



## CookFit to Get Fit with Katherine Cobbs

POSTED BY [CATHERINE](#) ON FEB 13, 2013



Who woulda thunk steak and chocolate would make the grade for healthy eating? No, I'm not bringing back the Atkins-style meat, cheese and butter fest. The Paleo Diet way of eating embraces the idea of clean eating and centers around meat, veggies and naturally-found goodies. Today, local culinary expert and writer [Katherine Cobbs](#) shares some valuable information on how to eat to improve your fitness level on the inside and gives us some tasty recipes that are sure to convince you there is no deprivation with this way of eating!



Katherine:

So, you've most likely been hearing about the Paleo...Primal...Caveman...or Ancestral Diet for these last couple years. If you think it's a passing fad or another way to deprive yourself to achieve a weight goal, I urge you to take a closer look. To be truly fit, you need exercise and the right food. I created [CookFit](#) (website launching soon) to inspire others to adopt an active lifestyle in the kitchen – get people to exercise their cooking muscles, in other words – instead of staying on a path of multiple short-term diets to offset a lifetime of poor eating habits and uninformed food choices.

As a culinary school grad, [food editor and cookbook author](#), I have collaborated on books with award-winning chefs and national magazine brands. Let me just say that I love really good food. I began a [CrossFit-based exercise](#)



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*regimen* over two years ago and learned about the Paleo Diet. Now, I'm not one to "drink the Kool-Aid" without doing my due diligence, especially when it comes to food and cooking. So I researched, read and asked questions of experts while experimenting on myself. I had my blood drawn before I undertook my new regimen and again, after a month and a half of consistently eating this way. Through intense workouts, my fitness level improved exponentially. Because I began to CookFit, my internal fitness improved too. My before-and-after blood work showed positive changes. That's really what it took for me to embrace this paradigm shift in my eating philosophy.

While CookFit recipes are built on a Paleo template, in no way do I attempt some historical reenactment of the way our evolutionary ancestors ate. I appreciate living in a modern world with an array of fantastic ingredients at my fingertips. What I have come to believe is that it is imperative to make every effort to understand the impact individual foods have on our bodies. Certain ingredients are best minimized, or better yet, eliminated altogether (inflammation-producing and blood sugar-raising grains, legumes, processed foods, and sugar that make up the bulk of our diets). Others, like hotly debated dairy, should be used in moderation or not at all. When you CookFit, you minimize the negative and accentuate the positive by preparing and eating the highest quality foods possible.

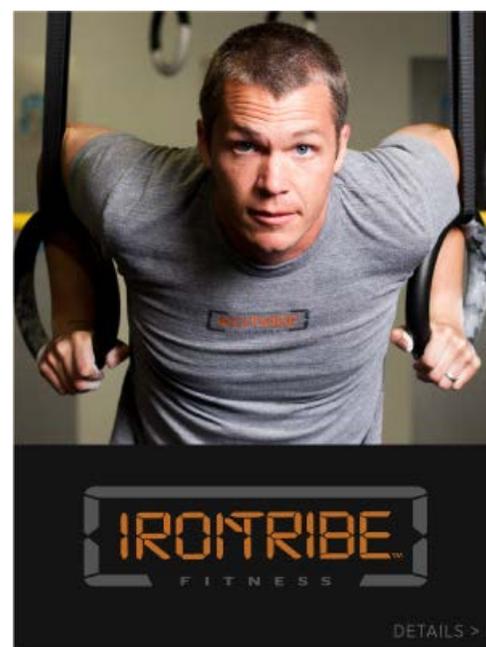
For me, eating this way is not about deprivation, but exploration. It's really an opportunity to try new things and to approach them in new ways. Focus on foods low in starch, carbs, and sugar, but high in fiber. Paint your plate with a rainbow of vegetables in bright colors to get the most vitamins and beneficial phytochemicals you can at every meal. Love mashed potatoes? Try an entirely new vegetable puree, like celery root (recipe below). Sweet tooth? Indulge in smarter ways. If you're a chocolate lover, try unsweetened dark chocolate (100% cacao) sweetened with xylitol, a natural sweetener (yes, with a very bad, chemical-sounding name). It is a sugar alcohol derived from birch bark that does not raise blood sugar. Bonus: It actually strengthens tooth enamel and prevents cavities. What other sweetener does that? Plus, it has none of the weird bitterness of many alternative sweeteners. (Note: Like chocolate, xylitol can be deadly to dogs, so keep it away from pets.)

If you think CookFit, means comfort food and chocolate are no more, I urge you to serve this meal to any meat-and-potatoes lover you think would never eat this way. Let it be their first carb-lite, sugar-free, cleaned plate on the meal train to optimal health. Let CookFit take you there.

MENU

### Grilled Flank Steak with Celery Root Mashers and Pomegranate Salsa

This makes a great Valentine's Day meal for the one you love. A glass of red wine is just fine too!





### Grilled Flank Steak

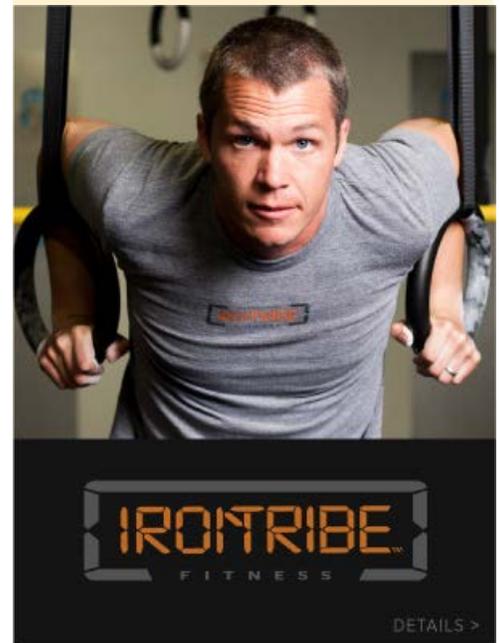
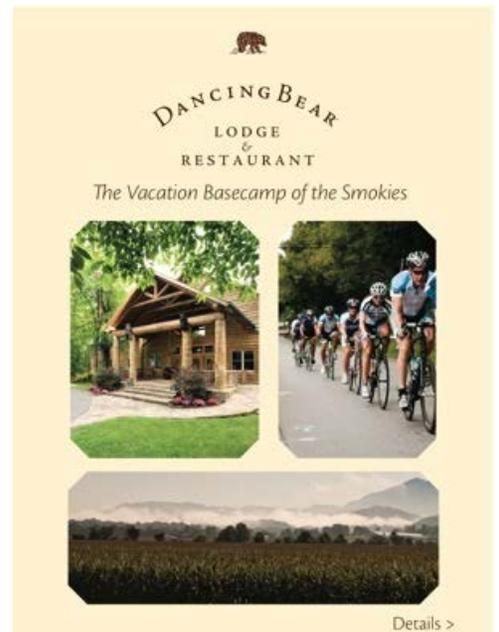
Flank steak is a really flavorful cut, but the key to its tenderness is proper slicing. Slice thinly across the natural grain of the meat or your jaw will get a workout. This is a good basic dry seasoning blend for any steak. A touch of Spanish smoked paprika ups the chargrilled flavor. (Serves 4 to 6.)

#### Ingredients:

- 1 T. kosher sea salt
- 1 t. freshly ground black pepper
- 1 t. granulated garlic
- 1/2 t. freshly ground lemon pepper
- 1/4 t. smoked paprika

#### Instructions:

1. Fire up your grill to high.
2. Combine the spices in a small bowl. Then sprinkle over both sides of the meat, massaging it into the steak really well. Set the meat aside for 10 minutes to let the seasoning permeate.
3. Grill the steak 5 minutes on the first side, flip, and grill about 4 minutes more on the second side. Remove to a platter and let the meat rest for 10 minutes before slicing.





### Celery Root Mashers

Time to think beyond the spuds. So many vegetables can be cooked and mashed to make a comforting side dish. Play around with combinations and flavorings. This one is super basic to allow the flavor of celery root (also called celeriac) to shine through. This celery cousin is low-carb, high in fiber, and has an earthy, subtle celery flavor that makes a great base for lots of dishes. Try it raw in salads too. (Serves 4.)

#### Ingredients:

- 2 celery roots
- 8 black peppercorns
- 1/2 t. kosher sea salt
- 2 thin strips lemon zest
- 3 T. organic butter or clarified butter



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Instructions:

1. Rinse the celery root well. Working around each root, cut the bumpy fibrous skin away with a chef's knife. Rinse again to remove any sand or dirt from the little valleys in the flesh of the root. Cut away any stubborn spots that remain. Dice the bulbs into 1/2-inch cubes.
2. Place the diced root in a pan with water just to cover. Add the peppercorns, salt, and lemon zest strips. Bring the water to a boil and then reduce to a simmer. Cook about 15 minutes or until root is tender when pierced with a knife.
3. Drain in a colander, reserving liquid, and return to pan.
4. Using a stick blender (or regular blender or food processor), blend the butter into the cooked celery root until you have a smooth puree, adding reserved cooking water only as necessary to achieve a fluffy mixture.



**Pomegranate Salsa**

High in vitamin C and potassium, the fiber-rich pomegranate is a wonder food. The seeds and juice are rich in antioxidants and polyphenols, as well as tannins, which are shown to decrease arterial plaque and offer protection against heart attack and stroke. Pomegranate extract blocks enzymes that play a role in cartilage degradation and osteoarthritis. Best of all, the tart-sweet pomegranate is a wonderful addition to cooking. When summer is a distant dream, let pomegranate seeds stand in for tomatoes in salsa. Buy containers of seeds in the produce section if seeding one isn't your thing. (Makes 1 3/4 cup.)



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Ingredients:

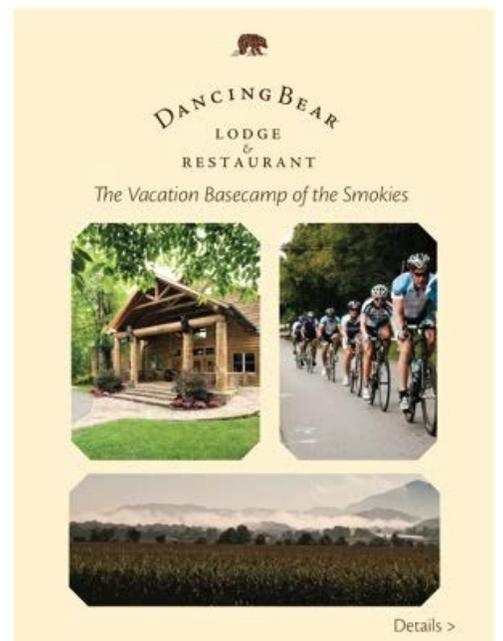
- 1 large pomegranate, seeded (about 1 cup pomegranate seeds)
- 1/2 cup finely diced and seeded cucumber
- 1/4 cup finely diced fennel bulb
- 2 T. finely diced onion
- 1 jalapeño pepper, seeded and finely diced
- 1 t. finely grated lemon zest
- 1 T. freshly squeeze lemon juice
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/4 cup coarsely chopped cilantro
- 1/3 cup toasted walnuts, finely chopped

Instructions:

Combine all ingredients, except the walnuts, in a small bowl and refrigerate for 30 minutes to let the flavors come together. Just before serving, stir in the toasted walnuts.

**Dark Chocolate Fondue with Red Berries**

You can have dessert and eat it too...just choose wisely! The berries are nutrient-packed no brainers, but like coffee, chocolate gets a bad rap. Both contain caffeine, which actually stimulates exercise stamina, acts as a soreness-busting analgesic, and all the while improves cognitive function in small doses. No ice cream or cake can do that! Look for unsweetened dark chocolate that is 100% cacao for the most flavonoids, compounds that lower blood pressure by increasing the flexibility of arteries while controlling insulin sensitivity. It's crucial to add hot liquids to melting chocolate or it will seize and become a big clump in the pan. If this does happen, whisk in more hot coffee or liquid. (Makes 1/2 cup.)



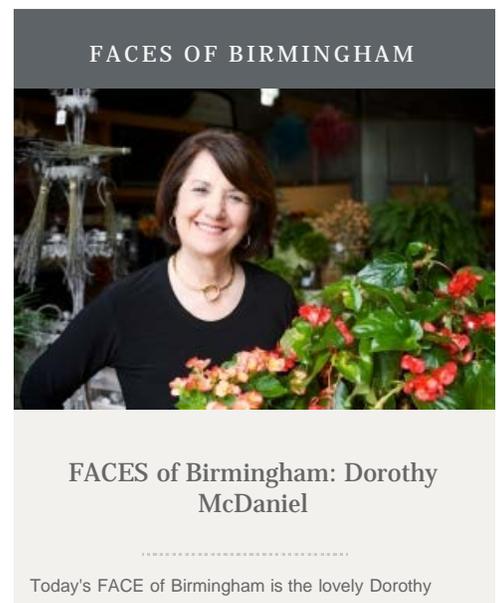
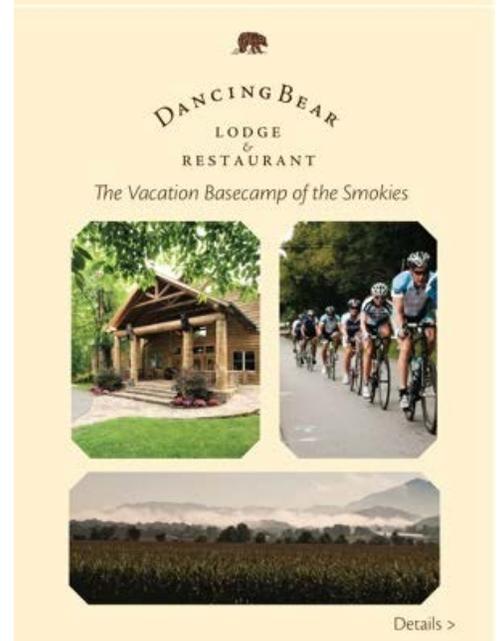
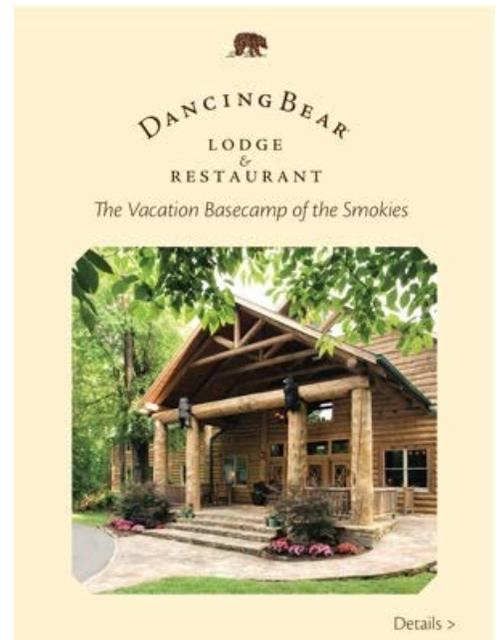


Ingredients:

- One 3.25-ounce bar dark (70% cacao) chocolate, chopped
- 1/4 cup (2 oz.) hot brewed espresso or strong coffee
- 1 t. coconut oil
- Pinch salt
- 1/4 cup xylitol crystals

Instructions:

1. Bring water in the bottom half of a double boiler to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to low and simmer.
2. Insert the second pan over the simmering water. Place the chocolate in the upper pan with the hot coffee, coconut oil, salt and xylitol.
3. Stir the chocolate often with a spatula until everything is melted and smooth.
4. Transfer to a heated fondue pot or dip fruit and transfer to serving plates immediately.



Thanks for these great recipes, Katherine! If this is cooking fit, I'm all in!

[CookFit.com](http://CookFit.com) launches this spring and we can't wait! Until then, see more of Katherine's work by visiting her website: <http://katherinecobbs.com>



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March 31, 2013 at 12:19 pm

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