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*This is an excerpt from the "About" section of my food blog, "The Alchemist," (<http://thealchemistblog.wordpress.com>) a site which incorporates how-to's and humor with an integrative, all-natural approach toward healing and feeding.*

...When most individuals hear the term "alchemy," they tend to think of half-crazed medieval craftsmen working to turn common metals into gold, or perhaps to create the elixir of immortality. What I'm going for with this food blog has little to do with either gold or immortality. The part that interests me is that whole bit about alchemy being a transformational event, a process that takes commonly occurring elements, and changes them, seemingly by magic, into something beautiful, alluring, and valuable. Yes, yes, you're all saying, that's just like cooking, very nice, let's get on with it. But there's something beyond that: alchemy was supposed to transform the crafter as well—now *that* is exactly what I think cooking does. Let your food create you, and creating the food will happen naturally.

While people derive joy and meaning from countless other interests and pastimes, I have never found any to be as involving and evolving as food. Think back to the most pleasurable parties, the most satisfying social gatherings, the best nights out with friends, or evenings in with...special friends; I'm willing to bet that eating was a central part of the action, and for good reason. Food is how we nurture, impress, and entertain, and great cooks are always part caretaker, part showman, and even part magician, giving of themselves and their talents in a stunningly personal way.

My style relies on using natural ingredients in a way that allows their inherent qualities to stand out, but in a complimentary way. I use minimally-processed, unrefined, organic and local/sustainable ingredients whenever possible. I have a deep respect for the creatures who give up their lives to feed me, and therefore try to exclusively eat "happy food," i.e. cage-free, antibiotic-free, pastured, etc. You'll see virtually zero lactose in my cooking for personal health reasons, and will notice the regular presence of "alternative" protein sources, such as tofu, nut milks, etc. I believe in treating food as medicine, respecting its ability to harm and heal, and providing oneself with a diet that is varied and balanced, on grounds that are both scientific and spiritual.

My approach to food is an integrative and intensely personal one—it plays a role in virtually all areas of my life, and this will be reflected in *The Alchemist*. I welcome your input and suggestions with open arms, and hope that I can inspire you in your own transformations...