

A sunburst graphic with numerous thin, light gray lines radiating from a central point behind the text.

Healthy Moms Podcast

BY **Wellness Mama**[®]
simple answers for healthier families

Episode 75: Rock the Instant Pot and Ferment
Anything with Wardeh Harmon

Child: Welcome to my mommy's podcast.

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Welcome to the Healthy Moms podcast. I'm Katie from wellnessmama.com and I'm here today with Wardeh from the traditionalcookingschool.com. That's traditionalcookingschool.com, no "the." And Wardeh lives in the farm country of Indiana. She moved from Oregon where they've raised animals and had a farm. She's the author of the "Complete Idiot's Guide to Fermenting Foods" and other traditional cooking e-books. She also has some of the best information on the internet about traditional cooking, fermenting sourdough. So if you are just getting into all of those, she is definitely your go-to source. And she has classes, amazing classes on all of these topics and she's here today to talk about them. So welcome Wardeh, thanks for being here.

Wardeh: Thanks so much Katie. I'm just tickled to be here, glad to visit with you and all your readers and listeners.

Katie: I'm so excited. So, I would definitely wanted to kind of deep dive into fermentation and pressure cooking because those are really big topics I feel like a lot of people are looking getting into right now, but first I'd love to hear your story about how you came to get involved with traditional cooking in the first place.

Wardeh: Sure. I think, like with so many of us, we have things that come up in our families and for us it was our children and food allergies. So we have three kids and by the time our third, our son, was born, probably my diet and health had gotten worse and anyway just all these symptoms arose. So he is sensitive to foods, he had eczema from head to toe. And so that just let us on a search to figure out what was wrong and how to fix it. And, you know, the obvious things that we looked at were the environment, like the cleansers and laundry detergent and pesticides on the lawn and stuff like that. But we eventually got to food and realized that he had some food sensitivity/allergies and we worked around those for quite a while. But then I stumbled on the idea of traditional cooking and nourishing food preparation methods where it's not...I mean it can be quick and fast, but it's not like the way we prepare quick foods now. You do things like ferment and culture and soak and sprout and hopefully, no one will be scared by those things.

They don't need to be scary, they really don't take extra time. But you just, you just, if you're cooking from scratch anyway you take care with your preparation. And what we found in our family was that especially food sensitivity and allergies healed when we started looking at the way we prepared our food and also getting

quality foods. You know, instead of conventional produce, organic. Instead of conventional milk, raw milk, things like that. So we talk about our son, he's like the, he's the canary in our mind. He's the one that told us there was a problem because he had problems. And so because of our love for him and our desire to do things the way that we feel God created the world to be, just led us down this wonderful path to traditional cooking. And we love it. And it's done a lot for our family, our family's health, plus just put us on a path to gardening and raising animals and learning more about God through creation.

Katie: Yeah, that's awesome and I think that there seems to be a movement of people who are wanting to get more back to nature and to grow their own food and to raise their own food. And you guys have definitely kind of pioneered that. And I love too, you have all these amazing resources on your site including recipes and I have never tried a recipe I do not love from your site.

Wardeh: Oh, thank you.

Katie: So I'd love to talk about...Speaking of recipes, what are some of the staples in your home that you just kind of have on autopilot with preparing traditional foods?

Wardeh: Okay, that's a great question. So some of them are seasonal but I'd say one that is a year round is culture dairy. So I've always got some yogurt or kefir. And/or. I mean, we often have both but our family loves fermented dairy. Fermented dairy is amazing. It's very digestible, probiotics, when you culture dairy you reduce the lactose. And me, getting older, don't need so much sugar, so being able to have yogurt or kefir where the lactose is reduced but there's amazing probiotics and beneficial acids and the protein. Oh which so yogurt and kefir are staples for us.

In the season of year where we're doing breads, we don't have breads year round. You know, summer I don't particularly like to bake breads unless I'm doing it on the camp stove. But we have a no-knead Einkorn sourdough bread. And einkorn is an ancient wheat which we do very well with. Modern wheat we get, for instance for me, like seasonal allergies will present if I have modern wheat. But if we stick to ancient varieties of wheat like einkorn or spelt, so our bread is this no-knead einkorn or make English muffins out of it, those are family favorites.

The other thing is sauerkraut. Always have sauerkraut. I don't always make it the same way. The batch I put together the other day was a blend of like cabbage and carrots and onions and garlic, but sometimes just straight cabbage. But there is nothing like homemade sauerkraut. So yeah, I probably could go on but we'll start with that.

Katie: That's awesome. The bread sounds amazing and I'd love for you to touch on that because I think a lot of people, if they've never done it, hear about making yogurt and it seem like this crazy complicated process or even an industrial process. Because a lot of people, that's our only the experience with yogurt at first is buying it in a store. So can you speak a little to how easy it actually is to make these foods? I know you said it doesn't take much more than making just processed food, but how easy actually can it be?

Wardeh: Oh yeah, yogurt is super, super easy. I mean, kefir is even easier because you start with a kefir grain that you plop into your milk and then leave it at room temperature for two days and it just cultures it. And then you take out your grain and move your kefir to the fridge. I mean that, there couldn't be easier than that. The yogurt I have worked on to get it easier and easier and easier because my confession is if it's not easy I'm not going to keep it up. So I've got it to the easiest it can be now. We have a...We're big fans of raw milk, so even now in Indiana we're purchasing raw milk. And I love that raw milk has all the naturally present organisms that, you know, when it was well, how do I say that? So it's not pasteurized. It's not heated. So everything that it comes with, the enzymes and the naturally beneficial organisms that are present in the raw milk, I just hate to pasteurize that.

So a lot of yogurt recipes, in fact, most of them, will have you heating your milk to a certain temperature and

then cooling it down and there is a real reason that you need to do this to make yogurt that sets up and is thick. But I found a workaround where I add gelatin to the raw milk. I just heat a small amount of the raw milk to dissolve the gelatin and it doesn't even get very hot. But I dissolve the gelatin with a small amount, then I take that and all the rest of the milk and add the yogurt culture and then culture it. And then I do it for 24 hours so there's a maximum reduction of lactose, the milk sugar. And we love that taste. It could be too sour for some people. So generally yogurt is like six to eight hours.

But the way that I've made it so, so easy is first, I skip the heating the milk stage. You don't have to pasteurize it if you use gelatin to thicken. The second thing is that I do it in our Instant Pot. And for anybody who doesn't know, an Instant Pot is this multi-purpose amazing kitchen appliance. And Katie you've done a review, so I know you love the Instant Pot. Yes, and if you get the right one, it's the Duo, there's a yogurt function. So you're not using the pressure cooker or the slow cooker, you're using the yogurt function. And we have an eight quart Instant Pot, so it's larger. So I can do like seven and a half quarts of milk and you just, you dissolve the gelatin in a small amount, you add the rest of the milk, you add your culture and you need to put it on your yogurt setting for 24 hours and then it's done. And it's just, you're just combining these things in the pot and putting away on the counter for 24 hours then you come back and you move your pot to the fridge to chill it. So, I've probably spent five minutes talking about it because I love it so much. I've worked on it, really works for our family, but it literally takes minutes, just minutes to throw together.

Katie: So you could have already made yogurt by the time you told us how to make it? It's that fast.

Wardeh: I could have, yes. In fact, I just came from the kitchen because we needed another batch and I was like, "Can I fit this in before I talk with Katie?" And I seriously did it in five minutes. It's going right now.

Katie: That's amazing and such an amazing tip to use the Instant Pot and how awesome that we can do that now. Because I feel like that was the step that took me the biggest...I had the most learning curve, was trying to figure out the right temperature and how do you keep it warm but not too warm. And is it the oven with a lighter with like, do you add extra heat, is it in a heating pad? Like there are so many different methods out there and the Instant Pot is awesome because it kind of just standardizes that process.

Wardeh: Yup, definitely. And in case anyone who's listening wants to hear, I made a link in case they want this recipe that I just took a lot of time to talk through, but it's really, really easy. So, the easy link for everyone is tradcookschool.com/katieyogurt because we're on your podcast and yogurt. So, but all one word though, katieyogurt and they'll be able to see that recipe.

Katie: Awesome, and I'll make sure to link to it as well so that people can find it directly. You mentioned a culture and I know there are several different schools of thought on what you said you used to culture your yogurt. What's your go-to for that?

Wardeh: Okay. Yeah, if you visit that link, tradcookschool.com/katieyogurt, there's a link to my favorite culture, which is a powdered yogurt culture that I just add and consume it. That's what I like but there are so many things. I mean, you can culture with kefir, you can culture with sour cream, you can culture with finished yogurt from a previous batch. There's a lot of options there, so if you just get one of those little plain yogurts from the store you can use that. The caveat I want to throw here is because if anybody follows my method and does it with raw milk yogurt, it's not considered a pure yogurt culture to re-culture your next batch with and that's because the raw milk organisms are present there. So that's why I use a powdered culture and just consume it batch to batch because I'm not preserving a culture, I just add it every time. So if somebody is using, like, pasteurized milk or they are pasteurizing their milk, then their yogurt can be a culture to do the next batch with. Does that make sense?

Katie: That does. And I know some resources even say if you're going to do that, the pasteurizing process, you can use even store bought yogurt.

Wardeh: For sure.

Katie: Like if you go to a high-quality one. So that's really good to know about the powdered one though. And I think you're the only source I've ever seen that has really perfected that process of using raw milk and still getting it to set, which is awesome. And so is yogurt pretty much a daily staple for you guys and how do you usually consume it? Just by itself or do you mix it up with different flavors?

Wardeh: Yeah. Nearly everybody eats it in addition to the kefir and so...Our kids are all teenagers or older, so I'm not really prepared...I mean we have a sit-down dinner and somebody is on duty to cook dinner, but everybody's on their own for breakfast and lunch. And why I bring this up is they are all diving in the fridge for yogurt for various things. So they're making smoothies or they're putting a bunch of yogurt in a bowl and topping it with berry sauce or frozen blueberries. In cooking, which is not heated cooking, I'll take yogurt and combine it with sour cream or mayo and make salad dressing. I love to use yogurt and just toss, like, crisp summer vegetables or even in the winter raw vegetables and then season up with salt and herbs to make like a yogurt dressing. It's separate from the salad. It's different from the salad dressing I just mentioned. I'm just putting some yogurt in a bowl with the vegetables and tossing them and seasoning it up so it's kind of like your Mediterranean cucumber salad, except I do with cucumbers but I also do with all kinds of vegetables. That's probably the basics for us with yogurt.

Katie: Awesome. Yeah, I love using it as in tzatziki sauce, which is, I think I could eat it by itself for every meal.

Wardeh: Yes. Yum yum.

Katie: That's awesome. So you also mentioned sauerkraut and is that also a daily staple in your house and what's...you mentioned there's a lot of different ways you make it, so what's the favorite?

Wardeh: Sure. I would say our favorite is plain, just plain cabbage and salt. Which sauerkraut is, again, super easy, maybe scary to people. Or maybe people think, "Oh, I don't like that," because they've had it canned from, you know, the store. But fresh sauerkraut you'll hear people talk again and again. You know, homemade sauerkraut or from an artisan, you know, local person making sauerkraut and selling it at the farmer's market is a completely different food than you buy at the grocery store. And to make it you're simply shredding cabbage, mixing it with salt. Salt pulls out water, kind of makes its own brine. You pack it in a jar or some kind of fermenting vessel and you give it like five to seven days and it will turn into sauerkraut. And so we have it just plain. And when I say plain I mean it's just cabbage and salt. That's probably our favorite. But every once in a while someone will say, "Oh, you know, could we have a little bit different?" And so that's why the other day I made it with red onions and carrots. I mixed all that together and I even did some purple cabbage along with the green cabbage. It's just a little bit of variety.

And the way we have it is it's delicious with fried eggs or any kind of eggs. So it's often a condiment with breakfast and it's also often a condiment with lunch or dinner because you put it on a salad or alongside a grilled or baked or any kind of meat. So we have it kind of like a condiment. It helps digestion because of the beneficial acids and of course you have the enzymes and the probiotics for your digestion. So we just love it and we crave it. And, in fact, anytime somebody is sick it's like, "Here, have a bowl of sauerkraut."

Katie: Yeah, it amazed me when I started researching it the probiotic profile of sauerkraut and how many probiotics this small amount of it can have. I know a lot of us spend a lot of money on probiotic supplements and sauerkraut pretty much blows all of those out of the water as far as the variety and the concentration of probiotics.

Wardeh: Yeah, isn't it amazing? And another thing is the vitamin C content is through the roof. So that's why we do it when we're sick. Have some sauerkraut.

Katie: That's a great tip. So you have great resources for this and I'll make sure to try to include a few links, but what else can you ferment? I know kind of really it's anything, right? I mean, what else can you ferment and what else do you ferment in your house?

Wardeh: Sure. I mean, nearly every food can be fermented. Even your old fashioned corn beef is a fermented beef. But we do like an apple chutney quite often. We have the sauerkraut. When pickling cucumbers are in season, we're making our own pickles. Relish. You can even ferment other condiments like ketchup. So we have a great ketchup recipe and if you just add a culture to it and let it sit out for a day you've got like a fermented ketchup. So really, I mean you can ferment anything. And in fact, if anybody's interested, salsa is another thing. If anybody's interested I've put together a cheat sheet, which has formulas for creating your own ferments. Because while, like a salsa versus a beverage versus pickles versus sauerkraut, versus this or that, are slightly different there's a general formula you can do for any of them. You need a certain amount of salt and/or starter culture. You know, a certain amount of brine or what not.

So what I've done and this has come out of teaching fermentation in our online classes and my e-book and the "Complete Idiot's Guide." So I've come up with these formulas. So I want to offer it to anybody who's listening. It's basically just a quick document that gives formulas for if you want to make a sauerkraut, use this much vegetables, use this much kraut and do it for this many days and what not. And so I've created a link for anybody who's listening, tradcookschool.com/katie1 and that would be in the show notes. Katie, right?

Katie: Yes it will.

Wardeh: Yes. Okay, good. So basically that'll walk anybody through just general formulas for creating ferments because you literally can ferment anything. I mean, as long as it's a food.

Katie: Yeah, that's awesome. And it's such an inexpensive way to get probiotics in a diet. I know a lot of listeners are on a budget and we follow a budget as well. And it's just such an inexpensive way. I mean, for pretty much less than the cost of a bottle of probiotics you can make so many different kinds of fermented foods.

Wardeh: That's true and it's so great because it's with the seasons, too. So, like, you know, the summer season when the pickling cucumbers are in season or the tomatoes or the cabbage. So you can really load up when it's cheap and in season because the farmers literally will give you boxes of it for not very much money and then you ferment it. You do need cold storage so that's why so many of us have like an extra freezer or extra fridge. So you ferment a bunch of it and then you keep it cold. And there are certain foods that we try to do make last all year. Like I'll do as many pickles as I can in the summer and then I'll just, whatever fridge space I have to devote to the pickles, we'll just make those last as long as we can. So we enjoy the cheap cucumbers, the cucumbers that were at the height of their nutrition because they were literally off the vine. And then you ferment it and you make it probiotic rich and enzyme rich and vitamin rich and then you can extend that throughout, well, as much as this year as possible. As much as you can store and that just keeps it really, really affordable, like you said.

Katie: Man and nothing beats homemade pickles. They're so good.

Wardeh: So good.

Katie: What about...Are there any other fermented drinks that you guys make? I know you mentioned, like, the yogurt and kefir but what else do you make for drinks?

Wardeh: Oh yeah, we're big into kombucha and my son is the kombucha guy. We have this ceramic continuous brew system. It's from Get Kombucha. It's fantastic and so we have that a lot. We know so many different ways to do it. Like, continuous brew. You can just be constantly adding sweet tea and the kombucha's

culture is called a scoby and it just floats in there and transform your sweet tea into the probiotic beverage of kombucha. And it has, you know, beneficial acids, beneficial yeast, beneficial bacteria. There's a lot of information on kombucha. You probably, people see it in the store. It's this bubbly kind of like soda alternative. It's delicious and so you can do a continuous brew system, you can just brew it like in just gallon sized jars on your counters.

Really simple stuff. And instead of doing that where we're constantly adding sweet tea, what we do is we take this continuous brew system which allows us to do like two gallons at a time and I ferment it entirely so that we get most of the sweetener that's in it reduced. I just try to keep our sugar down. And then my son, this is what he's gotten really good at, is he'll decant, like, the two gallons or whatever we get out of that. And he'll put them into bottles with a little bit of dried fruit and then they'll get bubbly and fruity and then we put them in the fridge. And it's just like having soda on tap but he made it. I'm so proud of him, he's gotten really good at it. And his favorite flavors, like dried cherry or we would take ginger. That's a really good one.

Katie: Oh yeah, I am a fan of anything with ginger in it, so good.

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And now back to the episode.

Katie: So let's talk about, let's switch a little bit and talk about pressure cooking because I know this is actually like an age old traditional cooking technique that our grandmothers and great-grandmothers used. And I remember their horror stories about how they could explode or the steam could burn you and all these different things. And now, as you said, we have this amazing thing called the Instant Pot that kind of eliminates most of the problems that you could run into. So, talk about pressure cooking and what it is and why you'd want to do it in the first place.

Wardeh: Sure. Well, I love pressure cooking. I think I was a late comer to it because I believed some of the literature, kind of the health literature in the last, I don't know 10, 20 years that said pressure cooking is bad. But I've since changed my mind about that. I think it can be ideal for certain foods that we are cooking, like grass fed beef. I mean, a really nice grass fed steak is just fantastic but some of the roasts just, they just don't turn out that great unless you pressure cook them. So it's ideal so that you have moist and tender roasts to pressure cook them. So I've changed my tune kind of about pressure cooking and then the Instant...and I started with a stove top pressure cooker and I got a fantastic roast and started dabbling in it. And then the Instant Pot came along and so then you combine all the well, the amazing aspect of a slow cooker being hands free with pressure cooking where you're literally just like pressing a button. You know, putting your food in and locking the lid and pressing a button and then the machine itself takes care of getting up to pressure and maintaining that pressure and then counts down for whatever timing you plugged in. So to me it's like all the benefits of pressure cooking and none of the hassle of watching it on the stove to make sure it stays at high pressure or low pressure. So pressure cooking was like amazing to give us moist roasts again. But then the Instant Pot came and it became very hands-free. So we are all about pressure cooking in our house.

Katie: Us too. It saves me so many nights when, even though I meal plan, and I forget to make something early enough or it's just going to be something that takes a long time to cook and the Instant Pot shortens that time so much.

Wardeh: So much, I know. And I think I want to be careful people don't think like it's super, super fast. Because while the cooking time under pressure may be fast, it takes time to get to pressure and it takes time to release pressure. So you can throw together meals amazingly fast but it's not like five minutes.

Katie: Right. That's a good point that even if the setting it looks like you're going to cook it for 35 minutes, for instance, it's really going to be closer to an hour by the time it gets to pressure. Which is still a heck of a lot faster than like eight hours in a slow cooker so.

Wardeh: For sure. Yes, for sure. So yeah, like you, it has just transformed our meal times. And, if I can confess, I have three Instant Pots.

Katie: Wow. I have two. You're beating me, that's awesome. But you have teenagers. I hear that's a different ballgame with feeding them.

Wardeh: It is. Yes, it is. I mean, it is, but I think also like we do batch cooking. So like, we like to put beets, cooked, chilled beets on our salads. And so I will just...Two of our Instant Pots are the eight quarts which are way better for batch cooking than the six quarts. So I will just do as many beet tops as I can. Or I'll do like two spaghetti squashes. And the eight quarts can fit two spaghetti squashes. Or, you know, lots of beans. So lots of batch cooking. Then there's the yogurt, which I do like every three to four days I'm doing seven, seven and a half quarts of yogurt. And that ties up an Instant Pot for at least 24 hours. So the third one really seemed like it became necessary when we really started using them.

Katie: I bet. So how do you do the spaghetti squash? Can you give us a quick overview of that? Because I feel like that's a tricky vegetable for some people to cook and if you don't get it exactly right, you don't get the spaghetti type feel. So how do you do that in the Instant Pot?

Wardeh: Right. Because you don't want it to be too crunchy and you don't want it mushy and both of those things can happen. So, first of all, I buy a good size spaghetti squashes, either the farmer's market or when it's not in season you know Whole Foods or something. But so I'm not doing small ones I'm doing the biggest ones I can get. Of course, they do have to fit inside the Instant Pot and the diameter of the eight quarts is like nine inches I believe, so you can eyeball that in the store. Or take a tape measure, which I haven't done but maybe someday I will. Anyway, so you pierce it all over with a big knife like six to eight times all over. Put the rack in the bottom of your insert pot. The Instant Pot has a stainless steel insert pot so you need the rack in there. You

set your spaghetti squash on the rack. You put in like one to two cups of water in the bottom. And then a medium to large spaghetti squash for me takes about 40 minutes on high. And so I'll put it on high for 40 minutes, when it's done, release the pressure, take it out And with vegetables I like to do a quick release, not a natural release. If it's a natural release it could take 15 to 30 minutes to naturally release pressure during which time your vegetable could get mushy.

So with vegetables I prefer to quick release that I can assess you know whether it's done or not without the risk of it going mushy. And if it's not quite done which I just test with a fork or knife piercing it, I just want it to go all the way through to the center. And if there's any question I can take a fork and kind of I start pulling it apart to get some of those shreds inside to see if they're done or not. And if they're still too crunchy I cover it back up and I do it you know like one to five minutes more depending on how much more time it needs. But generally 40 minutes work on the larger spaghetti squashes for me.

Katie: That's awesome and that's definitely faster than in an oven and to get the texture right. That's a big tip. One thing I know, and the question I get a lot about pressure cookers is, like, do you lose the nutrients? That seems to be a pretty common conception is that with pressure cooking you're going to lose a lot of nutrients in your food. What's your take on that?

Wardeh: Yeah. My take is no. And I do have a kind of getting started with pressure cooking link that we can include in the show notes. But just to go over it quickly it's that you're cooking foods so much faster and with so much less water and there's no nutrients lost to evaporation and whatnot, that there's no like bigger net loss of nutrients than with other cooking. And then some people even argue that you have less nutrient loss. So yeah. That was one of the arguments that maybe like 10 years ago people were saying which is one of the things I've reversed in my thinking which is no, I don't think there's nutrient loss.

Katie: Yeah, me too. The tip I've always had too if you're making soup or broth or meat just make sure you consume the liquid as well and then because all the nutrients have to, by nature, stay in the pot. So if you're consuming by what's in the pot clearly you're not going lose anything which makes so much sense.

Wardeh: That's a really good point. Yeah, yeah.

Katie: How do you adapt recipes for the pressure cooker? I feel like, such as the Instant Pot, it's so new that some people are having trouble figuring out, "Like can I convert slow cooker recipes to the Instant Pot and what's kind of the formula for that?"

Wardeh: Sure. I'll say that...I'll give you a link to include in the show notes because I just did my Ask Wardeh podcast last week on this and I think I had like 14 steps which I can't go over now in the interest of time. So if people want more information follow that link. But basically if you're converting from slow cooker to pressure cooker, a couple things to keep in mind is there are certain foods that you don't want to do in your pressure cooked recipe. Like dairy doesn't work well, wines stay raw and tart instead of like evaporating and changing that they do in the slow cooker. So you want to omit those and by the way dairy includes like sour cream, milk, cheese. And so those kind of things can be added at the end and/or simmered at the end but definitely don't include those in the recipes.

And then just as a general rule what you want to do is like, if there are vegetables, add them in a second stage instead of at the beginning with the slow cooker. Because they will most likely be mush if they're cooked the entire duration under pressure. So like if it's a stew recipe where you got like meat and beans. You know, soak your beans, then combine your meat and beans and cook those together and then if you're adding vegetables do that in another stage under pressure. And then regarding timing, timing is something, unless you're following a pressure cooker recipe, you kind of have to figure out. So that's where it's really handy to have a good pressure cooking book or refer to your manual. And you just like take the foods that are listed in your recipe and look up the time that they need to cook under pressure. And you want to go with the longest one. So like if your meat is the longest, that's how long you want to cook under pressure. However remember what I

just said about vegetables, don't put the vegetables in there, save those for the end.

And you can really successfully do it with stews and casseroles. One thing that...The final tip I'll share here is that because in a slow cooker, you know, liquid evaporates. It doesn't really do that in a pressure cooker. You want some liquid loss but not nearly as much so you are often reducing the amount of liquid needed to cook the recipe. So you can go down to the minimum of your pressure cooker which the Instant Pot is like one to two cups or one and a half cups. You can go down to the minimum because that's really all that's needed. And that can be broth, sauce, you know, tomato sauce, water. All those counts as liquid. An exception to reducing the liquid would be like if you're making a soup or stew. You basically want to use the amount of liquid you want in the finished dish. Or if you're cooking rice or beans, you need enough liquid for them to fluff up. So, those are kind of some guidelines and then I'll be sure to give you the link Katie so people can see the rest.

Katie: Perfect and I'll link to that. So just to make sure to clarify for people. So say you have meat that needs to be cooked for say 25 minutes and you're going to add vegetables, could you for instance cook the meat for 15 minutes or release the pressure manually and then add the vegetables and then cook for 10 more? Or does it need to...would you cook the meat all the way through first and then add the vegetables?

Wardeh: Okay. Yeah, that's a really good question. So meat often benefits from a natural pressure release, which means like if the meat is 35 minutes it would finish and then it would release pressure for 20 or 30 more before you take it out. But if you're doing a recipe in stages, what really works out well most of the time is for you to cook the meat for the duration, 35 minutes. You don't shorten it; you do what it needs. But then you do a quick release and then you add your vegetables and then you put them under pressure, you know cook under pressure more. And so then the meat that would have benefited from a natural release benefits from additional time under pressure to just soften up more. Does that make sense?

Katie: That does and then I guess depending on the recipe you could either let it naturally release or manually release the pressure at that point.

Wardeh: Right. And, like I said, think about if you have soft ingredients like vegetables in there, don't do natural pressure. They'll be mushy. So if it's vegetables you want to do a quick release.

Katie: Okay. And just if anybody's not familiar with this terms there's a pressure valve type thing on the top of an Instant Pot and you can either just let it over time naturally let all the pressure out or you can kind of flip it to the side and all the steam comes out, right?

Wardeh: That's exactly right. Yup. Thank you for clarifying that. Sometimes I forget.

Katie: I do too. I realize like you use these terms all the time and then maybe someone has never heard them. So if you're not familiar with Instant Pots. I feel like a lot of people kind of are still a little afraid of trying pressure cooking even in an Instant Pot because it seems a little daunting. And I actually was, too. I let mine sit on my dining room table for a long time before I got brave enough to use it. And I was kicking myself because they are so, so easy.

Wardeh: Yes. We just moved here in October. We just moved from Oregon to Indiana and we're in a rental while we figure out if we want to buy or where or what not. I'm so blessed a couple of days after moving in to get a knock on the door from our neighbor, she brought us a plate of cookies and then she said, "Wardeh, you look familiar and your name sounds familiar. I wonder if I know you." Or she said, "Do you have a blog?" And I said, "Yes." And it turned out she's been a subscriber for a while. But we are like both into the same kind of cooking. So, I was making sauerkraut and invited her over to join me. And then I was visiting her one day and I saw an Instant Pot. This is the point of the story. I saw an Instant Pot in the box in her dining room and I said, "You have an Instant Pot." And she said the same thing you just said, Katie. She said, "Yes it's been sitting there and I'm afraid to open it and use it." And I said, "Get it out right now, I'm going to show you how to make rice." And so we did and now she's been using it. I think that's what it takes is you just need to use it one time,

get over that hump however you can to be able to put some food in and press the button and let it work its magic. And then it's like, "Oh that's not scary. That's awesome." But it does take that one time.

Katie: Yeah. Well, it's my go-to for cooking a whole chicken. I don't think I'll ever go back to any other method because it's so much easier.

Wardeh: Oh my goodness, for us too. Yeah. That's a really great thing it does.

Katie: Yeah and then we can buy like organic chickens from local farmers, but a lot of them are a little bit tougher than the store ones because they're out on pasture, they're running around, they have more muscle. And the Instant Pot makes everything taste amazing and tender so that's so easy.

Wardeh: Mm-hmm. So let me ask you. Do you...do you put your chicken in like plain or do you add any seasoning so it's seasoning while it's cooking?

Katie: I just have a simple, like, poultry seasoning recipe that I mix up and keep in mason jars in my kitchen. And I just literally kind of sprinkle some of that on. And it's not a fancy process at all but it's so easy. And I love it because I can make a whole soup from start to finish. Like I'll cook the chicken, take it out, and like put some veggies in there for just a second while I'm pulling the chicken off the bone and leave the broth in there. And the soup is done in like under an hour and it is so easy.

Wardeh: Wonderful. I'd like to try your poultry seasoning sometime.

Katie: Yeah, I'll send you that link too. And like I said we have to meet up in person one day too now that I realize we're closer than I thought.

Wardeh: Wonderful.

Katie: So kind of, I want to make sure I respect your time, but just, like, maybe a mom who has never tried fermentation, never tried pressure cooking, never tried any of these traditional forms. I know I'm like kind of new even to sourdough, so that's a going to be a new one for me and I probably need to take your class to get an understanding of it. But what would be...or what do you say to those moms? Because you teach those kind of moms and women and families all the time about traditional cooking. So what are the kind of baby steps that you give them to get into it?

Wardeh: Sure. Well, I think the first thing that anybody can do is just start using real and whole food ingredients. So forget about complicated techniques or sourdough or fermenting or whatever. I mean, those will come. But right away, like, are you cooking with like butter instead of margarine? Are you using grass fed and pastured meats instead of conventional? You're a big fan of coconut oil Katie. So coconut oil in your baked goods instead of margarine or whatever you're using. So...and real salt instead of table salt, good water instead of tap water. So clean up so that your ingredients are all really whole and natural, fresh and whatnot. And that alone is going to be so huge for how you feel about food, how food nourishes you, how exciting food could be in your family. And I don't think it can be underestimated how important it is to start with really good quality ingredients.

And I think it's also true, like we talked about earlier Katie, that if you're shopping seasonally that it can be more affordable. And also maybe some people are daunted by the, "Oh but you know pastured to grass fed meat is so expensive." Well, yes it can be if you're purchasing at a Whole Foods. But if you're looking at local farmers or you're buying things when it's in season or you're able to do bulk purchases and put them in the freezer, you'll find it's quite cost effective. Plus the fact that because it's so nourishing, it'll stretch farther. It's amazing. You just don't need as much cheap food if you're having quality food. So I think start there. And the next thing I would say is if you feel like you need more probiotics in your diet or your digestive systems are suffering and you need broth or...there's a way to identify just by thinking about how your family's health is and

what you think the next step is and by kind of immersing yourself in reading recipes and whatnot. Things rise to the surface. Like, "That's the next thing I should learn."

So I just think you should start there. Instead of thinking about all the possibilities, if there's one thing that interests you like fermenting, just try some sauerkraut, make some sauerkraut. Forget about if you can ferment everything and just make some sauerkraut. Or if you feel like your family loves yogurt but it's really expensive to keep buying it from the store, try making homemade yogurt. Just start with one thing at a time. I think that really cuts through the overwhelm and allows us to get confident and be inspired and make changes that make a big impact in our family. And then it's just a process of repeating that. It's, you know, you learn one thing then you move on to the next. So, don't ever stop but don't try to eat the whole horse.

Katie: Yeah, good point. One bite at a time. And one of the things I love the most about your work is that all these traditional really nutrient dense foods you make the process easy. Another podcast guest I've had on is Dr. Cate Shanahan. And her book "Deep Nutrition," she talks about how every traditional healthy culture in the world had these commonalities. And they basically all go back to traditional food. Fermented foods, meat on the bone, organ meat and fresh vegetables. And you make those all so easy and you make them really achievable. So I definitely will make sure to link to all of the courses you have, because they're a great resource and you are an incredible teacher. I know a question that a lot of people might ask, especially hearing about your son and his food intolerances. I know that's a big struggle for a lot of families. How long did it take to see changes in your family after you started?

Wardeh: It was very quick. I mean, removing the allergens from his diet when we finally found out what they were, his skin was baby soft within a few weeks. So that's just to be realistic. We have built up things in our systems that need to get out. So like people go on an elimination diet and expect to be better the next day. That's not always the case. It could take four to six weeks. And I think it was like four weeks pretty much on the dot that our son's skin cleared up when we figured out his triggers. And then when we got into traditional methods and started just whole foods and quality ingredients and preparing them in nourishing ways, we were able to quite quickly, like within a matter of weeks of adopting these practices, to reintroduce foods that had been a problem for him without issue. So that's kind of a long answer to maybe a simple question but I want to take it in stages. Because one thing for us was removing the problems and another was reintroducing them. And when those two stages happened they were four weeks long or so.

Katie: That's, I'm sure, so encouraging to a lot of moms too because it can seem like a food intolerance or an allergy can be kind of a life sentence. And that's what's so great about your story is that once you figured out forms of these foods that his body tolerated, I'm sure he was able...so like einkorn technically has gluten and I'm guessing that might have been a trigger but he's able to tolerate that. So it's not that you have to give up bread forever and there may be hope for families who have food intolerances and who are struggling to figure out how to kind of manage those.

Wardeh: Right, right. And I don't want to give anybody false hope that reintroducing foods will be, like problem-free and no problem, because everyone is different. Our family has had very good experiences with gut healing so that we can reintroduce problem foods without problems. And I want to say, when we reintroduce we don't reintroduce the conventional option. We introduce the nourishing option. So yes, it's einkorn, there's also sourdough and so we're really, really thankful and I'm thankful for that can be encouraging to other people that there is hope. I do think there is hope even though everybody's path may be slightly different.

Katie: Yeah, absolutely, and I think your family is a testament to it because you mentioned that you have teenage children but every picture I've seen of you, you don't look old enough to have teenage children. And I'm always so jealous of your hair because you have gorgeous hair. So you're a testament to how all that works.

Wardeh: Thank you. Well, I feel very, very blessed. We feel very blessed.

Katie: Well, and you do so much to help other families. And to wrap up, talk about that. Talk about all the resources you have on your blog and how people can find them and also the classes. Because I think your classes are definitely, hands down, some of the best out there and I would love for people to find them and learn from them.

Wardeh: Yeah, I'll be happy to do that. I realize that when we were talking about pressure cooking I forgot that I had a free recipe to share with your listeners. And that is a sourdough cornbread recipe that you can make in your pressure cooker, so it's written for Instant Pot or stove top pressure cooker. And so that's at tradcookschool.com/katie2 for you Katie and the number two. And as I mentioned before the fermenting formulas cheat sheet is tradcookschool.com/katie1. We do have tons and tons of recipes at Traditional Cooking School, so be sure to visit the show notes because I'm going to give Katie links to several things we were talking about today. The no-knead einkorn bread that's a daily staple in our home. The kombucha, the yogurt in the Instant Pot, how to convert slow cooker recipes to Instant Pot. So off the top of my head I think we mentioned those things and I want to make sure that you all have links to those at the show notes, so I'll give those to you Katie.

And then just in general terms, you can find me at traditionalcookingschool.com. We do publish recipes and my podcast three days a week, so there's a variety of information there on all kinds of traditional cooking methods plus health articles. And then I have a weekly podcast called Ask Wardeh where I answer traditional cooking questions. And if people are interested to go more, all the topics of traditional cooking school we do cover inside our premium membership. So there will be a link there at the show notes. I'll give it to you Katie in case people want to see more about membership. We cover the fundamentals of traditional cooking, sourdough, fermenting, culturing, dairy, dehydrating. There's a kid's cooking class, allergy free cooking, einkorn baking, pressure cooking. I'm probably missing one because there's a lot.

And then also is that's kind of membership and there are video classes with step by step print tutorials. There's a Facebook group and meetings and bonuses that kind of are all wrapped up in that package. And also we do have stand-alone e-book and video packages. So they're not, the videos are not as many as you'd get in our premium membership but there's a selection of videos that go along with every e-book. And the e-books are the topics of traditional cooking school. So there's an e-book on sourdough, an e-book on lactic fermentation and so on. And so make sure those links that I give to you Katie so people can check them out. I just...I feel like I've just said all that it can be overwhelming. But really it's there for whatever somebody is interested in. From the free recipes on the blog or if you want to go further with an e-book or becoming a member, I'm happy to help with any of it.

Katie: Absolutely and you're awesome and I'll make sure to include all those links. And like I said, I've learned from you in the past and your guides are amazing. So I'll make sure that people can find those in the show notes.

Wardeh: Thank you, Katie. It's been so fun to be here.

Katie: Thank you Wardeh. It's always so fun. This was an amazing interview and we'll have to do it again sometime but thank you for your time and being here.

Wardeh: Thanks.

Katie: And thanks to all of you for listening, I'll see you next time on the Healthy Moms podcast.

If you're enjoying these interviews, would you please take two minutes to leave a rating or review on iTunes for me? Doing this helps more people to find the podcast, which means, even more moms and families could benefit from the information. I really appreciate your time and thanks as always for listening.