WELCOME TO THE REAL FOOD CHALLENGE!

What you eat has a tremendous impact on your overall health and quality of life. Your diet can either fuel your body or drag you down. Cutting back on heavily processed foods, or "fake foods", and replacing them with real food is one of the easiest ways to reduce calories and sugar, feel more energized, and keep your body healthy and happy.

There are a lot of extra empty calories in heavily processed foods. Unlike real food, your body can't use the calories from fake food to keep you mentally and physically energized throughout the day. Instead, fake foods can cause your insulin to spike and lead to an afternoon crash.

The Real Food Challenge isn't about losing weight (although it is a great perk of cutting back on processed foods!) – it's about feeling good and properly fueling your body. Replacing fake food with real food provides your body with the nutrients it needs to sustain a healthy weight, healthy mind, and healthy brain function.

So, let's get to the rules. For this challenge, we consider real food as any food that is minimally processed or not processed at all. Fake food includes any heavily processed, packaged foods that include dozens of unrecognizable ingredients, chemicals, and additives.

It's important to understand that not all processed food is bad for you. For example, bagged spinach, pre-cut veggies, and roasted nuts are all technically processed foods. They are pre-prepped for convenience and usually do not contain added chemicals or preservatives. On the other hand, heavily processed foods, like chips or donuts, contain excessive amounts of added sugars and chemicals, and offer very little nutrients in return.

The bottom line is that replacing fake food with real food is a simple and delicious way to reduce calories, consume more essential vitamins and minerals, and maintain a more balanced diet. Below are some examples of real food vs. fake food.

Examples of real food include:

- Nuts
- Plain Greek yogurt
- Nut butter
- Fruit
- Veggies
- Hummus
- Whole-grain crackers
- Air-popped popcorn
- Dried fruit
- Brown rice
- Lean meats
- Seeds
- Beans
- Avocados
- Unsweetened raisins
- Dark chocolate

Examples of fake food include:

- White bread
- Potato chips
- Cookies
- Snack cakes
- Sugary granola bars
- Candy
- Pretzels
- Soda
- Easy Cheese®
- Hot dogs
- Pop-Tarts®
- Fruit snacks
- Sugary breakfast cereals
- Frozen pizza
- Fast food
- Deep fried foods

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