

## Sole Food

by Rebecca Wolsk

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## TALK:

STYLE

SUBSTANCE

Michelle Obama meets French First Lady, former model Carla Bruni-Sarkozy.

04.03.09 11:55am EST  
1 reply; 4/3/09 5:14pm EST:  
"She looked fantastic, very stylish and sophisticated. Kudos!"

UK enthralled with Mighty Michelle who is more popular than Barack in recent polls!  
04.03.09 12:40am EST  
3 replies; latest 4/5/09 6:48pm EST: "Yes, even the mighty Queen melted. Bravo."

Michelle Obama delivers touching remarks at all-girls school in working class London neighborhood.  
04.03.09 12:36am EST  
1 reply; 4/5/09 6:40pm EST: "It was so nice to see her add her own brand of inspirational substance to ..."

The Obamas give the Queen an iPod on their visit to Buckingham Palace!  
04.01.09 7:03pm EST  
1 reply; 4/2/09 3:02pm EST: "On one end it's like, umm.. is that appropriate... but on the other end it's ..."

76% percent of Americans approve of Michelle Obama. How could they not?  
03.31.09 10:22pm EST  
2 replies; latest 4/2/09 3:22pm EST: "Using my Michael Steele

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Michelle Obama shared this sensible advice just before breaking ground on the White House's kitchen garden:

***"You can begin in your own cupboard by eliminating processed food, trying to cook a meal a little more often, trying to incorporate more fruits and vegetables."***

But, how do we implement the First Lady's call to action? As a foodie and a mom, I have come up with some strategies to prepare healthy food for my family without breaking the bank or too much of a sweat... Here they are:

### **Begin with eco-strategy:**

For those of us who can't grow our own vegetables, the target is, whenever possible, to buy SOLE food. The SOLE acronym, broadcast by Ethicurean bloggers ([www.ethicurean.com](http://www.ethicurean.com)) stands for Sustainable/Seasonal, Organic, Local, and Ethically produced.

Support farmers markets, co-ops, and CSAs (community-sponsored agricultural programs). At the grocery store, look for deals on seasonal fruits and vegetables, canned and frozen organic goods, and limit red meat consumption.

### **Add this logistical strategy:**

Instead of scrawling out lists of the same foods week after week, consider keeping a master list on your computer, divided into these health-conscious categories:

- Produce
- Whole grains
- Legumes and Nuts
- Dairy
- Poultry, Fish, Vegetarian Protein, Meat
- Condiments, Soups, and Sauces
- Snacks
- Prepared Foods and Deli
- Household Items

Print out about six weeks' worth of lists, and each week just circle the items you need.

### **Shopping List Highlights:**

**At least six of your favorite fruits and vegetables.** The deeper the color, the more nutritious. Think green, orange, yellow, and red. In winter, look for apples, root vegetables, hearty dark greens like kale and collards. In summer, cukes, tomatoes, bell peppers and soft fruits are succulent choices.

Avocados provide a healthy source of fat. Onions, garlic, and lemon add flavor to your favorite sources of protein.

LOL: Using my Michael Steele HipHop dictionary... They are just HATIN'."

[see more style talk](#)

### **“ LATEST STYLE ”**

Michelle Obama meets French First Lady, former model Carla Bruni-Sarkozy...  
*Jump in and talk...*

### **“ LATEST SUBSTANCE ”**

Sarkozy and Merkel praise Obama's influence at G-20...  
*Jump in and talk...*

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Buy antioxidant-rich frozen berries (look for brands without added sugar) when fresh berries aren't in season.

**Whole grains**, especially **oatmeal**, which has attained "super food" nutritional status. Other grains that cook up relatively quickly (15 to 20 minutes) are **bulger, quinoa, fine grind cornmeal, and quick-cooking brown rice**. Arguably the quickest whole grain dish of them all is **couscous (look for the whole wheat kind)**. **Boxed grain dishes** that come with seasonings are pantry lifesavers. Look for brands like "Casbah" and "Near East."

**Legumes and nuts: hummos, edamame, dried or canned beans, lentils** (dry lentils cook faster than other beans and don't need to be soaked beforehand). Among the healthiest nut varieties are **almonds and walnuts**.

**Lowfat animal protein: chicken, turkey, fish**—stock up on the fresh stuff for your freezer, or buy **canned tuna, salmon, anchovies, and sardines**. Make red meat a condiment, instead of allowing it to play a starring role on your dinner plate. You can use **eggs**, or just their whites, to make big frittatas for a few hot or cold meals. Eggs aren't just for breakfast anymore!

**Vegetarian protein (miso, tofu, tempeh, seitan, veggie burgers)** even if you aren't a vegetarian, because you'll be eating low on the food chain. Veggie burgers can fly from your freezer to your microwave, and onto your dinner plate in two minutes.

**Lowfat dairy: organic skim, 1%, or 2% milk, string cheese, yogurt, cottage and feta cheeses**

**Condiments: mustard, salsa, olive oil, balsamic vinegar, raspberry vinegar, marinades like teriyaki, tamari, or soy sauce, salad dressing (try Annie's Brand dressings, or Paul Newman's Light Balsamic Vinagrette, or tahini-based dressings), bouillon cubes, a tub of miso paste to store in the refrigerator, which can be used instead of bouillon, Worcestershire sauce, mirin (Japanese rice wine for cooking), sherry cooking wine**

**Spices: basil, chili powder, cinnamon, cumin, paprika, herbes de provence**

**Snacks: fruits and vegetables, nuts, whole grain crackers, cheese**

### **The Night Before:**

Your kids (and/or dogs and/or cats) are in bed, your Blackberry is quieter than it will be tomorrow. Your brain is so tired that it might as well be made of mashed blackberry.

Nighttime is a good time to chop mindlessly.

**Chop vegetables** for the next 48 hours' worth of salads and steamed vegetable dishes or stir-fries. Onions and garlic are naturally low-sodium ingredients that enliven stir-fries and marinades.

**Consider cooking a few portions' worth of grains**, because grains refrigerate and freeze well. You can freshen them up before eating by stirring in some milk, water, homemade stock or broth, and/or yogurt. Microwave for about a minute, or heat up in a saucepan.

Tip: Unlike when cooking pasta, don't add salt to the water when cooking whole grains. Wait until you are giving them a final stir once they are tender enough to eat.

**Prep a smoothie.** Take advantage of your hot stovetop while cooking to defrost a bowl of frozen berries and/or bananas. Throw them in a blender with some yogurt and/or cottage cheese, and refrigerate overnight so you'll have a fruity, creamy treat available for the next day.

If fresh berries are in season, consider mashing and freezing some as an alternative to sugary, fattening ice cream.

### **Assemble tomorrow's dinner marinade and/or seasoning combination. Here are ideas:**

- Lemon or orange juice mixed with mustard
- Soy or tamari sauce
- Miso paste blended and thinned into mirin or sherry cooking wine
- Some or all of the following: diced onion, diced garlic, olive oil, balsamic or raspberry vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, soy sauce, and herbes de Provence
- Quick teriyaki = store-bought teriyaki marinade and sesame oil
- Quick tandoori = a yogurt-based paste of minced garlic, onions, cumin, chili powder and a pinch of cinnamon or nutmeg—this combination is based on Laurie Colwin tandoori chicken recipe from *More Home Cooking: A Writer Returns to the Kitchen*.

If you haven't gotten a chance to read the day's paper, consider using this chopping and assembling time to catch up on current events by listening to public radio podcasts on your mp3 player.

### **Just before bed:**

Put any protein that you need to defrost for tomorrow night's dinner in the fridge.

### **In the morning:**

Put your already-defrosting dinner protein of choice in a broiling pan lined with aluminum foil to minimize cleanup. Coat with marinade or seasoning combination. Spray with Pam cooking spray, and cover with a pan lid to minimize use of disposable plastic wraps or foils.

### **Breakfast ideals:**

Smoothie, fruit, yogurt, whole grain cereal or toast, or oatmeal, cheese and whole grain crackers

### **Lunch ideals:**

For your kids, try this lunchbox threesome: leftovers, fruit, reusable containers.

"Brownbag" your own lunch. Streamlined options are:

Salad with leftovers or cold cuts or tofu or canned tunafish or salmon and/or feta and some sort of whole grain

Sandwiches on whole grain bread could be:

- Turkey with avocado, mustard, and LTS (lettuce, tomato and sprouts)
- Vegetarians might try tempeh with LTS, or almond butter and banana
- Salmon spread (made with leftover or canned salmon, minced onion, celery, chopped orange, and mustard)

### **Afternoon snack ideals:**

Fruit and yogurt, nuts and string cheese, raw veg with hummos, or this healthy twist on a classic dip: your favorite dry onion soup packet mixed in with yogurt, cottage cheese, or lowfat sour cream.

## Eating in Your Car:

Of course, we should all be biking, walking, or availing ourselves of public transportation, but if you must drive (and most of us must), turn your trunk into a healthful pantry. I re-use yogurt and cottage cheese tubs to store pretzels, whole grain crackers, and nuts.

## Four-step dinner prep:

To improve browning and taste, coat your already-seasoned protein of choice with olive oil or sesame oil, or cooking spray.

Broil your steaks and fish; bake, or roast, or saute your chicken, tofu, tempeh, or seitan.

Saute or steam vegetables. If you steam them, instead of wasting the cooking water by dumping it down the sink drain, consider preserving that liquid to use as vegetable stock, or to rinse dishes, or to water plants once it has cooled.

Reheat or cook grain dish.

**When the day is done, don't forget to pat yourself on the back!**

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