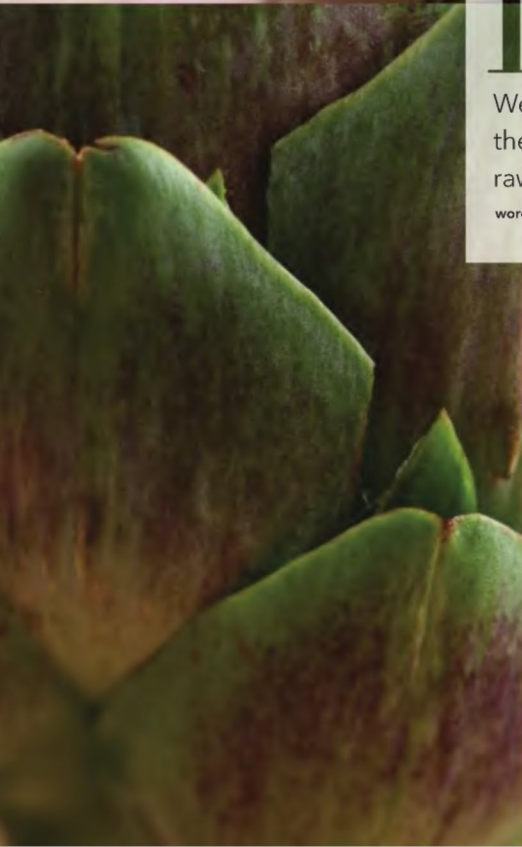
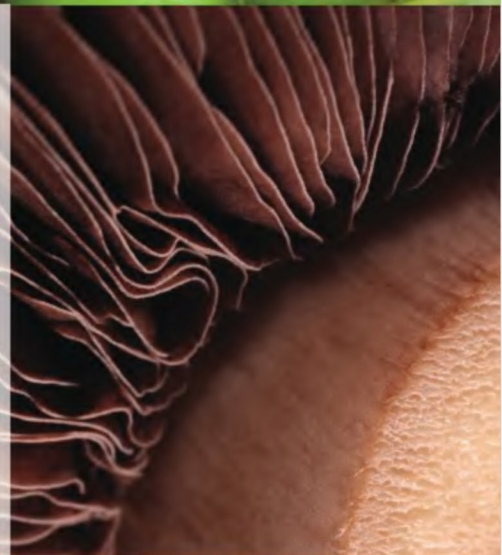




THE RAW DEAL

Western Australia is leading
the way in embracing the
raw food movement

words Georgina Walsh



W

hen John Wood went raw, his life turned around. In May 2006, John, 67, was diagnosed with cancer of the prostate, and suffered a range of other acute conditions. He was overweight and had high blood pressure, an under-active thyroid, continuous diarrhoea, perennial skin ailments, high cholesterol, regular bouts of hay fever, itchy eyes and exhaustion.

He immediately changed his lifestyle, learnt how to prepare raw food and turned his diet 100 per cent raw. More than four years later, he still eats a completely raw diet, and all his secondary ailments have fully healed. He now has the blood pressure of a 21-year-old and a cardiovascular fitness and endurance level that compares favourably with people up to 40 years his junior.

John's cancer is also doing better. His tumours are smaller and his PSA level (the indicator for prostate cancer) is the lowest it has been since two years before his cancer diagnosis – and he has had no medical treatment.

"I am not cured of cancer but my urologist tells me to keep doing whatever I'm doing," he says.

What he's doing is what a growing number of West Australians are doing: choosing a

Raw Food Reawakening, was written by Perth nutritionist and naturopath Karen Bartz.

Karen went raw in 2006. She had an undiagnosed illness – symptoms included chronic reflux, overwhelming fatigue and pain with every movement. She was also overweight. "Within two weeks of going 100 per cent raw my energy returned and my symptoms faded," she says.

She's spent much of her new-found energy studying, and now it's her passion to share her experience and knowledge with anyone who will listen. She started the cafe and workshops at People & Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) in Perth to show how raw is done.

That's uncooked, preferably organic and, even better, picked and eaten within two hours. It's mostly fresh, sometimes dehydrated at low temperatures and occasionally frozen.

Naturopath and raw nutritionist Heath Daly, who recently opened The Raw Kitchen in Fremantle with partner Emma Gilbert, explains that raw foods are enzyme-rich, oxygen-rich, living food in the ideal state to eat.

"They are packed with all the things that allowed them to grow in the first place –

"Within two weeks of going raw my energy returned and my pain and other debilitating symptoms faded"

diet of high-quality raw fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds and seaweeds, none of which have been heated beyond 45 degrees.

Dunsborough's Samudra retreat puts the raw food philosophy thus: "Live food, live body, dead food, dead body."

About 60 per cent of the completely vegan menu at Samudra's Kombi Cafe is raw. The Raw Kitchen in Fremantle is another of Australia's only cafes serving 100 per cent raw food.

WA is arguably the epicentre of the raw food movement in Australia: it has two of the biggest outlets for raw food in the country, and several educators in raw food philosophy. The only book on the subject to be published in Australia,

enzymes, water, oxygen, vitamins and minerals and life force," says Heath.

Raw doesn't just mean not cooking food. Raw food must not have been subjected to heat greater than 40 to 45 degrees celsius (temperature stipulations vary among experts) at any stage. Many foods have been pasteurised, refined and processed using heat, and, as Heath explains, heat destroys the enzymes that help in digestion and absorption.

"When food is heated or cooked above 45 degrees these enzymes are destroyed and the body must draw on its own stores of enzymes to replace those lacking in the food."

Diehard raw foodies will scratch dairy, soy, egg and meat products from their diet,

RAW IN PERTH

The Raw Kitchen The cafe also offers community classes and workshops teaching the "benefits and power of raw, whole, real, nourishing food". Shop 14 Piazza Arcade, 36 South Terrace, Fremantle 0409 323 441, therawkitchen.com.au.

Sacred Kitchen at Grove Spiritual Centre. Vegan, raw and gluten-free options. 12 Norfolk Street, Fremantle (08) 6397 2711.

Manna Whole Foods Specialising in raw ingredients and products. A few raw items are also available in the cafe, 274 South Terrace, South Fremantle (08) 9335 7995, mannawholefoods.com.au.

People & Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) Offers 100 per cent vegan food including a growing number of yummy raw dishes. Also offers workshops. 120 Beaufort Street, Perth (08) 9228 2435, paws.org.au.

Soul Tree Organic Store and Cafe Raw Vegan food is on the daily menu. Shop 6, 3-5 Railway Parade, Glen Forrest (08) 9298 9997, thesoultree.com.au.

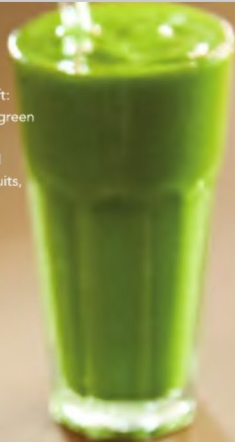
Alive Organics Specialises in organic, raw, living foods that have not been exposed to any heat above 40 degrees, plus a juice and smoothie bar and raw food workshops for beginners. Shop 7/507-515 Walter Road East, Morley (08) 9377 3880 or (08) 9371 9908, aliveorganics.com.au.

Healthy Valley Organics Organic raw food specialist wholesaler. 28 Drynan Street, Bayswater (08) 9371 9903, healthyvalleyorganics.com.au.

Roar! Superfoods. Educators and suppliers of superfoods, with a focus on raw cacao. Learn to make raw chocolate! roarsuperfoods.com.

Kombi Cafe at Samudra yoga and surf retreat. Samudra retreats offer a holistic approach to life, incorporating surfing (the ultimate connection with the physical dimension), yoga (creating harmony with your eternal wellbeing) and education about food. 226 Naturaliste Terrace, Dunsborough (08) 9779 9977, samudra.com.au.

Clockwise from top left:
Raw food pizza and a green
smoothie, Fremantle's
Raw Kitchen, raw food
nachos, raw food biscuits,
dairy-free cheesecake



The awe in raw

Any notion that raw food is all carrot and celery sticks is scuppered by what's on the menu at Fremantle's Raw Kitchen

Pizza. Made with a dehydrated base that includes sundried tomatoes and sprouted buckwheat, and topped with 'cheese' made from cashew nuts.

Pasta. Spiralised raw zucchini imitates spaghetti and is doused in a rich, raw tomato sauce and topped with macadamia 'parmesan'.

Nachos. Dehydrated corn crisps with spicy 'refried beans', tomato salsa, guacamole and dairy-free sour cream.

Dairy-free raw cheesecake. Rich, dense, frozen and chocolate.

King Hit Choc Chilli smoothie. Raw cacao, banana, agave, almond milk and a hint of chilli.

Green smoothie. Organic spinach, banana, water and mango.

Coffee. Fairtrade coffee made with homemade cashew nut milk.



but some raw movements include raw meat, eggs and honey. Unpasteurised milk and dairy products can also qualify.

Stripped raw

Karen Bartz points out that in modern times we heat, process and preserve food then try to top up our nutritional needs with artificially created supplements. Then we wonder why we're always tired and getting sicker.

Amid what the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* calls an epidemic of diet-related disease affecting 50 to 65 per cent of the western adult population, there are good arguments for raw food. It has a long history.

In her recipe book *Raw Food Reawakening*, Karen talks about Russian holy orders that subsist on sprouted grains and little else, and ancient Jewish sect the Essenes, who ate mostly raw food. And in India there's the Yogic diet that's been around for more than 1000 years.

Surprisingly, the modern raw movement started in the US. "The greater the sinner, the greater the saint," quips Heath. "Raw is going crazy in the US. And it's not just another diet fad. It's not a religion. It's not a dogmatic movement. It's a trustworthy movement. It's about going back to basics."

In the 1980s, research was done on the rise in Type 2 diabetes in Australian Indigenous populations. *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* documents how a group of diabetic Aborigines spent a month in the desert eating traditional food, after which their diabetes was gone.

The independent documentary *Simply Raw: Reversing Diabetes in 30 Days* documents the story of six Americans whose 'incurable' diabetes is reversed after a 30-day raw food diet. And in the UK, volunteers spent 12 days eating up to five kilos of raw fruit and vegetables a day, with

"This is not a diet fad... it's about going back to basics"

standard portions of cooked oily fish introduced in the second week. The experiment was based on the theory that modern diets cause health problems. Overall, cholesterol levels dropped 23 per cent, a drop usually achieved only through drugs. Blood pressure fell from an average 140/83 (almost hypertensive) to 122/76, and participants lost an average of 4.4kg.

Raw foodies, even those who only eat partly raw, agree they have more energy than they did before going raw. They don't need to eat as much. And they lose weight. Overeating occurs because the body is crying out for nutrients, Karen says. "By consuming food raw, your body will receive the full complement of nutrients and feel satisfied and full on far less."

Downsides? The body's natural detoxification can be unpleasant, as well as emotional. John Evans, owner of Alive Organics and Healthy Valley Organics, also points out that people who follow a raw diet for a long time can become more sensitive to chemicals. "Because we absorb our food so much better, it also means we absorb any chemicals that have been used, so we need to be extremely careful to stick to organic food, especially when eating green leafy vegetables," says John, who has been 100 per cent raw for four years. At 63, he runs long distances regularly and is looking forward to going into his later years with "abundant energy".

If it sounds ascetic, it need not be. Raw food experts agree it's not about labelling yourself a 100 per cent raw foodie – it's more about changing your lifestyle and listening to what your body needs. Heath Daly eats about 90 per cent raw, but he's no all-or-nothing evangelist.

"Everyone could benefit from adding a green smoothie to their daily diet, even if they do nothing else." 