

10. The Raw Food Connection

The raw food movement has been growing fast as many people's lives are being positively affected by their choice of consuming fresh, whole, uncooked and unprocessed natural foods. More and more people are understanding that food is imbued with energy and the purer the form of that energy, the healthier it is. It is the same with coffee. Once coffee is roasted, it is like a fresh whole food that is packed with energy and nutrients. Immediately after roasting these chemical compounds start decomposing and disappearing which is why when it comes to coffee, fresh is best!

Back in 2009 while living in the Little Applegate Valley in Jacksonville, Oregon, my wife decided to enroll in a Raw Food preparation class that was being offered at the Ashland Food Coop in Ashland, Oregon. At that time the raw food movement was in its infancy but a few of the pioneers of the movement happened to live in Ashland.

After the class, my wife was excited and inspired to explore a new way of preparing food. She has always been an amazing gourmet cook and has vast knowledge and experience in preparing delicious and nutritious meals. She is an artist and applies her artistic sense to cooking.....but now the concepts and ideas about food presented in the class brought a whole new understanding of food as energy and medicine. This new way of understanding food was a revelation to her and she eagerly embraced and explored the tenets that she learned.

Over the next 3 months my wife changed dramatically! She began preparing raw food gourmet meals and started exclusively eating only raw uncooked and unprocessed food. Her health and energy levels skyrocketed. She effortlessly dropped weight and I noticed a clarity and

high energy vibration that was now emanating from her. She was preparing enough raw food so that my daughter and I were able to try out her artful creations. She had a way of making a salad come alive by serving it with a cashew cheese, or pesto dressing, and dehydrated flax seed crackers. I noticed that the flavors and energy from this raw food were even more delicious and vibrant than any cooked food she had previously made. This, combined with the undeniable health and vitality I experienced in her Being had me declaring, "I want what you're having!", and after 3 months I too began eating almost exclusively raw. The physical changes that I experienced were dramatic. I needed much less sleep. Whereas before I was sleeping 7 or 8 hours each night, I now needed only 5 or 6. My digestive / elimination system became more regular and consistent. I felt more awake, aware, and alive than I had ever felt before! By this time, I had already been roasting coffee for about a year. I started to realize that what I was experiencing with the coffee was similar to what I was experiencing by eating raw food. Fresh roasted coffee had more energy and made me feel better in every way, as did eating raw food. I applied the same concepts behind raw food, i.e., the imbued energy and life giving substances that were present in greater amounts, to my ideas about coffee. I realized that roasted coffee is similar to raw food in that during the roasting process there are more than 1,000 chemical substances created and that these substances begin disappearing and deteriorating immediately after roasting. Therefore, in order to maximize and take advantage of the life giving qualities of these substances it is important to consume the coffee as close to roasting as possible. This not only made logical sense to me, but in practice I had already noticed that the fresh roasted coffee had a special energy to it and this energy, this "aliveness" and "vitality" seemed to diminish as each day passed.

Two of the world's biggest health issues of today, obesity and diabetes, which have reached epidemic proportions in many places, can be attributed to diets consisting mainly of heavily processed food. This "dead" food is devoid of energy and nutrition, but not calories. This causes the body to remain hungry for nutrients which results in overeating. In the documentary movie, "*Simply Raw: Reducing Diabetes in 30 days*", Dr. Gabriel Cousens demonstrates how Type 2, and in some cases even Type 1, diabetes can be cured through diet alone. The power of a raw food diet should not be underestimated, it can, and does, transform lives!

Once coffee is roasted, it is like a fresh whole food that is packed with energy and nutrients. Immediately after roasting these chemical compounds start decomposing and disappearing. It is estimated that there are over 1,000 chemical compounds *created* when coffee is roasted. Some of these compounds are in the form of gases, like carbon dioxide. It has been measured that 40% of the carbon dioxide in the coffee bean has left just 24 hours after roasting. My questions about this are, what other gases, chemical compounds, are leaving with the CO₂? If there are over 1,000 chemical compounds created, what are these compounds? Are they beneficial? Are they also leaving with the CO₂?

The answer to these questions have not yet been studied in a laboratory because the big coffee companies who fund the studies have no interest in studying coffee within 24 hours after roasting because it does not fit in with their economic model of packaging and shelf life. Without empirical data it is left to our human senses of smell, taste, and *feeling*. With coffee that has just been roasted and ground, it is very obvious that our sense of smell experiences the most intense, richest, unimaginable aroma! The aroma is at its peak! After brewing and sipping, it is likewise very obvious that the *feeling* of the coffee is also at its peak! It is *alive* with energy and it is

possible to feel a buzz and a lightheadedness that is awakening and enhances the present moment.

So....where does that leave taste? To listen to specialty coffee experts describing the various tastes of different coffee's is similar to listening to wine connoisseurs describing different varieties of wines. Their focus is exclusively on taste and disseminating all the different *flavors* of which there are many. They believe that it is best to not brew coffee for at least 2 days after roasting.....this time frame has recently changed, a lot! It used to be recommended to "de-gas" or "rest" coffee for 2-3 weeks after roasting! The reasoning behind this is, if coffee is brewed and consumed too close to when it was roasted, it is *impossible* for the human taste buds to distinguish and determine what the specific *flavors* are in the particular coffee, e.g., chocolate, caramel, spiciness, fruitiness, smokiness, etc. In other words, the fresh roasted coffee must decompose and deteriorate to the point where these specific flavors can be recognized. This attitude and practice is diametrically opposed to the Ethiopian coffee ceremony which has been in place for 1,000 years or more and which focuses on roasting, grinding, and then brewing the coffee immediately with no rest in-between. Are the Ethiopians heathens and less evolved in their understanding about coffee? I think not....they have been maintaining this same practice for over 1,000 years and I am sure that they have experimented with many different methods and forms of roasting, grinding, and brewing. The big difference is that the Ethiopians can *taste* freshness, and are not confined to describing the taste as *flavors*. They can taste *aliveness*, *energy* and *vitality*.....in the same way that a raw foodist can also taste them. But we have become programmed, in the west, to specify *flavors*, much to the delight and economic well-being of the commercial coffee culture. One of the biggest supporters and promoters of the *flavor* tasting method has been the Specialty Coffee Association of America (SCAA) which was created in

1982, less than 35 years ago, and is largely responsible for the “Flavor Wheel” that is the basis for rating systems and barista competitions.