

2016

OCTOBER UNPROCESSED

The Official Guide



October Unprocessed 2016: The Official Guide

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Welcome to the October Unprocessed Challenge from EatingRules.com! Thank you so much for being here and taking part in this event.

This is the seventh official challenge and we hope it will be the biggest and best yet. Our goal is to get as many people as possible eating as little processed food as possible for the entire month of October (and hopefully beyond!).

There is a lot of information and community support at Eating Rules throughout the month of October, but in years past, some people new to this way of eating have felt overwhelmed at the start. We hope this guide will give you the tools you need to feel (and be!) successful with the challenge.

In this guide, you'll find:

- The history and basic definitions of October Unprocessed
- How to get the most out of the challenge, including common speed bumps and how to overcome them
- How to read labels and stock and unprocessed pantry
- Tips and recommended tools
- Suggestions on dealing with dietary considerations
- How to Continue the Challenge Beyond October

Where to find more information throughout the challenge:

- [EatingRules.com](#)
- On Twitter, using the hashtag [#unprocessed](#)
- The [Eating Rules Facebook page](#)
- The [October Unprocessed Facebook Group](#)

Please do share your experiences, since we can all learn from them. Thank you for joining us!

Getting Started

The October Unprocessed Story

In October of 2009, Andrew was struck by a simple idea:

“What would happen if I went for an entire month without eating any processed foods?”

This question would have been laughable (rather, nonsensical) just a few decades ago. Nowadays, it seems that almost every food that comes with an ingredients list on it is likely to be laden with extra sugar, fat, and salt. And preservatives. And flavorings. And artificial colors.

Andrew wasn't okay with this.

So he tried it, along with a few good friends: A month of no processed foods:

“It was revelatory. My expectations and sense of taste were re-calibrated. I started to identify individual ingredients in the foods I ate. I didn't crave those salty snacks. I found myself often in the kitchen, excited to see what I could cook next. Above all, I simply felt better.”

“We took turns hosting small dinner parties, and shared our stories and experiences. It brought us closer together. Funny how real food does that.”

The next year, he decided to try it again, in a bigger way. He had started Eating Rules just a few months before, reached out to his fellow foodies, bloggers, and friends, and issued the challenge again. In October 2010, 415 people took the pledge and he shared over 40 guest posts. Since then, the challenge has grown each year -- by now more than 30,000 people have participated!

Our goal for 2016 is to inspire more than 25,000 people to sign the pledge, committing to eating no processed foods whatsoever during the month of October.

And then let's see what happens.

First Steps

Set An Intention

The best way to succeed in this challenge is to be clear about what you want to accomplish. If you already eat pretty well, maybe this month is the time to buckle down and toss those last few packages skulking around the pantry. If you aren't there yet, maybe cutting out high fructose corn syrup or just vending machine food is your first step. Or maybe Sunday dinners will be unprocessed, but the work week won't change much.

DO WHAT WORKS FOR YOU. No matter what your goal, even if it's small, please join us and [sign the pledge](#) if you haven't already.

So, what's your intention? Write it out and make it official!

My intention for the October Unprocessed challenge is:

The Kitchen Test Definition

October UNPROCESSED. How do we define “Unprocessed?”

Obviously there’s a wide range of implications in that word, and we will probably each define it slightly differently for ourselves. Andrew’s definition is this:

Unprocessed food is any food that could be made by a person with reasonable skill in a home kitchen with whole-food ingredients.

We call it “The Kitchen Test.” If you pick up something with a label (and if it doesn’t have a label, it’s probably unprocessed), and find an ingredient you’d never use in your kitchen and couldn’t possibly make yourself from the whole form, it’s processed.

It doesn’t mean you actually have to make it yourself, it just means that for it to be considered “unprocessed” that you could, in theory, do so.

Andrew recently posted about [**The Kitchen Test**](#) and we’ll continue exploring it throughout the month.

Does that definition work for you? If not, what is your definition of "Unprocessed?"

The Deliberate Exception Clause

What are your options if something doesn’t pass the Kitchen Test?

1. Don’t eat it. It’s processed.
2. Consider adding a deliberate exception.

When Andrew first started this challenge, he and Matty (his husband) decided to exempt certain ingredients. For example, vital wheat gluten is extracted through an industrial process and fails the kitchen test. That said, they decided in advance that the benefit in adding a few tablespoons of vital wheat gluten to their homemade 100% whole grain bread outweighed the “harm” of using it.

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Another example is a runner who has signed the pledge and is training for a marathon. For regular meals and snacks, she ate unprocessed. During training runs, she allowed herself sports drinks and gels that wouldn't pass the Kitchen Test. But the rest of the time, she ate completely unprocessed.

It's important to decide what your boundaries are BEFORE you get to them. The key to the deliberate exception clause is weighing the pros and cons of allowing a certain ingredient so you don't have to make it a test of willpower, potentially when you're hungry or under pressure.

What are your deliberate exceptions (if any) for the challenge?

How To Get The Most Out of the Challenge

The Technical Stuff

Sign the pledge: To officially participate in October Unprocessed, we ask that you take the pledge! This does not mean you WON'T eat any processed food during the month, it means you will strive to meet your own goal of eating unprocessed, whatever that may be.

Signing the pledge shows your commitment and adds your support to the thousands of other pledge-takers all working toward a similar goal.

[CLICK HERE TO SIGN THE PLEDGE](https://eatingrules.com/october-unprocessed/) - <https://eatingrules.com/october-unprocessed/>

Guest posts: The key to this challenge is community, and food is not only fuel, but our culture and a part of how we socialize. No one can do this alone, and having the food blog community participate will enrich the experience for everyone with dozens of guest posts throughout the month of October. These bloggers and other experts bring their own unique view, skills, education, and personal challenges to the fold.

The most common feedback we received from the previous challenges was "More Recipes, Please!" -so we'll be sharing at least one recipe every day (all have passed the Kitchen Test!). We'll also sprinkle in a few other posts on "D.I.Y.", specific ingredients, and other things to think about in the world of unprocessed.

People come to the challenge from very different places, and we want it to be easy for everyone to get what they need. Not every post will resonate with everyone. In years past people have wanted more vegan recipes, fewer vegan recipes, more food policy, less food policy, more tips, fewer tricks, and everything in between. The goal is to cast a wide net and provide information that helps as many people as possible. Not interested in a certain post? Skip it! See if the next one helps you.

Our Facebook Group

Our Facebook group, called "October Unprocessed," is free to join, and you can chime in with conversation about how the challenge is going for you - or share recipes, pictures, and other links with the group.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/octoberunprocessed/>

Common speed bumps and what to do about them

Every year of October Unprocessed reveals new challenges experienced by participants. The goal of the challenge is to motivate, educate, and inspire you, not to frustrate you, judge, or make anyone feel like they've failed. Here are some common areas where people get stuck – and what you can do to avoid or overcome them.

Spirit vs. Semantics of the Challenge

Start from where you are. If you don't think you can feasibly cut out all processed foods for a month, make your goal to reduce them, or to focus on a few ingredients (cutting out high fructose corn syrup and refined grains is a great start). Be clear about what you want to accomplish (we recommend setting an intention, above).

If you eat a piece of candy corn during the month, the world will not end. **At its core, this challenge is an awareness exercise.** It's not a punishment. Today wasn't the best? That's what tomorrow is for – you can always start again.

Resistance From Family and Friends

Feeling “sabotaged” by family and friends is a common complaint, both for the challenge, and whenever people make any dietary changes. Know that for many people, they are operating from a place of fear: What if this changes you? They are simply holding on to what they know, and it is a reflection on them, not on you.

That said, it can be very frustrating. Here are some tips that can help:

- **Encourage friends and family to take the pledge with you**, and talk to members of your household to get them involved instead of trying to take this on yourself or deciding for everyone. Help them understand why you want to do this.
- **Rely on outside resources.** When all the information is coming from you and someone disagrees, it can feel personal. Some great movies are [Food, Inc.](#), [Forks Over Knives](#), [Fat, Sick & Nearly Dead](#), [Super Size Me](#), and [King Corn](#). For books, check out Andrew's [Recommended Reading](#) Section.
- **Emphasize that the challenge is only for one month.**

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- **Lead by example!** Find a delicious new recipe and cook it for your family or friends (without pointing out that it's unprocessed before they eat it). There's probably no better way to convince someone than by serving them fantastic food that, oh yeah, it just happens to be unprocessed.
- **Stay accountable and host or attend an Unprocessed Potluck** (see below).

Where do you anticipate coming across resistance? What would help alleviate that?

Accountability

No one will know if you stick to the challenge or not – unless you tell them. **If you're feeling trepidation about it, find yourself support and accountability.** If you're a blogger, write about your experience. Recruit a friend to take the pledge with you and check in once a day or once a week (it also gives you a good excuse to chat with your friend!). Your buddy could be someone you know, or find another participant online.

Another good way to stay accountable is to stay active in the participating community: Leave comments with your successes and challenges on Eating Rules posts, [share with the Facebook group](#), and use the #unprocessed hash tag on Twitter. We want you to succeed!

Who can support you in this challenge? Who could you invite to join you?

Dining Out

Ah, the dangerous, additive-ridden gantlet of the restaurant. What to do? It's easy to say "Just eat in! If you cook it, you know what's in it." Many people do this, and kudos to them!

For those of you who have lunch meetings or work dinners or just love not having to do the dishes, here are some tips.

1. **Check out the [swath of posts on eating out at Eating Rules](#).**
2. **Look up restaurants ahead of time when possible.** Chains are required to post nutrition information, and most larger establishments will have detailed information for your perusal. Knowledge is power!
3. **Patronize restaurants with farm-to-table menus or who make everything in-house.** This is easier if you live in California, we know.
4. **Choose dishes with easily-identified ingredients.**
5. **If ingredients are mysterious, ask, or substitute!** If they don't make their own salad dressing, request olive oil and lemon juice.
6. **Don't worry too much.** Do your best and stick to the challenge at home.

Which local restaurants are most likely to serve unprocessed food? Where do you currently eat that may not make the cut?

Time Management

The easiest way to ensure you're eating unprocessed food is to cook at home. That said, if you don't already cook at home a lot, that can be a big change and a major speed bump on the road to unprocessed eating.

Here are some of the best ways to make the most of your time when eating unprocessed. We go into more details later in this guide.

1. **Have a well-stocked pantry of unprocessed ingredients.** This doesn't just mean dried staples in the cupboard, but also frozen and fresh foods. There is a large section on stocking your pantry below.
2. **Plan your meals.** Menu planning can make a huge difference, especially when you're hungry. Menu planning resources are located below.
3. **Have a stock of unprocessed snacks, just in case.** It's harder to think and easier to grab something convenient when you're hungry.
4. **Prep ingredients ahead of time or cook in batches.** Fall foods are great for freezing (soup, this means you).
5. **Get out the slow cooker!** Dinner is done when you come home from work.

If this is an area you struggle with, set aside some time in your calendar to do the planning each week. Maybe it's Sunday morning before you grocery shop, or Thursday before you pick up your CSA share. Taking half an hour to plan today can save you hours during the week.

Where do you struggle now with food and time management? Which tips could help you?

Reading Labels

The most important skill in becoming an Unprocessed detective is reading labels. The easiest way to do this is to buy food that doesn't HAVE labels like fresh fruits and vegetables. Once you get into grains, dairy, meat, and snack foods, it's time to get out your magnifying glass. Even the bulk bins have ingredient lists, so don't assume that everything in there is safe.

All that nutrition info on the label? You can skip over it, and go straight to the ingredients list. Ask the following questions:

- Can I identify all the ingredients on the list?
- Can I pronounce them?
- If I can't pronounce it, is it the scientific name of a real-food ingredient?
- Is it a "whole" food or real ingredient?

If YES, it's good to go. If NO to any of these, it's processed.

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At the end of this guide is an appendix of frequently-asked-about foods and ingredients, so if you're not sure, check there.

A note on organics and natural foods: The term “natural” is not regulated. You could mix up arsenic and concrete and slap a “natural” label on it, no problem. **Never trust the claims on the front of a package, always flip it over and consult the ingredient list.**

“Organic” is a term that is actually regulated and means that ingredients were grown in accordance with organic practices, without certain synthetic pesticides. That does not mean that the product is unprocessed, however. Organic white flour is still white flour and organic cookies are still cookies. That said, an organic apple and a conventionally-grown apple are both unprocessed – and deliciously in season.

Tips and Tricks

Packing Unprocessed Lunches For Adults

Weekday lunches can be a challenge, especially if you work a traditional 9-to-5 job. Here are some ideas to get you started.

Bring leftovers. Make extra servings of dinner and pack it up for work the next day. Soups are a great option this time of year and they freeze well so you don't have to eat them two or three days in a row. Wait a week!

Build a salad bar in your fridge. Prep ingredients over the weekend and mix-n-match a small salad throughout the week. Make your own salad dressing (you could even store the dressing at work, with or without a fridge). And yes, you can buy bags of pre-washed greens to make it easier!

Break out of a sandwich rut and have a *meze* meal. Bring fruit, cheese, bread, olives, and veggies instead of one main item.

Cook in bulk, then mix-n-match. For example, at the start of the week make a pot of beans, a pot of rice or quinoa, and chop your veggies. Now you have the basics makings for a whole-grain salad, a green salad with toppings, a burrito, and veggie burgers. You can also freeze the grains and beans.

Bring a (sweet) potato. If you have a microwave at work, bring a whole baking or sweet potato, stab it with a fork (especially satisfying on stressful days), and zap it for about 6 minutes. Bring a small container of toppings of your choice *et voilà*: lunch!

If you normally bring a sandwich, go for whole grain bread (but check the ingredients!) and skip the processed deli meat. Instead of a bag of chips or crackers, bring fresh fruit or veggies.

Make sure you're drinking lots of water. If you hit the 3:00 slump, it may be a sign of dehydration – headache, fatigue, and hunger are all symptoms. Skip the vending machine or coffee shop and drink water first.

Packing Unprocessed Lunches For Kids

Here is a great guest post from the 2011 challenge with ten unprocessed school lunch ideas:

<https://eatingrules.com/unprocessed-school-lunch-ideas/>

Many of the tips from packing lunches for adults work here, too. If you usually include snacks as sides, see the “UNPROCESSED SNACKS” section next for more ideas.

- If you're sending PB&J, use unprocessed nut butter and jelly on whole grain bread. Real fruit instead of jelly works great, too - try mashing blueberries or banana slices into the butter.
- Send boiled, salted edamame instead of chips.
- Try toasted nori (seaweed) snacks instead of chips.
- Perfect for fall: send soup in a thermal container.
- Send fruit as a naturally sweet snack.
- Pack hummus and carrots or snap peas.
- Hop on the **bento box** wagon. Not all recipes are unprocessed, but there are some creative options.
- Pack whole grain salads.
- Make chickpea salad sandwiches instead of using deli meat.

Unprocessed Snacks

We tend to think of snack foods as things that come in snack-size packages: cookies, crackers, candy, etc. Switching to unprocessed snacks is cheaper and healthier (and arguably more delicious). Here are some ideas to get you started.

- Fresh fruit is sweet and all natural! Add some cheese or nut butter to make it more filling.
- Fresh veggies: branch out from baby carrots and try jicama sticks or snap peas. Dip in hummus for protein (and garlic).
- Hummus and veggies or whole wheat pita bread (homemade or read the label).
- Nuts, especially almonds and walnuts – or make your own trail mix with dried fruit and nuts.
- Popcorn – skip the microwave packages and DIY! Scoop ½ cup of popcorn kernels into a brown paper lunch bag, fold over the top to prevent escapees, and microwave for about 90 seconds (your microwave time may vary). Add seasonings, skip the creepy chemicals!

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- Crackers: look for 100% whole grain (read your labels), or make some at home! Top with cheese, veggies, fruit, nut butter, etc.
- Yogurt parfaits – plain yogurt with fruit and/or granola.
- Homemade potato chips – [in the microwave](#). Or [apple chips](#). Or [kale chips](#)!
- Hard-boiled eggs with a little salt and pepper.
- Instead of HFCS-based fruit snacks, make fruit leather at home. Or just send fruit.
- Applesauce with cinnamon is great for fall, but read labels or try making your own in about 20 minutes.

Unprocessed on a Budget

The most common complaint going in to the challenge other than “I don’t have enough time” is “unprocessed food costs more.” While in some cases that could be true (large companies buy in bulk and use less-expensive ingredients on purpose – we won’t even get started talking about [government subsidies](#)), there are definite ways to stretch your unprocessed dollars.

Meal planning. There is more discussion under the Resources section, but planning ahead saves you time and money.

Make a list. Grocery shopping can get expensive if you don’t have a plan. You can buy too much that goes to waste, too little and need to make another trip or fall back on convenience food, or impulsively buy unneeded items.

Reduce your meat consumption. Meat is expensive. Taking part in Meatless Mondays or using meat as a condiment instead of the center of your plate can greatly reduce your grocery bill.

Beans. An amazing and inexpensive source of protein, fiber, and nutrients, beans are amazingly versatile. Use them as a main dish (black bean burgers or *mujadarrah*, anyone?), a side (baked beans or a cool bean salad), a soup base or addition, an enchilada or burrito filling – heck, you can even make black bean brownies.

Some great staples are chickpeas (garbanzo beans), black beans, pinto beans, cannellini beans, lentils, and split peas. Canned beans aren’t terribly expensive (check for preservatives), and dried beans are even cheaper. Most dried beans can be soaked overnight to reduce cooking times, or cooked in a slow cooker.

Buy in bulk. This could be through a co-op or Costco, or just in the bulk bins at the natural foods or grocery store. “Fancy” steel cut oatmeal can be \$7 per pound in the metal can, but is \$0.99/pound for organic steel cut oats in the bulk bins (even at Whole Foods). Don’t have storage space? Try recruiting a friend to split that flat of canned tomatoes.

Buy seasonally and on sale. Coupon-clipping is less effective when you aren’t buying packaged items, but you’ll save a lot of money buying ingredients that are in season. There’s a reason we eat

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more pumpkin and sweet potatoes in the fall and watermelon in the summer. Embrace what's fresh and ripe to save money.

Farmers markets. Sure, you can compare hot house tomatoes from the grocery store to organic heirlooms at the market and cry foul, but many items are actually less expensive at farmers markets. Try going at the end of the market when vendors are trying to sell off what's left, ask about blemished produce (like “cosmetically challenged” avocados for half price), or buying a larger quantity (like 20 pounds of apples at once). Many farmers markets now accept and/or double WIC/SNAP/Food Stamps, too!

Grow your own. A packet of seeds, a little dirt, and a recycled container can provide a lot more fresh herbs than the wilted \$3 bunch from the grocery store. All you need is a sunny windowsill, patio, fire escape, or small outdoor area. (Did you know that SNAP Benefits/Food Stamps can be used to buy food-producing plants? Check out snapgardens.org!)

Preserve. Can, ferment, pickle, or freeze for later!

Ethnic markets. Spices are often much cheaper at co-ops (you can often buy small amounts in bulk) or at ethnic markets. Ginger and garlic are often cheaper at Asian markets, and peppers and tortillas from the Mexican mercado can't be beat! Look for Middle Eastern shops to buy items like dates, olives, and orange blossom water. Sure, it can mean an extra stop at the store, but think of it as a field trip instead of an errand.

Frozen fruit and vegetables. Fresh is preferable, but buying frozen can be just as nutritious or possibly more so (most produce is now flash-frozen shortly after harvest) and extremely convenient. Frozen veggies can get tossed with pasta or pilafs, and frozen fruit makes great smoothies or desserts.

Make it at home instead of buying it. There are a lot of links in this guide so you can make common grocery purchases at home. Yes, it takes more time, but it can be a fun project (especially with kids) and often can be done in bulk.

You can also save a lot of money by eating at home instead of at restaurants. One trick is to look at restaurant menus for kitchen inspiration.

Some ideas to try making at home: [bread](#), [crackers](#), dehydrating fruit, meat substitutes ([tofu](#), tempeh, [seitan](#), veggie burgers), [charcuterie](#) or sausage, [cheese](#) or [yogurt](#), [pickles](#), [sauerkraut](#), [applesauce](#), condiments (ketchup, [mustard](#), or [mayo](#)), [granola](#), jam or jelly, [soy milk](#) or [almond milk](#), [nut butters](#).

Host a Potluck

Another fun way to get other people involved and to give yourself some social accountability is to hold an Unprocessed Potluck! Recruit some friends and family to join you and bring an unprocessed dish (it may help to agree on a definition for the event) to share. This could be a kick-off early on, a mid-point check in, or a celebratory closing feast. Be creative! (And, [here's a table-card template](#) you can print.) *Who could you invite to a potluck? When in October would work best for you?*

Unprocessed Tools

Food Journal

Whether you're planning on cutting out all processed foods or just want to focus on a few, it's hard to change what you eat if you don't know what that is. A helpful tool is a food journal.

This is not to judge what you eat, it is merely a record. Think of it like scientific research. You can use a smart phone app, track in your planner or a notebook, or download this handy form:

<http://centerstagewellness.com/files/SASS/SASSFoodJournal.pdf>

Write down everything you eat. You don't have to track calories or fat grams, just write down "whole wheat toast with jam" or "six Oreos" or "large Caesar salad." Additional information to record: what time you ate, what you drank, how hungry you were, and how you felt emotionally.

Track this for up to a week. Note any patterns: do you eat more sugar when you're stressed? Do you drink more coffee in the morning or the afternoon? Do you snack in front of the TV before bed?

Which patterns would you most like to change? What factor do you think has the biggest impact on your eating habits? Which processed foods are showing up the most that you want to eliminate?

Meal Planning Resources

There's no right or wrong way to meal plan, and your approach will be very different if you're an urban single versus a rural family. Be flexible. Don't plan a new-to-you recipe every night of the week or you may get overwhelmed. Try a few tips and decide what works for you!

Taking 30-60 minutes once a week can save you stress and hours in the kitchen or running to the store later in the week. And there's no shame in planning breakfast-for-dinner or every-man-for-themselves nights.

The simplest way to get a meal plan: **The October Unprocessed Simple Meal Plan Guide will be available starting on September 26, so be on the lookout!**

Use a meal planning subscription service. We love friend-of-October-Unprocessed [The Fresh 20](#). These budget-friendly menu-planning lists give you 20 ingredients with recipes for 5 meals – no preservatives, no processed foods, nothing frozen. Plans are available in classic, vegetarian, gluten-free, and more.

Pick a general theme. For example: Meatless Monday, Taco Tuesday, Soup and Salad Wednesday, Leftover Thursday, Pizza Friday. The actual meal depends on what's in season or on sale.

The middle ground. Chart out your recipes and leftovers for the week. Schedule in lunch meetings or dinners out.

Here is a handy form to use: <http://centerstagewellness.com/files/WeeklyMealPlanner.pdf>

Dietary considerations

Tips for Vegans and Vegetarians

When people go meatless, it's common to rely on *faux* meat: Veggie burgers, “chik” nuggets, and the like. Those are great transition foods, but when the focus is on eating unprocessed, they can become problematic. It's also easy to be a “junk food vegan” or vegetarian – just because something doesn't contain animal products doesn't make it automatically healthy.

So kudos to you for taking the pledge! Here are some tips to help you:

Meat replacements: Many veggie burgers, veggie dogs, etc. are made with all sorts of preservatives and chemicals. The basics like [tofu](#), tempeh, and [seitan](#) are usually fine (see above); it's the ones with “[textured vegetable protein](#)” to watch out for. Veggie burgers are the easiest to make at home – try lentil-walnut-quinoa, or [spicy jalapeno black bean](#) burgers.

Ethnic food: If you grew up eating a Standard American Diet (think meat-and-potatoes), it can be harder to get past the idea of, well, meat and potatoes. Focus on dishes like curries, stir-fries, soups, and hearty salads. There's nothing wrong with eating a giant bowl of roasted veggies as a meal.

Non-dairy milk: Many non-dairy milk brands add thickeners and/or sugar, so read the labels or try making your own – all you need is a blender.

Non-dairy yogurt: Most that we found have lots of thickeners and sugar added. Decide where you draw the line, or [try making your own at home](#).

Non-dairy cheese: You may want to give up your “mozzarella shreds” for the month, but you can go to town with [nut-based spreads](#) or test out [these recipes from Vegetarian Times](#).

Tips for the Gluten-Free

Luckily, there is a lot of food that is naturally gluten-free! The trick comes in when talking about gluten-free food products that normally contain gluten. In 2010 we learned about [gluten-free flours](#), and in 2011 we learned [all about gums](#).

Instead of focusing on the gluten-free replacements that may not be unprocessed, think about all the foods you CAN eat:

- [Meat, eggs](#), and unprocessed dairy
- Tofu and some tempeh (not all is gluten-free)
- Rice, corn, millet, buckwheat, potatoes, oats, and other gluten-free starches
- Nuts, seeds, beans, legumes
- Fruits and vegetables

If you just can't wrap your head around cutting out xanthan gum, maybe that could be a deliberate exception. Decide if that's right for you, or if this month is when you'll focus on alternatives instead of substitutes.

Appendix A - Previous Guest Posts

In an effort to offer up fresh (no pun intended) content each year of the challenge, we try not to repeat topics too much. That said, there is a trove of valuable recipes and information from the previous challenges. Click through for an index of each year's posts on Andrew's site:

2010 - <https://eatingrules.com/october-unprocessed-2010-guest-posts/>

2011 - <https://eatingrules.com/october-unprocessed-2011-guest-posts/>

2012 - <https://eatingrules.com/october-unprocessed-2012-guest-posts/>

2013 - <https://eatingrules.com/october-unprocessed-2013-guest-posts/>

2014 - <https://eatingrules.com/october-unprocessed-2014-guest-posts/>

2015 - <https://eatingrules.com/october-unprocessed-2015-guest-posts/>

Appendix B - Frequently Asked Questions

Andrew's written a series of posts on Unprocessed Frequently Asked Questions. In those, he answers the vast majority of questions about does (and does not) count as "unprocessed."

Be sure to read through these posts, we're sure it will be tremendously helpful! if you still have questions after that, please *ask in the comments section on the relevant post* so you can get an answer - and other people can learn from it, too.

The Kitchen Test - <https://eatingrules.com/the-kitchen-test/>

Beverages - <https://eatingrules.com/unprocessed-faq-beverages/>

Flour & Grains - <https://eatingrules.com/unprocessed-faq-flour-grains/>

Sugar & Sweeteners - <https://eatingrules.com/unprocessed-faq-sugar/>

Chocolate - <https://eatingrules.com/unprocessed-faq-chocolate/>

Additives, Preservatives, and other Confusing Ingredients -
<https://eatingrules.com/unprocessed-faq-additives/>

Meat & Eggs - <https://eatingrules.com/unprocessed-faq-meat-eggs/>