of starchy tubers grown mainly in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean and are a very important food staple. Yams can grow up to almost five feet long and weigh up to 150 pounds or more! Because of the confusion, most labeling in the US is required to state either “yam” or “sweet potato.” This book, when calling for sweet potatoes, refers to the orange-flesh variety.





Coconut Pancakes

Pancakes are a favorite breakfast food for our kids. When we gave up grains, there was a period of time when we just didn't know what to make for breakfast and snacks. Creativity flourished, though, and many pancake recipes were born. This one is the best of them all. Not only are they great fresh out of the pan, served any way you would normally have pancakes but they freeze well and can be reheated in the toaster or eaten cold out of hand.

YIELD: 18 PANCAKES

¼ cup coconut oil, melted

¼ cup nut butter (such as almond, cashew, or macadamia)

2 tbsp honey or maple syrup (optional)

4 pastured eggs

1 tbsp pure vanilla extract

½ tsp apple cider vinegar

3 tbsp coconut flour

½ tsp ground cinnamon

¼ tsp sea salt

1 tsp baking powder

1 tbsp ground golden flax

1 tbsp hemp hearts

3 tbsp mini chocolate chips (optional)

Coconut oil (for frying; optional)

- 1.** In a large bowl, mix the coconut oil and nut butter until smooth. Mix in honey or syrup if using.
- 2.** Beat in the eggs one at a time until combined completely.
- 3.** Whisk in the vanilla extract and apple cider vinegar and set aside.
- 4.** In a separate bowl, mix the coconut flour, cinnamon, salt, baking powder, flax, hemp hearts, and chocolate chips, if using.
- 5.** Place a nonstick or cast-iron pan on the stove and heat on medium-low (preheat it for a good few minutes). Melt the coconut oil into the pan if using. When the pan is hot, mix the wet ingredients with the dry and drop by the spoonful into the pan.
- 6.** Cook each pancake until bubbles form and pop. Flip pancake over and cook until done, about 2 to 3 minutes total per cake. Serve immediately or cool and freeze on baking trays.





Waffles

There's nothing more comforting on lazy weekend mornings than the warm smell of waffles. These breakfast superstars contain zero refined sugar and are, of course, dairy- and grain-free, but you won't miss those aspects at all. Served straight out of the waffle iron with fresh berries and coconut cream, these light and fluffy beauties will have you wishing you were a kid again.

YIELD: 6-8 WAFFLES

- ¾ cup almond meal or flour**
- 3 tbsp coconut flour**
- 2 tbsp arrowroot flour**
- 2 tbsp cocoa powder**
- 1 tsp baking powder**
- ¼ tsp sea salt**
- 4 eggs**
- 2 tbsp coconut oil, melted**
- ⅓ cup coconut milk**
- 1 tbsp honey**
- 1 tbsp pure vanilla extract**
- 3 tbsp or 1 oz 90 to 100 percent dark chocolate, chopped (optional)**
- 2-3 tbsp coconut oil, melted (for greasing your waffle maker)**

- 1.** In a large bowl, blend the dry ingredients (all flours, cocoa, baking powder, and salt) until thoroughly combined.
- 2.** In a separate, smaller bowl, combine the wet ingredients (excluding the chocolate) until thoroughly combined.
- 3.** Scrape the wet ingredients into the dry and stir to combine. Stir in the chopped chocolate, if using, just before you are ready to cook.
- 4.** Follow the directions for your waffle maker to preheat. Brush the melted coconut oil over the waffle iron on all sides. Spoon batter into each section and close the lid. Remove waffles when done (golden brown and cooked through).
- 5.** Serve immediately or freeze on baking trays in a single layer and reheat in your toaster.

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