

## What's Inside

Vet-approved meal plans, shopping lists, raw food checklists, and more!



Brought to you by Red Dog Blue Kat

# Creating a High-Quality Diet for Your Pet's High-Quality Life

Tips and Tricks for Every Budget!



MADE IN  
CANADA



TOP FOOD  
SAFETY



WHOLE FOOD  
INGREDIENTS



ETHICAL  
SOURCING



Bowl Credits: @luna.tuna.dish



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# Why We Wrote This E-Book

Every pet parent wants their dog or cat to live a long, healthy, and happy life. While we know that their diet is an important factor in preventing diseases and helping them thrive, figuring out how to make good food choices for our pets that fit our goals and budget can often be frustrating and confusing.

One of the biggest challenges with navigating the pet food industry in Canada is how far it lags behind the human food industry in safety and quality regulations, as well as an understanding of what makes up a healthy diet for our pets.

That's right: the safety and quality of your pet's food are optional in Canada. As it turns out, the industry is not regulated by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) or any other health authority. So unless a company has voluntarily implemented their own food safety program and is regularly inspected for quality, safety, or misleading marketing claims, consumers have no way of knowing what the safety or quality of their pet's food actually is.

Additionally, an extensive volume of recent food science research has seen Canada Food Guide and others world-wide updated to move away from processed food to fresh food—so why not do that for our pets, too?

Ultimately, the burden falls completely on pet parents to sort through all the information, opinions, and occasionally misleading marketing to find a healthy diet for their furry family members.

As an expert in pet nutrition, quality, and safety, we wanted to share our experience to support you and every pet parent on their journey to help their furry friends thrive.

## In This E-book You'll Learn:

- **How to choose quality, safe products**
- **Simple tips to feed fresh foods for a complete and balanced diet**
- **How to achieve that diet on a budget**

If you're interested in learning more, check out our extensive collection of resources at [reddogbluekat.com/learning-hub](https://reddogbluekat.com/learning-hub).





[ Goose | 2yrs | Guilty Pleasure: Swimming In Any Season ]



**"Let food be thy medicine, and let medicine be thy food." — Hippocrates**



# The Three Forces Behind a Balanced Diet

05

As a loving pet parent, you want the best for your pet—you wouldn't be reading this book if you didn't! However, every pet parent has unique constraints around their lifestyle and budget that require consideration before choosing the diet that works for you.

When choosing food or any other products, there are three key elements to consider: **quality**, **convenience**, and **cost**.

Simply put, a healthy, high-quality, balanced diet needs a variety of high-quality ingredients and time to prepare them. We get that life can be busy—sometimes, it can be a struggle to just cook for yourself after a day of work! So to get the same quality with more convenience means paying for someone else to prepare your pet's food, which means an increase in cost.

Unfortunately, you can't have the very best of quality, convenience, and cost—not with food or any other product! With that said, we hope that this book can help you learn how to balance convenience and cost without compromising quality.

To start, you must ask yourself: of these three forces, which two influence your decisions more regarding food for you or your pet?



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**"It's the age-old golden rule: you get what you pay for. You have to choose the two elements most important to you: quality, convenience, or cost—you'll never be able to satisfy all three."**—Inna Shekhtman

## So How Do We Define the "Three Forces"?



### Quality

The sum of all properties and attributes that influence the value of food, including nutritional composition, texture, colour, processing, consistency, food safety etc.



### Convenience

How much time and effort would a specific product save you?

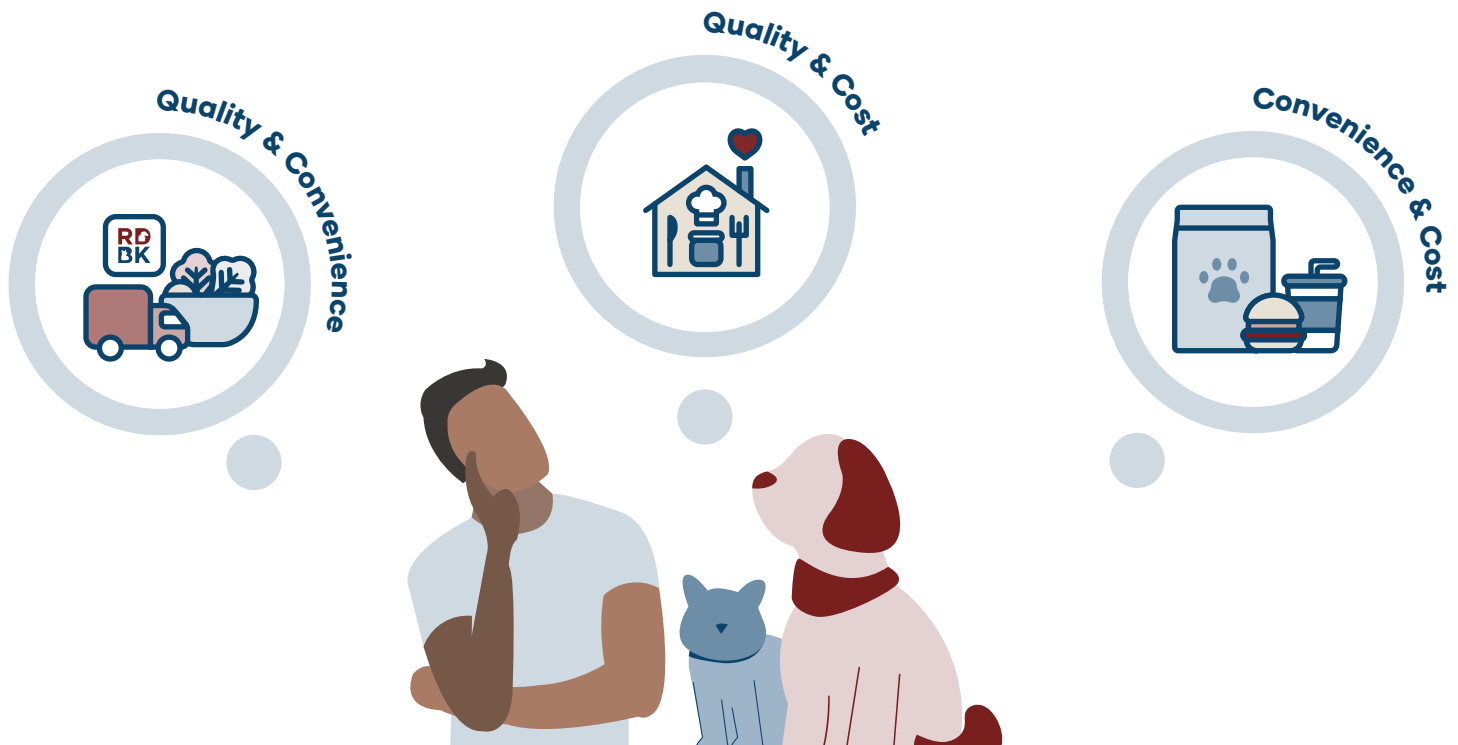


### Cost

How much you are willing to spend on a product.

# How Do You Choose What to Eat?

Your pet is part of the family—so why wouldn't you feed them with the same consideration? Think about which of these options you'd reach for first.



## Quality + Convenience



### A Meal Prep Delivery Service Or A Deli/salad Bar?

You know that quality ingredients are key to health but lack the time or skill to make it happen yourself. Since quality is paramount, you are willing to pay more to have others prepare it for you.



For pets, an example of this would be a high-quality premade raw diet or a gently cooked diet.

## Quality + Cost



### Cooking at Home?

You know that quality ingredients are key to health, and you want to invest your time in preparing meals. Preparing more of the food yourself allows for savings over the convenience of premade food but will take more of your personal time.



For pets, an example of this would be giving your pet a high-quality diet by preparing some or all of it yourself.

## Cost + Convenience



### Fast Food or Microwave Dinners?

Putting convenience for your time and budget first means you're choosing to risk feeding a low-quality product. You get what you pay for—there are no tricks to make healthy food cheap and convenient. Ask yourself: is this a conscious choice, or will learning more about food quality and safety change your decisions?



For pets, an example of this would be cheap, low-quality pre-made foods like kibble, canned foods, or low-grade raw.

When you start by selecting quality products, you can work with them to create a routine that balances your time and budget with the ability to give your pet the nutrition they need and deserve. See the next chapters for some ideas on how to do this.



01

## CHAPTER 1

# Identifying Quality

With all the marketing tactics food brands use nowadays, it can be hard to distinguish between poor-quality and high-quality pet food. But when we start to think about how we would choose quality foods for ourselves, we can apply that instinctual knowledge to our pet's diet. After all, we can usually recognize healthy food for ourselves when we see it, and we usually know when we can trust a brand to replicate its product safely and consistently. When you look at it that way, you can narrow down three questions you have to ask yourself about the food in front of you (and your pet):

1. Is it made with high-quality foods with clear health benefits, and am I getting enough nutrients from a variety of sources?
2. Is it safe? Has it been produced with an appropriate audited and accredited food safety program?
3. What kind of quality assurance does the manufacturer provide? How can you depend on the food to be consistently high quality?

# Healthy Foods From Healthy Sources

The quality of your pet's food is determined long before it gets to their dish or even at the company where it's produced. It starts with where and how the ingredients are sourced.

When you feed your family, you can count on the fact that all ingredients are "edible" or fit for human consumption. However, for pet food, it's not that easy: ingredients can be human-grade or feed-grade.

## "Edible" or Human Grade

Edible or human-grade ingredients are deemed suitable, safe, and approved by CFIA for human consumption.

**TIP:** "Made with ingredients from federal human-grade facilities" does **NOT** mean the ingredients are human-grade.

## Feed-Grade or "Pet Grade"

These are meats, vegetables, and other ingredients unsuitable for human consumption but can legally be given to animals. For meat ingredients, "pet grade" ingredients can range from healthy ingredients like green tripe to contaminated meats, by-products, and parts from animals that are dead, dying, diseased or disabled. Because some "pet grade" meat ingredients look exactly like human grade, they are also sprayed with coloured chemicals to ensure that they aren't sold to the human market. For vegetables, this could mean various states of decay or infestation.



## What to Look For

When you're evaluating sourcing, here are some things to look for:



Made with human grade ingredients and made with recognisable ingredients.



Clear country of origin information for all ingredients (not all countries have good food safety and quality regulations).



Animal welfare standards.



For foods that include tripe (which is a "pet grade" ingredient), check for additional safety testing, and no denaturing chemicals are added.



## What to Avoid

When you're evaluating sourcing, here are some things to avoid:



No ingredient standards or sourcing information.



Ingredients not suitable for human consumption.



Artificial or highly processed ingredients.



Foods that include raw tripe and don't do E Coli testing (we love tripe but it is naturally a higher risk for pathogenic bacteria)



[ Kale, image taken at RDBK Manufacturing Facility ]

## The Importance of Feeding Fresh

The Canada Food Guide clearly states that a diet is more than just a collection of nutrients; drinking a protein shake packed with vitamins won't give you as good results as eating those same nutrients from fresh, whole foods. The basic principles of a healthy diet include:



**Variety of fresh or minimally processed, whole foods**



**Avoiding ultra-processed foods and an excess of salt and sugar**



**More hydration, including moisture-rich foods**

We all know that highly-processed foods aren't a sustainable option when it comes to our own health, so why wouldn't we apply this knowledge to our pets health?

Studies on both **human and pet diets** have shown that focusing on fresh foods does more to help achieve long-term health benefits than any other diet.



A 2021 study showed that dogs who had at least 20% of raw food in their meals during puppyhood were associated with lower instances of allergy/atopy skin signs in adulthood.<sup>1</sup>



# What Would This Look Like for Your Pet?

The Canada Food Guide recommends: "Eating a variety of healthy foods each day" <sup>2</sup>

Have plenty of  
vegetables and fruits

Eat protein foods



Make water  
your drink  
of choice



Choose  
whole grain  
foods



# Variety as the Spice of Life

Since now we know why (and how) we should pick fresh, human-grade food for our pets, the factors that go into making safe raw foods, there's only one more thing to think in regards of choosing a quality diet for our pets: making sure they're getting their nutrients from a wide variety of nutritious foods. Think about it this way: which would you rather eat day after day: a) a full spectrum of colourful veggies and a range of proteins or b) cereal?

It's safe to say most of us would pick a diet of various vegetables and proteins over a bowl of cereal, which is, of course, the healthier choice. But it's not only the healthier choice because it's fresh, but because it allows for greater variety of nutrients!

Part of the convenience of dry kibble is that it comes in enormous bulk bags, but this means pet parents have to subject their pets to the monotony of a single, feed-grade food for upwards of months at a time. Not only does this mean pets aren't getting the full range of nutrients they need from a variety of sources, but feeding the exact same food can increase the risk of pets developing food sensitivities or allergies over their lifetime.

A variety of food choices for your pet makes their mealtimes more exciting and offers you a chance to bond with your dog or cat by offering delicious meals designed just for them. We'll be going over what a diet with a well-rounded selection of variety looks like under different budgets in more detail in Chapter 3: Menus with Variety.





# What About AAFCO?

One of the most common statements you'll find on pet food packaging is a variation of this sentence: "formulated to meet the AAFCO Dog/-Cat Food Nutrient profile for adult dogs/cats."

Sounds reassuring, right? AAFCO provides pet manufacturers guidelines for minimum nutrient requirements per meal and a list of allowable ingredients. These guidelines became necessary due to the emergence of the unhealthy practice in the pet industry of feeding pets the same highly processed food every day. Furthermore, AAFCO's nutrient numbers are higher because they are based on lower quality and less digestible ingredients.

Based on volumes of research into nutrition and health, we know that eating only highly processed food and a lack of diversity in a diet are both recipes for a health crisis.<sup>3</sup>

For example, AAFCO does not consider water, healthy fats, or fresh foods to be essential ingredients.

That's not how we would think about choosing a healthy diet for ourselves. Let's take a look at the differences:



## A Healthy Human Diet...

- ✓ Prioritizes fresh, minimally-processed foods
- ✓ Includes nutritious foods
- ✓ Encourages a variety of healthy foods in a day
- ✓ Requires plenty of water



## An AAFCO Diet...

- ✗ No restrictions against extreme processing
- ✗ Uses long lists of synthetic supplements to replace what was lost in processing
- ✗ Encourages a monotonous diet with no variety
- ✗ No moisture requirements



# Food Safety in the Pet Food Industry

If you're wondering how to tell if your pet's food is actually made with safe, quality ingredients, look for manufacturers that are **HACCP-verified or higher** and use human-grade ingredients: this means the facility is audited by a 3rd-party to let you know they're doing everything to meet safety standards.

HACCP is the basic standard for human food production in Canada, and we believe it should be the standard for our pet's food, too.

But it goes further: raw meats in the grocery store are produced with the understanding that they will be cooked before consumption and are tested for pathogens on a monthly basis. On the other hand, raw pet food is meant to be fed as is—this means there should be more rigorous testing and preventative steps to ensure the safety of the food before it is released to consumers. Here's a list of things to check for when considering the safety of your pet's raw food:



## What to Look For

When you're evaluating food safety, here are some things to look for:



Choose foods produced in a HACCP-verified (or better) facility that undergoes annual audits (ask for proof).



Choose companies that test every batch of food, are transparent about their testing methods, and have a clear hold-and-release program.



Choose brands that have pathogen prevention methods, like using bacteriophages that target and eliminate hazardous bacteria.



## What to Avoid

When you're evaluating food safety, here are some things to avoid:



Companies that claim they "follow" HACCP practices but are not third-party audited. They're either HACCP-verified or not!



Companies that will not share test results upon request about what foods they are testing, how frequently, and what they consider safe.



No hold-and-release program (food is sent to market without ensuring the product is safe).

# Hold Your Pet's Food to the Same Safety Standards as Your Own

Keep in mind that if a human-grade facility doesn't use human-grade ingredients (or vice versa), then the final product will not be considered human-grade; in this way, quality and safety go hand-in-hand.

It can be easy to become complacent about the safety of our pet's food. With consistent and reliable food standards in the human food industry, pet parents can make the understandable mistake of thinking their pet's food goes through the same safety checks as their own—when in reality, it couldn't be further from the truth.



## When Shopping for Human Food...

- ✓ Health Canada has strict food safety and nutritional regulations, policies, and guidance under the Food and Drugs Act
- ✓ Peace of mind knowing food claims are regulated and verified by Health Canada
- ✓ Accurate ingredient labelling



## But When Shopping for Pet Food...

- ✗ You have to verify most of the claims on pet food packaging in Canada yourself
- ✗ 6-month grace period to update ingredient labels
- ✗ Limited regulations and enforcement for misleading claims





## What's in the Box? Reading Labels

Because the pet food industry is unregulated in Canada, pet parents need to keep a close eye on the ingredients in their pet's food to make sure they match the claims on the box.



### What to Look For

When you're evaluating the ingredient list, here are some things to look for:



The main protein should be listed first.



Secondary proteins (if applicable) or organs should be listed after that.



Vegetables should be next. Look for recipes that include an abundance of colourful vegetables.



Dry supplements like kelp, probiotics should appear at the end.

#### Example of Good Label:

Main protein, secondary protein, vegetable, vegetable, probiotics.



### What to Avoid

When you're evaluating the ingredient list, here are some things to avoid:



Any protein "meal" or "byproduct" (e.g. chicken meal, chicken byproduct) as these ingredients are a composite of many parts of an animal which have been highly processed and rendered down into a powder.



A high concentration of starchy vegetables and legumes, as that starch content is, at its core, sugar.



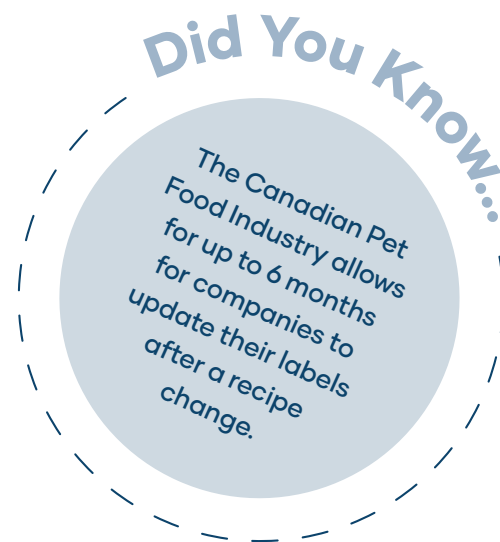
Recipes with more than 10% grain or carbohydrate content.



Added vitamins and minerals means the processing has stripped the primary ingredients of those naturally occurring nutrients or it is poorly formulated and is deficient.

# The Subtle Details of Labelling

While there are some differences in the foods that are biologically appropriate for different animal species, the science of food, the biology of how it is metabolized on a cellular level, and the basics of a healthy diet are the same whether we're talking about humans, dogs, cats, cows, or pigs. So if we want our pets to live into their golden years in health and comfort, we can start looking at the ingredients in their food with the same scrutiny as our own food. Here are some tips:



## Tip #1 Ingredient Hierarchy

The higher up an ingredient is on the list, the more of that ingredient is in the package by weight. But just because healthy food items are listed doesn't mean they're present in any meaningful quantity.

## Tip #2 Vitamin and Mineral Source

Where are the vitamins and minerals coming from? Are they coming from whole food ingredients or added as a pre-mix or synthetic additive? We recommend staying clear of vitamin and mineral isolates because they:

- Are often not fit for human consumption, such as many of the industrial chemicals and solvents used to synthesize vitamin isolates
- Do not have the necessary cofactors for their proper efficient utilization by the body
- Excess not used by the body must be removed by the liver, skin and kidneys, increasing the burden on these organs and increasing the risk of toxic load for certain vitamins

## Tip #3 Calorie Source

Calories should be coming from protein, fat, and carbohydrates in that order based on the nutritional panel. Can't find carbohydrates on label? **Here is how you can calculate.**<sup>4</sup>

## Quality Over Quantity

Studies in human nutrition have shown time and time again that a "complete and balanced" diet is not an end goal but the natural result of a healthy diet composed of a variety of high-quality, fresh foods. Because which makes more sense: a) a rotation of high-quality, nutritious foods or b) ultra-processed foods with premixed vitamins?

So while considering daily nutrient requirements can be part of what you look at for your pet, it should not be your primary or even secondary filter. Remember, some nutrient levels (zinc, iodine) in AAFCO are higher based on the assumption that they are coming from poor quality and less absorbable synthetic sources and are not a reflection of those nutrient levels in real foods, which are lower, but of better quality.



**"This industry nonsense aside, a lot of people and most vets come to the raw table with an ingrained fear of imbalance, deeply concerned they might get it wrong and their dog's butt will fall off. It costs a lot of money to make you feel that helpless, a helplessness that keeps you and your vet reaching for those grossly over-priced bags of ultra-processed, nutritionally bereft crackers."**  
–Dr. Conor Brady, Feeding Dogs

If you're interested in learning more about how we formulate our meals, see our article **Are Red Dog Blue Kat Meals Complete & Balanced**





[ Cabana | 13yrs | Guilty Pleasure: RDBK Chicken Necks ]



Image Credit: Steve Ray



**Price Per  
Package**



## Good Food Is Not Cheap, Cheap Food Is Not Good...

**Ethical  
Human-Grade  
Food**  
27%

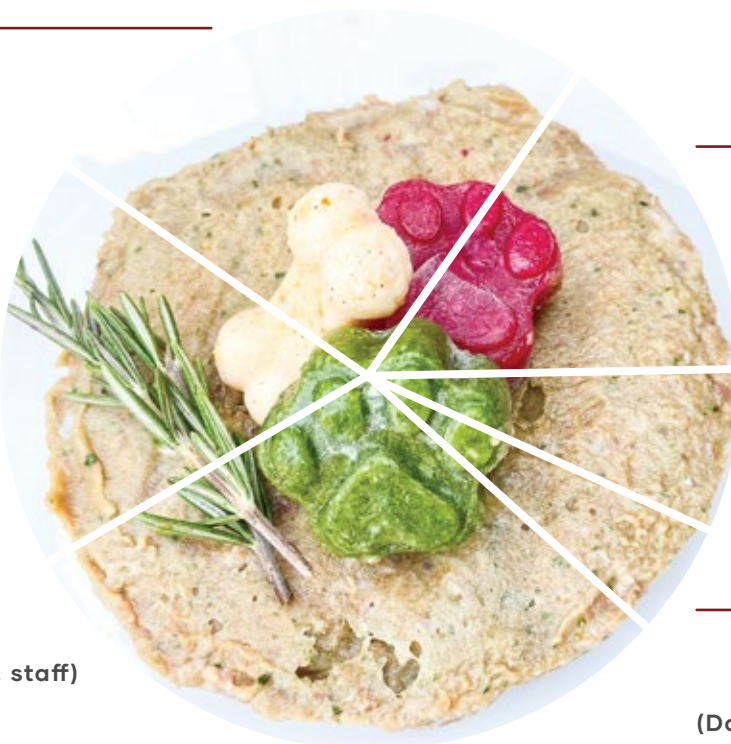
**Frozen Storage  
and Shipping**  
18%

**Pet Store  
Overheads** (Rent, staff)  
30%

**Expert Team &  
Labour**  
14%

**HACCP Verified  
Facility**  
7%

**Other**  
(Donations, education, admin)  
4%



Here is an example of how the price tag of quality food is calculated, including quality raw food. You know that at RDBK we prioritize top food safety, ethical sourcing and human grade ingredients—these high quality standards require an investment to maintain.





## Key Learnings on Quality:

1. Choose fresh, minimally or unprocessed whole foods whenever possible.
2. Choose human-grade ingredients.
3. Choose foods produced in a HACCP-verified facility.
4. Look for recipes with a high protein content, low carbohydrate content, and a variety of colourful vegetables.
5. AAFCO is a basic guideline, but not the be-all-end-all of healthy pet nutrition.







02

## CHAPTER 2

# A Sustainable Budget for Health

**Just like you can't go to the gym for one day and expect to get fit, a healthy diet is a long-term commitment.**

Therefore it's important to set reasonable and achievable goals, so you (and your bank account) don't get discouraged and quit before you have the chance to see positive results.

In this chapter, we'll discuss the value of raw compared to dry kibble diets and some cost-saving tips you can apply throughout your raw journey.

Nutritional values and proportions for the recipes and tips in this section were verified using the Animal Diet Formulator by Royal Animal Health University <sup>5</sup>

# What Is the Cost of Kibble?

When people think about the costs of maintaining their pet's health, they mostly think about the monetary price of food. In reality, the money you exchange for a bag of food is only one facet of its true cost.

Let us explain: by making a healthy diet just about ensuring your pet is getting enough calories and the basic nutrients, you run the risk of getting some unplanned veterinary bills—and take it from us, feeding raw is way less expensive (and stressful) than urgent vet visits.

A balanced and biologically appropriate raw diet can be your pet's first line of defence—and as the saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

While kibble is one of the most common diets in the pet industry, it comes in a full spectrum of price and quality. Saying you feed “kibble” is similar to saying you “eat beef” for dinner—there's a lot of room for interpretation between ground beef and Kobe beef.

So let's say you're feeding the best kibble on the market—the Kobe beef of kibble, so to speak. A higher-quality kibble might have more nutrients than cheaper kibble, but it will be:

- Highly processed with extreme temperatures
- Devoid of any moisture
- Full of synthetic ingredients
- Lacking variety
- Lacking live enzymes and healthy bacteria

If you feed Kobe beef-grade kibble, then switching to a raw diet isn't much more expensive than your current diet plan. Plus, a raw diet comes with the benefits of variety and—hopefully—the promise of a high-quality product if you've selected your company and manufacturer carefully.

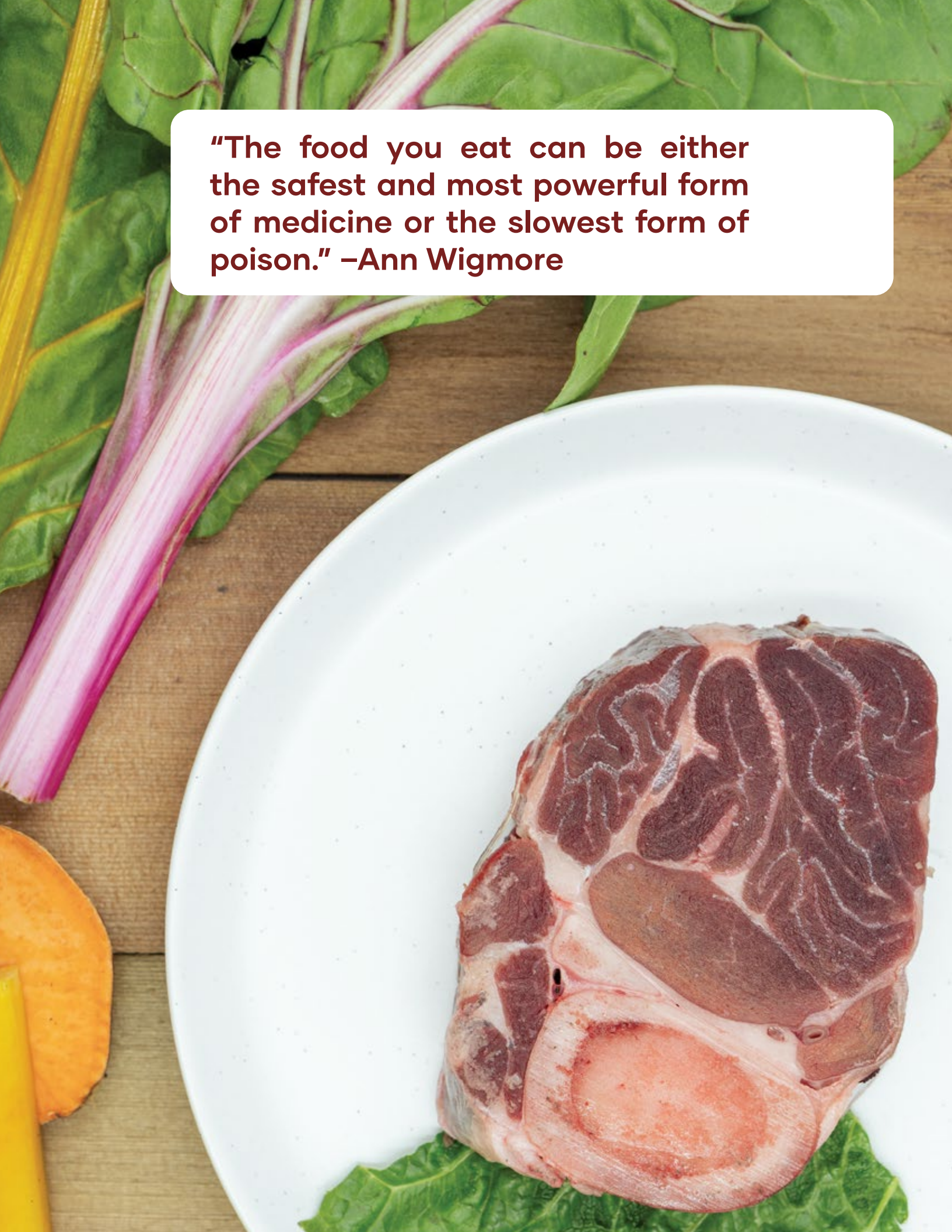
**“Cheap food is an illusion. There is no such thing as cheap food. The real cost of the food is paid somewhere. And if it isn't paid at the cash register [...], it's charged to your health.”**

**—Michael Polland, Fresh Documentary**





**"The food you eat can be either the safest and most powerful form of medicine or the slowest form of poison." –Ann Wigmore**





# Here's a Quick Cost Analysis Where We Compare Feeding Kibble and Raw by Pet Size



**Molly**

**Weight:** 20 lb

**Activity Level:** Moderately Active

**Calories Per Day:** 340 k/cal

**Feeding:** Everyday Raw Variety

——● 1/2 lb per day

**Estimated Monthly Cost:**

——● Raw: \$105 /m

——● Kibble: \$60 /m

**When Compared to Kibble,  
Choosing to Feed Raw Will Cost:**



**Less than \$2 a day**  
1 granola bar /day



**Goose**

**Weight:** 50 lb

**Activity Level:** Active

**Calories Per Day:** 675 k/cal

**Feeding:** Everyday Raw Variety

——● 1 - 1.25 lb per day

**Estimated Monthly Cost:**

——● Raw: \$200 /m

——● Kibble: \$100 /m

**When Compared to Kibble,  
Choosing to Feed Raw Will Cost:**



**Less than \$3.50 a day**  
1 croissant /day



**Miso**

**Weight:** 80 lb

**Activity Level:** Moderately Active

**Calories Per Day:** 960 k/cal

**Feeding:** Everyday Raw Variety

——● 1.5 lb per day

**Estimated Monthly Cost:**

——● Raw: \$300 /m

——● Kibble: \$180 /m

**When Compared to Kibble,  
Choosing to Feed Raw Will Cost:**



**Less than \$4 a day**  
1 coffee /day

With that said, we know a full raw diet isn't on the cards for every household. As inflation tightens purse strings around the world, the decision to opt for the highest quality diet for your pet may (understandably) depend on the rest of your daily expenses.

So if budgeting for a raw diet causes you more grief than relief, we've got some tricks up our sleeve to help you boost your pet's bowl **while staying within your budget.**



# Saving Tips for Those Who Prioritize Convenience & Quality

Here are some meal tips for prioritizing quality and convenience when feeding your dog. You can combine these tips for cumulative savings!



## 1 Use EVERYDAY RAW™ Meal Line

Save Up To 20%

Feeding Foundations? If your dog has no allergies or sensitivities, then consider trying Everyday Raw.

## 2 Add a Tripe Meal Day

Save Up To 14%

Replace up to 2 meals a week with tripe. Add a bit of veggies to the tripe for extra wow!

## 3 Buy in Bulk (2lb Cases or Variety Bulk Pack)

Save Up To 10%

Buying 4 x ¼ lb or 1 lb Everyday Raw – Buy a 12 lb Variety Bulk Pack.

## 4 Add Whole Grains (Oats, Quinoa, Barley)

Save Up To 8%

Replace up to 10% of your raw diet with quality whole grains (cooked) like oatmeal. If you feed 1 lb per day, then replace ½ lb of raw with ½ lb of oatmeal, etc. one day per week.

Up to **52%**  
In Savings





# Saving Tips for Those Who Prioritize Cost & Quality

If you have a bit of extra time and vegetables at home, you can use healthy whole foods to create your own vegetable blends to add to your dog's bowl—and your savings!



**Save Up To 15-20%**  
(Per Meal)

## Recipe 1: Nutrient Dense Veggies

### Substitute Everyday Raw Meals up to 15% with Veggies

Veggie Medley (makes 1 lb):

- 114 g Cabbage (raw)
- 75 g Zucchini (raw)
- 66 g Kale (raw)
- 66 g Carrots (raw)
- 66 g Green snap beans
- 66 g Red (or green) pepper (raw)

Don't forget to rotate raw meals. Optimize savings with Everyday Raw Bulk packs!



**Save Up To 20-30%**  
(Per Day)

## Recipe 2: Homemade Blend

### Replace 25-40% of your Everyday Raw dog meals with this Homemade Blend

Here is the recipe (makes 1 lb):

- 1 Large Free-Range Egg
- 125 g Organic Greek Plain Yogurt
- 125 g Cooked Whole Grain Oatmeal or Barley
- 155 g Veggie Medley (see Recipe 1)

Don't forget to rotate raw meals. Optimize savings with Everyday Raw Bulk packs!



**Using This Blend Can Cost the Same or Less Than Mixing Raw With Kibble**



**Save Up To 15-20%**  
(Per Day)

## Recipe 3: DIY Base, Tripe, and Veggies

### Replace Meals With the Following Blend

Here is the recipe (makes 1 lb):

- 1/3 lb RDBK Base (Chicken or Turkey)
- 1/3 lb RDBK Beef Tripe
- 1/3 lb Veggie Medley (see Recipe 1)

Don't forget to rotate raw meals. Optimize savings with Everyday Raw Bulk packs!





**"Healthy eating is a way of life, so it's important to establish routines that are simple, realistically, and ultimately livable." – Horace**



# Kitty Corner: A Highlight on Our Feline Friends

Unlike dogs, that are better adapted to digest carbohydrates, cats are obligate carnivores, meaning they evolved eating a prey-based diet, and more importantly, eating that food raw. While dogs benefit from higher vegetable content, cats lack the necessary enzymes to absorb all their essential nutrients from plants. They still need a little bit of plant material in their diet for some nutritional aspects, like fibre, but raw meat, organ and bone, is by far the most essential ingredient in their diet.

This means that food for cats should have a higher percentage of protein, and surprisingly, those proteins don't cost much more to serve fresh compared to high-quality canned or kibble diets!

Additionally, because cats evolved in desert habitats where they would get the majority of their moisture intake from their prey, cats have a naturally low thirst drive and don't instinctively seek out their water bowl as often as they should. This would be useful if you lived in a desert where you don't always have access to fresh water, but not so much if you're not getting any moisture from your diet to start with.

This means that cats on dry diets are in a state of constant dehydration, which puts enormous strain on their internal functions; that strain is often the precipitating cause of **kidney** and **urinary tract issues** that plague modern housecats.

Have you heard about the **epidemic of kidney disease in cats**?  
[Click here to learn more!](#)

## What to Look For

When you're evaluating the ingredient list, here are some things to look for:



High protein content with some amount of fibre.



Moisture-rich foods.



Fresh, minimally processed proteins (of animal origin).



**Cabana**

**Weight:** 11 lb  
**Activity Level:** Inactive  
**Calories Per Day:** 155 k/cal

**Feeding:** Foundations Raw  
—● 1/4 lb per day

**Raw Monthly Cost:**  
—● Raw: \$90 /m  
—● Kibble: \$80 /m  
—● Canned: \$90 /m

**When Compared to Kibble,  
Choosing to Feed Raw Will Cost:**



**Less than \$1 a day**  
1 banana /day





## Key Learnings on Cost

1. Trying to save money on low-quality food might cost you more in the long run.
2. You can rotate through a variety of cost-saving measures without sacrificing quality.
3. It's okay to get creative—using food from your produce drawer or adding whole food meal toppers and supplements can help keep costs low while still providing your pet with the nutrients they need.





03

## CHAPTER 3

# Menus With Variety

It's one thing to understand the value of a variety of fresh foods in a healthy diet and another thing to be able to combine your best intentions with a sustainable budget that suits your lifestyle.

Fortunately, we're here to help make your pet's journey to a long, happy, and healthy life that much easier. In this section, you'll find a meal plan to suit every budget, including:

- Menus for pet parents who want all the convenience of ready-made, all-in-one meals
- Menus for pet parents who are interested in adding their own veggies and controlling their pet's diet
- And menus for pet parents who fall somewhere in between!

# Menus for Every Type of Feeder

We get it—some days you have plenty of free time to experiment with new recipes and some days you're too busy to do anything but slap a meal in your pet's bowl. That's how life goes!

Here's a 30-day meal plan for Goose, who eats 1 lb of Everyday Raw (ER). Using this as a rough model, you can combine the best of your busiest days and when you have a bit more time to boost your pet's bowl.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
<b>Breakfast:</b> 1/2 lb ER Farmhouse  <b>Dinner:</b> 1/2 lb ER Farmhouse	<b>Breakfast:</b> 1/2 lb ER Reef n' Beef  <b>Dinner:</b> 1/2 lb ER Reef n' Beef	<b>Breakfast:</b> 1/2 lb ER Classic Harvest  <b>Dinner:</b> 1/2 lb ER Classic Harvest	<b>Breakfast:</b> 1/2 lb ER Wild Outback  <b>Dinner:</b> 1/2 lb ER Wild Outback	<b>Breakfast:</b> 1/2 lb ER Farmhouse  <b>Dinner:</b> 1/2 lb ER Farmhouse	<b>Breakfast:</b> 1/2 lb ER Reef n' Beef  <b>Dinner:</b> 1/2 lb ER Reef n' Beef	<b>Breakfast:</b> 1/2 lb ER Classic Harvest  <b>Dinner:</b> 1/2 lb ER Classic Harvest
<b>Breakfast:</b> 1/4 lb ER Farmhouse 100g Sardines  <b>Dinner:</b> 1/2 lb ER Farmhouse	<b>Breakfast:</b> 1/4 lb ER Farmhouse 100g Yogurt  <b>Dinner:</b> 1/2 lb ER Reef n' Beef	<b>Breakfast:</b> 1/4 lb ER Reef n' Beef 1-2 Egg(s)  <b>Dinner:</b> 1/2 lb ER Classic Harvest	<b>Breakfast:</b> 1/4 lb ER Reef n' Beef 1-2 Chicken Necks  <b>Dinner:</b> 1/2 lb ER Classic Harvest	<b>Breakfast:</b> 1/2 lb ER Wild Outback  <b>Dinner:</b> 1/2 lb ER Wild Outback	<b>Breakfast:</b> 1/2 lb Tripe Base  <b>Dinner:</b> 1/2 lb ER Farmhouse	<b>Breakfast:</b> 1/2 lb Tripe Base  <b>Dinner:</b> 1/2 lb ER Farmhouse
<b>Breakfast:</b> 1/2 lb ER Farmhouse  <b>Dinner:</b> 1/2 lb ER Farmhouse +GL Mussels	<b>Breakfast:</b> 1/2 lb ER Reef n' Beef  <b>Dinner:</b> 1/2 lb ER Reef n' Beef +50g Broth	<b>Breakfast:</b> 1/2 lb ER Classic Harvest  <b>Dinner:</b> 1/2 lb ER Classic Harvest +Blueberries	<b>Breakfast:</b> 1/2 lb ER Wild Outback  <b>Dinner:</b> 1/2 lb ER Wild Outback +Steamed Broccoli	<b>Breakfast:</b> 1/2 lb ER Farmhouse  <b>Dinner:</b> 1/2 lb ER Farmhouse	<b>Breakfast:</b> 1/2 lb ER Reef n' Beef  <b>Dinner:</b> 1/2 lb ER Reef n' Beef	<b>Breakfast:</b> 1/2 lb ER Classic Harvest  <b>Dinner:</b> 1/2 lb ER Classic Harvest
<b>Breakfast:</b> 1/2 lb Home-style blend*  <b>Dinner:</b> 1/2 lb ER Farmhouse	<b>Breakfast:</b> 1/2 lb ER Farmhouse  <b>Dinner:</b> 1/2 lb ER Reef n' Beef	<b>Breakfast:</b> 1/2 lb Home-style blend*  <b>Dinner:</b> 1/2 lb ER Reef n' Beef	<b>Breakfast:</b> 1/2 lb ER Classic Harvest  <b>Dinner:</b> 1/2 lb ER Classic Harvest	<b>Breakfast:</b> 1/2 lb ER Farmhouse +1/4 lb Veggie Blend*  <b>Dinner:</b> 1/2 lb ER Farmhouse	<b>Breakfast:</b> 1/2 lb Tripe Base  <b>Dinner:</b> 1/4 lb ER Wild Outback 100g Pumpkin	<b>Breakfast:</b> 1/2 lb DIY Blend  <b>*Dinner:</b> 1/4 lb ER Wild Outback 100g Quinoa

\*See recipes on page 26 & 27

To get customized feeding portions visit our **Free Feeding Guide**.





# For Your Convenience: Your Pet's Grocery List

Psst—you can print me out!

Here's a quick checklist for some whole foods you can pick up on your next trip to the grocery store!



## Pet Store Shopping List

- ☐ RDBK Everyday Raw Meals
- ☐ RDBK Base Meals
- ☐ RDBK Chicken Necks
- ☐ RDBK Raw Bones
- ☐ Pet-Friendly Bone Broth
- ☐

## Grains

- ☐ Quinoa
- ☐ Whole-Grain Oatmeal or Barley

## Dairy Products

- ☐ Organic Plain Greek Yogurt
- ☐ Kefir

## Fruits & Vegetables

- ☐ Cabbage
- ☐ Zucchini
- ☐ Kale
- ☐ Carrots
- ☐ Green Beans
- ☐ Bell Pepper
- ☐ Broccoli
- ☐ Blueberries
- ☐ Pureed Pumpkin (Pure Pumpkin)

## Protein

- ☐ Free Range Chicken Eggs
- ☐ Sardines (Fresh or Canned in Water)
- ☐ Oysters (Fresh or Canned in Water)




If you want to find a RDBK Retailer or want customized feeding portions see our **Store Finder** or **Free Feeding Guide**.





# Supplements for Health

If you're looking to target specific health concerns, then use the information below to add more goodness to your pet's bowl!

 Gut Health	 Joint/Dental	 Overall
Bone Broth	Eggshell Powder	Raw Eggs and/or Quail Eggs
RDBK Green Tripe	RDBK Raw Meaty Bone	Fruit Medley (e.g. blueberries, raspberries, cranberries, or strawberries)
Pureed Pumpkin	Green-Lipped Mussels	Dark Leafy Greens (e.g. lightly cooked spinach, kale, collard greens, and broccoli)
Organic Plain Kefir	Omega 3 Fatty Acids/Fish Oil	Fermented Veggies (e.g. small amounts of sauerkraut & kimchi)

If you're interested in learning about supplements, check out our article **4 Essential Supplements for a Raw Food Diet.**



# Frozen Treats & Bowl Toppers



## Pumpkin Pie Frozen Paws

### Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup pumpkin puree (\*\*make sure it's not pumpkin pie filling!\*\*)
- 1 cup of plain organic goats milk (or kefir)
- 1 tbsp raw pumpkin seeds
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- Coconut whip for topping (optional)

### Health Benefits:

- Pumpkin is a great prebiotic fibre
- Goat milk is a naturally-occurring probiotic for the gut
- Cinnamon: This spice is abundant in anti-inflammatory properties



## Tummy Taming Paws

### Ingredients:

- 1 teaspoon fresh ginger, grated
- 2/3 cup organic honey
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup organic pumpkin

### Health Benefits:

- A fantastic digestive aid for dogs with upset tummies
- Helps with vomiting, constipation and diarrhea symptoms
- Great as a treat to support healthy gut function and digestion



Recipe & Image Credits: @wildk9kitchen





Image Credits @luna.tuna.dish



## Cran-Apple Sauce Frozen Paws

### Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup of cranberries
- 1/2 cup of chopped red apple
- 1/2 cup water
- Sprig of fresh rosemary

### Health Benefits:

- Cranberries can improve your dog's urinary health & promote a healthy gut!
- Red Apples are low in protein and fat but high fibre
- Rosemary can act as a powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory



# What About Kibble Diets?

If your dog or cat is already on a kibble diet and you're not quite ready to make the leap to a raw diet, then adding **a tablespoon of fresh food a day** to their bowl can do wonders for their health while still managing your budget.

There are two methods to mixing raw and kibble: in separate meals or all at once, and they each have their own advantages and disadvantages.



## Method 1: Separate Meals

This method involves feeding a kibble meal in the morning and a raw meal in the evenings (or vice versa). This works particularly well for pets with sensitive stomachs or GI issues, as it allows the digestive tract to tackle one type of food at a time.

If GI issues are a concern for your pet, we also recommend soaking the kibble in warm water or bone broth—everything digests easier with a little bit of liquid, and it also helps to keep your pet hydrated!



## Method 2: Mixing in a Single Meal

If your pet has no GI issues, then you can mix raw and kibble in a single meal; you may use a 50/50 mixture, but remember to keep your pet's caloric needs in mind and adjust their portions accordingly.

As always, we don't recommend feeding cats kibble as it can contribute to a lifetime of dehydration. If you want to split your cat's meals with raw food, we recommend using wet canned food over kibble.



## Key Learnings on Cost

1. A quality raw diet doesn't cost much more than a quality kibble diet but can save you money and time in vet visits.
2. There are ways to budget for a healthy raw diet without sacrificing quality.
3. You can start incorporating raw, wholefood items into kibble meals until you're ready to move away from an ultra-processed diet.
4. Shopping from your own fridge is an easy, budget-friendly way to boost your pet's bowl.



## To Wrap It All Up...



My vision for Red Dog Blue Kat has always been to help fellow pet parents work towards feeding their pets with the same considerations and strategies we feed ourselves and our families. This means finding a balance between convenience and cost without sacrificing safety and quality.

Our inspiration for this e-book was to share some of the strategies we learned over the years to further that vision. I hope you were able to find some helpful ideas and inspirations for your furry family members.

I wanted to leave you with a few last thoughts from my own journey over the last 20 years.

- Every pet is unique, and there is no one size fits all solution. Like people, pets need variety, so stay flexible and try different foods. A healthy diet is ever-changing, so don't worry about switching it up and not getting it "right" every meal.
- Health and nutrition are complex. Science and research are just starting to understand the complex interactions between diet, gut health and overall health. For food to be truly "complete and balanced" implies that we know nearly 100% of the science, which is far from the truth. Without that certainty, all we can do is focus on variety and staying as close to a natural diet as possible.
- You are the best person to advocate for your pet's health! Vets and other industry experts are great resources to provide advice and information to help you make the best choices for your pets. However, you see your pet daily—only you have the full picture. To make good decisions, you need good information, which is part of why we created this e-book. When you know better, you can do better!

Whether you're new to fresh-food diets or have been feeding raw for years, we're thrilled to be part of your pet's journey toward a longer, healthier life.

So from all of us at Red Dog Blue Kat to you and your furry family: happy feeding!

—Inna Shekhtman  
CEO | Top Dog | Red Dog Blue Kat





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# Disclaimer

The information provided in this guide is for reference and informational purposes only and is not meant to replace any veterinary or nutritional advice provided to you by professionals for your individual pet, and it may not be suitable for every pet

## Further Learnings and References

1. RDBK Learning Hub
2. RDBK Store-Finder
3. Free Feeding Guide
4. Portion Calculator
5. 4 Essential Supplements for a Raw Food Diet
6. Are RDBK Meals Complete & Balanced?
7. Help Stop The Epidemic of Kidney Disease (Part 1)

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