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IN MY KITCHEN

## A Visit to the Kitchen of Amy Chaplin, Vegetarian Chef and Cookbook Author

Chef and healthy-eating advocate Amy Chaplin, author of the new book 'At Home In the Whole Food Kitchen,' counts Natalie Portman and Liv Tyler among her clients. Here she shares her tips and a recipe for a delicious fall salad



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*By Jackie Cooperman*

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**VEGETARIAN CHEF** Amy Chaplin, 39, has earned a cult following teaching New Yorkers how to eat wisely and well, stocking their pantries and creating custom organic diets. (Her clients include actresses Natalie Portman, Liv Tyler and Anna Deavere Smith.) Now she's doing the same for home cooks everywhere with her new book, "At Home in the Whole Food Kitchen," published this week by Roost Books. "The goal is to make this kind of healthy food approachable and doable for everybody," Ms. Chaplin said. Her appealing recipes steer clear of processed ingredients but still leave room for some indulgences.



The kitchen's airy open plan makes it a pleasant space for both cooking and entertaining. Walnut cabinets by Henrybuilt provide plenty of storage. The marble countertops are not only beautiful but also make a smooth, cool surface for rolling out pasta, pie or bread dough. STEPHEN KENT JOHNSON FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

A native of rural New South Wales, Australia, where her parents made their own tofu and taught her to pluck vegetables directly from their garden, Ms. Chaplin began her career as a pastry chef in Amsterdam before moving to London and ultimately to Manhattan, where she was the executive chef of Angelica Kitchen. Now she lives in New York's East Village with her

partner, Jacqui Kravetz, a writer and fundraiser, their trio of rescue dogs and a pair of slider turtles. When she's not cooking in her clients' homes, Ms. Chaplin relaxes in her own airy, flower-filled kitchen.

**The thing most people notice first about my kitchen is:** the light. And the openness. When we redid the space, I wanted it to have a lot of storage and drawers, something simple and functional. My walnut cabinets are by Henrybuilt, a company from Seattle.

**The kitchen tool I can't live without is:** a Japanese knife I bought in Amsterdam 20 years ago. The writing is in Japanese, so I don't know what the brand is. It was all I used until recently, when I got a gift from [Japanese cutlery and tableware store] Korin in Tribeca, called the Toghiharu Hammered Texture Santoku. The knives are sharp on both sides, which makes them perfect for left-handers like me! I also couldn't live without my Vitamix blender, for making nut milk.

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AMY CHAPLIN'S RECIPE »

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*Roasted Acorn and Delicata Squash Salad With Wheat Berries and Bitter Greens*

**The pot I reach for most is:** my two-quart Le Creuset. It has a heavy lid



Ms. Chaplin's kitchen table, set with beeswax candles and fresh flowers. STEPHEN KENT JOHNSON FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

so it cooks grains beautifully [with minimal moisture loss]. The other one is my Kuhn Rikon pressure cooker. I've had it for 16 years. It looks like hell, and I've changed the rubber ring, but it's a great investment. Once you try chickpeas cooked in a pressure cooker, simply, with olive oil, you really can't eat them out of the can again.



Jars of grains, nuts and beans that are staples in Ms. Chaplin's cooking. STEPHEN KENT JOHNSON FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

**My refrigerator is always stocked with:** flax oil, almond milk and pumpkin and black sesame seeds. I'm told that sesame seeds are really nutritious and good for your kidneys; in Chinese medicine, they always recommend them. I toast them in a skillet until they pop and smell fragrant.

**The ingredients I'm most excited about right now are:** red kuri and delicata squash. I also love sturdy mustard and turnip greens.

**When I entertain, I:** set my table with Astier de Villatte tableware, and anything from John Derian Company. I think food looks best on white—dishes that are natural with a little bit of whimsy and delicacy. Beeswax candles smell good and they're not polluting. I love the glow, and if you do a big group, it's almost like a little fire. I often use Mason jars for flowers, and I collect old jam jars from England.

**At this time of year, my favorite thing to eat is:** soups. I love simple puréed vegetable soups, like creamy cauliflower or squash with ginger and cilantro.

**The most underrated ingredient is:** sprouted flour. If you make a cake with it, it rises really well and is a bit moister. Shiloh Farms in Pennsylvania has a good variety of sprouted spelt and whole wheat. My goal is to make delicious cakes that might be vegan or not, but they're 100% whole-grain flour and sprouted flour if possible.

**Something I could happily have every day of my life is:** tea. My current favorite is Rishi organic Sencha Green Tea. I've never found another with such a grassy flavor.

**My indulgences are:** nut butters and nuts. They're not necessarily bad, but you can overdo it. I could eat toasted almonds all day long. Another treat I crave is a drink called Black Label from Juice Press. It's made with dehydrated almonds, coconut water and vanilla. It is so delicious. If I'm craving chocolate, I love Theo chocolates from Seattle, particularly the toasted coconut, and the cherry and almond.

**An ingredient I could live without is:** canola oil. It's highly refined, and it's got a horrible mouth feel. I'd also like to see microwaving disappear.

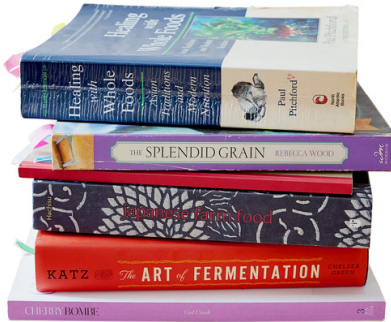
**The ingredient I use in nearly everything is:** extra-virgin olive oil. I use it in baking—cookies, tarts, cakes. If I'm making something Asian, I might use sesame oil, as long as it's cold pressed and unrefined.

**The key to eating well at home is:** to cook a big pot of something like beans or grains, and use it as a base for three days. You can steam greens and marinate them, so you're not eating anything boring.



Some of Ms. Chaplin's white and cream tableware STEPHEN KENT JOHNSON FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

For a special dessert, I make: a nondairy custard, like macadamia and vanilla bean,



Favorite cookbooks, including 'The Art of Fermentation' by Sandor Katz and 'The Splendid Grain' by Rebecca Wood. STEPHEN KENT JOHNSON FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

with strawberries in the summer, and then you don't need anything else. For the fall, I love a roasted fig and raspberry tart with toasted almond crust. I might top it with whipped cream or cinnamon cashew cream.

**My typical weekend involves:** eating with friends, in someone's home. I love Jean-Georges Vongerichten's ABC Kitchen. His food is healthy-ish and clean, but also a little special—things like Meyer lemon gnocchi that I would never do at home.

**The best advice I ever received was:** from my best friend's mother. She said, "Creativity is in the process, not the outcome." I'm still learning that.

*—Edited from an interview by Jackie Cooperman*

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