# ORGANIC LIVING

# Robert Rodale

#### The Ten Most Popular Health Foods

If you're a newcomer to the world of natural foods, the interior of a typical health food store--or even the health foods section of a supermarket--can be a confusing place. Out of all the hundreds of items in stock, how are you supposed to know which are the best buys, in nutrition and value?

You can't go wrong if you remember to stick to basics. Over the years, certain foods have proven to be extremely popular among health food shoppers, and for good reason. The items listed below represent "The Top Ten," so to speak. (To keep things simple, I've purposely omitted vitamin and mineral tablets and other natural food supplements from this list.)

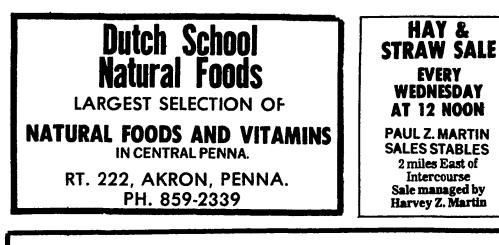
WHEAT GERM. The heart of the wheat kernel is a nutritional

powerhouse, packed with all the good things that are milled out of our commercial white bread and baked goods. Natural B vitamins, protein, iron and vitamin E are all included.

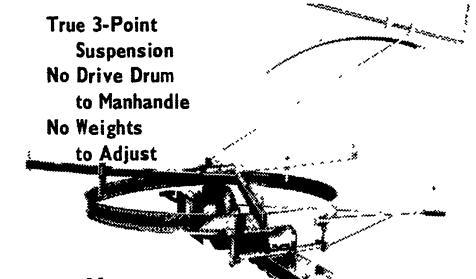
You can sprinkle wheat germ on fruit and ice cream or mix it into meat loaves and casseroles. Wheat germ is one health food you can find in almost any supermarket, right on the cereal shelf.

SPROUTS. Buying soybeans, mung beans or alfalfa seeds and sprouting them at home is a very inexpensive way to raise your own nutritious fresh "vegetables," even in a city apartment. Sprinkle the sprouts on salads for a big boost of vitamins B and C.

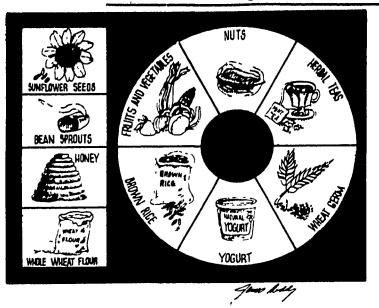
SUNFLOWER SEEDS. Long a favorite of the American Indian, these tasty seeds make a perfect snack.



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Sunflower seeds are a natural convenience food. They keep well without refrigeration, so you can carry them anywhere, even take them on long trips.

High in protein, the seeds are also an excellent source of unsaturated oils, minerals and vitamin E. Be sure to buy them raw and unsalted for maximum nutritional benefit.

YOGURT. This low calorie food has really caught on big in recent years. Like milk, it's an excellent source of calcium, but in a more digestible form.

Try buying plain yogurt without any sugary syrups added for flavoring. You can add your own fresh fruit at home.

NUTS. Pound for pound, nuts far exceed the food energy power of bread, meat and fruits. And they are a good source of unsaturated oils, protein, minerals and some vitamins. Be sure to buy them raw and unsalted.

Cashews, in particular, are an outstanding source of protein, containing almost as much high-quality protein as soybeans.

BROWN RICE. Why pay extra for "enriched" white rice, when you can buy unpolished brown rice with all the original B vitamins still intact? It takes a little longer to prepare, but the flavor and texture are worth the effort

HONEY. A natural sweetener, honey can generally be substituted in recipes requiring sugar. Just add half the amount. Unlike sugar, honey supplies more than just calories. It also contains some vitamins and minerals.

HERB TEAS. Find a variety that suits your taste. Mint, lemon balm and chamomile are the most popular. All make good substitutes for coffee, tea or soft drinks.

WHOLE WHEAT FLOUR. Stoneground, freshly-milled whole grain flours are becoming more generally available. Some natural food stores have their own mills and will grind flours to order. Once you purchase the flour, keep it refrigerated or in a cool, dry place.

Because the bran and germ have not been removed from whole grain flour, you get additional minerals and food fiber.

FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES. You might not normally think of these as "health foods," but they certainly are. Fruits and vegetables supply vitamins, minerals and fiber that are often lacking in the typical American "steak-and-potatoes" diet.

Many health food stores carry organically-grown produce in season, as well as fresh fruit and vegetable juices.

(Editor's Note: The opinions appearing in "Organic Living" are those of its author, Robert Rodale, an independent columnist. Rodale's comments do not necessarily reflect the thinking of the Lancaster Farming editor or anyone else on the Lancaster Farming staff.)

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