

# column: raw living

## For all sea sons and daughters

**I'm not really sure why sea vegetables have such a bad reputation.** Maybe it's the name, sea 'weed', but we all know foraging is coming back into fashion, and the weeds of our childhood are the gourmet salad leaves of our present days. What most mums are surprised to find is the ease with which our offspring take to these fruits of the sea. Maybe it's partly down to their lack of prejudices and preconceptions, but there is no doubt of their popularity among small boys and girls.

I often describe sea vegetables as the 'meat' of our diet. When I was growing up, a proper meal had to have 'meat and two vegetables'. Now, many of our meals are 'seaweed and two vegetables'. Sea vegetables form the bulk, the density and the high-quality nutrition of the meal. I don't believe it's possible to sustain a raw diet that just consists of fruit, vegetables and beansprouts. It might feel good in the short term for a detox, but in the long term it's not enough nutritionally and we can start to feel spaced out, and the craving for cooked, grounding foods intensifies.

People say to me, "Well, that makes sense nutritionally, but I don't like seaweed." That's like saying "I don't like vegetables." A carrot is not broccoli is not a cucumber, and in the same way hijiki is not dulse is not nori. Most people don't like all the seaweeds: currently in our house Ethan is big on wakame and sea spaghetti, while Reuben won't eat those and prefers nori and hijiki. Zachary likes dulse and arame best. I like them all.

Dulse and nori are probably the most popular with novices. Dulse, unlike virtually every other seaweed, doesn't need any pre-soaking, and is happy just with a quick rinse before you add it to your dinner. It's a gorgeous purple colour, and its tenderness and sweetness mean that, as well as being a great salad ingredient, it also adds a certain something to tomato sauces, burgers, and raw crackers and breads. Nori is the paper-like seaweed used in sushi. I don't know what it is about children and paper, but it works. My mum used to buy coconut macaroons and I just used to eat the rice paper off the bottom. I've seen plenty of kids just eat the sheets as they are, or you can cut them into strips and dip them in dips. And of course you can make nori rolls by filling them with anything your imagination can come up with – even fruits work, maybe mashed up with some avocado.

Arame and hijiki are both spaghetti-like sea vegetables that need soaking for at least twenty minutes before you eat them. (Note to strict raw-fooders: arame and hijiki are both heat-treated in preparation and are not raw foods!) Wakame comes in small green strips and, to be honest, is a little slimy. It's the one that looks and tastes most like you imagine seaweed to be. The sea salads are dried flakes like dulse, nori and wakame, and we use those as sprinkles over our food.

Sea spaghetti is very fibrous and needs soaking for at least twelve hours, but it's so nurturing and sustaining, and one of our very very favourite foods. Kelp noodles look and taste just like Chinese glass noodles, but are made entirely of kelp! As



kelp is the most nutrient-dense sea vegetable, and sea vegetables are the most nutrient-dense foods on the planet, this has to be a good thing.

Often we eat sea vegetables on their own with a gorgeous dressing. Today, for example, we're going on a picnic, and I've dressed arame in some hemp oil, chilli sauce, hulled hemp seeds, and a little barleygrass. It's stunningly delicious, and as practically the only work involved is soaking the seaweed, very easy to do. I'm always looking for shortcuts that mean I can spend less time in the kitchen, and sea vegetables is one of my favourite ways to be able to serve up a huge dish of tasty and healthy food with the minimum of effort.

If your palates aren't so excited about these foods, then just introduce them gradually by adding them to your existing popular dishes: try spaghetti bolognese with added arame, stir-fry with hijiki thrown in, pasta sauce with dulse blended in, or rice with chopped wakame. And, as I said, don't be put off if you don't like the flavour of the first one you try, and don't automatically assume that if you don't like them your children aren't going to either. I have lost count of the number of children I have seen devouring nori sheets and tucking into big bowls of arame! Incidentally, the same goes for the algae as well: I've heard innumerable tales of children eating chlorella tablets by the mouthful or asking for spirulina when mum's forgotten to give it to them.

When we talk about eating holistically, this works on many different levels. I believe that, as our planet is 70% ocean, if we want to connect with it on a holistic level, we need to eat foods from the sea. The sea is associated with female energies, with nurturing, and with immeasurable strength. When I eat the vegetables of the sea, I feel that connection; I feel nurtured by my planet, and sustained by her strength. Then add to that the fact that sea vegetables are indisputably an incredible storehouse of important minerals such as calcium and iron, a brilliant source of amino acids, and fantastic at balancing the metabolism and removing toxins from the body, and you can see why sea vegetables rank very near the top of my favourite superfoods and essential foods to include in your daily diet to ensure sustained joy and vitality for the whole family.



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## Fennel and hijiki salad in pumpkin seed mayo

Time needed: 4–8 hours for soaking; 15 minutes to prepare  
Equipment needed: food processor, blender

I adore this salad. Fennel is one of my favourite vegetables; with its distinctive flavour, refreshing crispness, and unusual shape, you could never accuse fennel of being boring. The pumpkin seed mayo makes a gorgeous creamy contrast, combining a feeling of being virtuous and sinful at the same time.

### Serves four

400g (14 oz) white cabbage  
1 bulb fennel  
30g (1 oz) hijiki, soaked 1 hour  
125g (4 oz) pumpkin seeds, soaked 4–8 hours  
1 tbsp hemp oil  
juice of 1 lemon  
1 clove garlic  
125ml (4 fl. oz) water  
sea salt and black pepper to taste

Slice the cabbage and fennel using a fine slicer. Transfer to a mixing bowl with the drained hijiki. Put the pumpkin seeds, hemp oil, lemon juice, garlic and water in the blender and blend for a few minutes until you have a thick cream. Spoon it over the vegetables; you will only need about two-thirds of it – just enough to cover them, not drown them. Reserve the rest of the mayo for another use, or dehydrate it. Serve immediately.

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## Broccoli dip

Time needed: 5 minutes  
Equipment needed: blender

Another sea vegetable we love to include in our daily diet is wild wrack, which is sold in the UK under the brand Seagreens®. It comes in granules which you sprinkle on your food to add fantastic flavour and texture. Wrack is a complete food: that is, it is thought to contain every single nutrient the body needs.

### Serves four

1 head broccoli (about 500g/1 lb)  
4 tbsp olive oil  
juice of 2 lemons  
¼ red onion  
2 tbsp nutritional yeast flakes  
2 tbsp Seagreens®

Chop the head and stem of the broccoli into bits small enough for your blender. Pop them in the jug with the olive oil, lemon juice, chopped onion, yeast flakes and Seagreens®. Blend to a beautiful light-green cream. If your blender is struggling, you can add more olive oil or a splash of water. Serve with nori sheets and make roll-ups, or with crudités such as carrots and peppers.

Variation: Add up to 2 tbsp spirulina powder (to taste) for an extra green, extra nutritious, extra energising food.

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## Alxxx is an Angel

Time needed: 15 minutes  
Equipment needed: none

### Serves two

50g (1 cup) dulse  
2 avocados  
100g (1 cup) broccoli  
3 tbsp flaxseeds  
2 tbsp hemp oil  
½ tsp salt  
1 tsp purple corn extract (optional)  
juice of ½ lemon  
½ tsp chilli powder

Rinse the dulse and put it in a large bowl. Halve the avocados; remove the stones, cube the flesh, and spoon it out into a bowl. Finely chop the broccoli into bite-sized pieces. Add all the remaining ingredients to the bowl and give it a good mix with a spoon. ●



Written by Kate Magic Wood

Photos opposite page Alex Varlakov (123RF); this page Steffen (123RF)

Kate has sixteen years' experience of raw eating and is raising a family of three boys on a predominantly raw diet. She is the author of *Eat Smart, Eat Raw, Raw Living* and *Raw Magic* and has spoken at festivals and other events around the UK, on raw foods, superfoods and natural parenting. Kate is driven by a passionate desire for change in this world.

For sea vegetables, try your local health food shop or buy online at [www.clearspring.co.uk](http://www.clearspring.co.uk) or [www.rawliving.eu](http://www.rawliving.eu)

Further reading:

*Atlantic Sea Vegetables* by Clemente Fernandez Saa, Algamar

*The Real Taste of Japan: Using the Finest Ingredients* by John and Jan Belleme and Ysanne Spevack, Cross Media

*Raw Magic: Recipes for the Revolution* by Kate Magic Wood, Rawcreation contains a whole chapter on the benefits of sea vegetables, and dozens of recipes.