

## A Visit to My Kitchen: Kami McBride of The Herbal Kitchen

Kami McBride is in my kitchen today talking about clean water, mushroom feasts, and book clubs. Kami is the author of *The Herbal Kitchen*, a book that helps bridge the gap between home remedies and our kitchens.

### Why is living organic important to you?

The damage done by chemical fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and [genetically engineered seeds](#) is reflective of the loss of integrity in our relationship with the plants. We have disrespected ourselves and the plants. We poison the plants and denature them to the point where not only have we shattered our covenant with the plant world, but we also have broken our promise of the right to health for future generations. We have polluted the air, soil, and water, and all life that is sustained by these elements. The chemical methods of food production are degenerative in nature, wreaking havoc on our health and vitality. The rampant chemical waste poisons our bodies, our children's bodies, and the environment of those not yet conceived.

I get depressed if I dwell on the problem for too long, so I try to stay focused on solutions, simple solutions that are attainable within our home and daily lives. The commitment to an organic lifestyle is a choice that has broad-reaching implications in every aspect of our lives. It is more than creating delicious and nutritious food; it's my pathway toward awareness of how to live in integrity on this earth. It's a lifestyle practice dedicated to healing ourselves and future generations.

### What was your favorite food growing up?

My grandparents kept an annual tradition throughout their lives of harvesting wild mushrooms after the first spring and fall rains. They grew up doing this with their parents and grandparents.

I can still smell the mounds of garlic, onions, and mushrooms cooking in the enormous cast-iron skillet on their stove. I remember them talking in amazement about how many helpings of mushrooms I could eat.

I loved our family mushroom feasts. This celebration was a high point in our culinary culture, and everything about it is vivid in my mind as if it was yesterday. I can hear the sound of the knives chopping on the wooden chopping board. I see the smiles on my grandparents' faces, and hear the conversation and laughter of family and friends who came out of the woodwork for our holy day of mushroom gluttony. I was so awake and present for this vivacious celebration that centered on the pleasure and excitement of this single wild food. I LOVED those mushrooms!

When I was about 15 years old, this tradition stopped. The development and overgrazing laid waste to the mushroom patches, and there just weren't any more mushrooms.

### What's your go-to comfort food now?

Most definitely chocolate.

### What's the one thing in your kitchen you just couldn't live without?

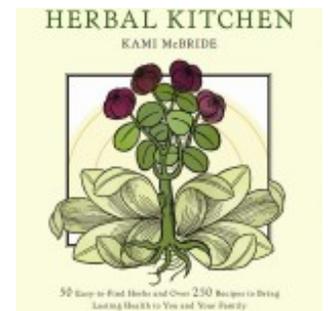
My Osterizer blender. It is ancient, and I make everything in it. Pesto, salad dressing, salsa, marinades, smoothies,



herbal oils, and green drinks. I also make all of my own body lotion in the blender! Now, that is how you really save money—and get the chemicals out of your life—by making your own lotion!

**What magazine, website, book, album, or product are you most obsessed with right now?**

I am currently rereading *Kitchen Literacy* by Ann Vileisis. I am enjoying reading it even more the second time around. The detail of her research around the history of our food distribution in this country is amazing. You learn that our current food illiteracy did not happen overnight. There was a very consistent and calculated campaign that over many years just chipped away at everything we knew to be right about what we should eat.



I am also in a book group with several moms, and we are reading *Simplicity Parenting* by Kim John Payne. It has been great to brainstorm with other mothers about how to really simplify our food, play, sports, everything.

**What's the most important news story today that you think we all need to pay more attention to?**

I am a mother. I am a nurturer, the one who gathers and prepares the food and water to feed my family for all of us to be healthy and strong. Why is it so difficult to supply my family with clean water? When I was a child, we used to drink water straight from the stream. Now we need three different filtering systems to be able to use the water. The water is full of chemicals that make us sick. We have to clean up our watersheds. We have to let go of our love affair with quick-fix chemicals and err on the side of caution, instead of introducing them into the environment at the drop of a hat. We treat them as if they are innocent until proven guilty, and finding them guilty takes 10 years or more.

**Where do you get your news?**

Amy Goodman with Democracy Now, The Organic Center, Environmental Working Group. I support my local media: our town bookstore, our local radio station, and locally owned newspaper.

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