

Ask the Expert
Chef Allen Campbell
AC Kitchen





Inside the world of peak performance, the transition to eating healthy food has become more than a movement; it's a revolution.

Allen Campbell is widely known as a leader in the sports nutrition world. Through his culinary acumen, various publications, speaking engagements, consulting, and highly publicized work with athletes, actors and entertainers, he has revolutionized traditional culinary artistry by maximizing health benefits and sustainable practices.

Allen's culinary education began at the age of 14 in the Boston suburbs. After 20+ years in the hospitality industry, he earned his stripes, crafted his own culinary style, and sought out a deeper meaning of the traditional "chef" position. Then, the lifestyle itself nearly ended his career. Instead of burning out, Allen woke up, made some radical changes, and began to morph into his calling. And today, Allen is all about one thing – cooking with health as THE priority, period!

His efforts locally and nationally, are part of much larger social efforts to bridge the gap between healthcare and the food industry. While sustainable, healthy foods are gaining more and more traction among consumers, the challenge is to keep this momentum going so that more Americans will benefit. Allen is the owner of AC Inc, an organic food and lifestyle brand with a focus on personalized nutrition. AC Kitchen and AC Foodservice are on a mission to continue the creation of delicious, healthful foods that do not sacrifice the integrity, flavor, or traditions of our cultures, and cuisines.

In this episode, Chef Allen Campbell provides a live cooking demonstration from his kitchen and discusses some of the concepts presented in his book, *The Game of Eating Smart: Nourishing Recipes for Peak Performance Inspired by MLB™ Superstars*.

Chef Allen Campbell:

Welcome to my kitchen. I'm Chef Allen. I'll be cooking this delicious recipe with all of you today. If you haven't yet, pop your oven on 400, and also if you have a flat top like guide, you pop that burner on as well, because we're brought the saute in there.

I've got my oven 400, I've got my saute pan getting nice and toasty, and then we'll get right into dicing our sweet potato. I ended up getting the white sweet potato. These are pretty big, so I'm probably going to use about one and a half. They're about the size of my hand. And so, I'll just



start with, anytime I'm cutting a root vegetable like this, I want to get a flat edge, right? So I'll first cut the ends off. Nice sharp knife. Remove the ends and then right down the middle, just to keep it nice and clean, that's always the best thing to do.

Then you can go in and start making your cuts, about half an inch, and then we'll turn it on its side like this, get a nice, flat edge, and then again, half an inch. It doesn't really matter what size it is, as long as they're all about the same, size because then it will cook evenly. Now we'll go back to the other side and we'll, again, another half an inch. That's it. It should all look about the same. Getting out the bowl. Half an inch.

Sweet potatoes are a great carb. They're a complex carb. They burn slowly. This white sweet potato, it's a bit more mild than an orange sweet potato. It also looks more like a white potato, so if you know you're cooking for kids or you're cooking for someone that doesn't love sweet potato, this one will come across as maybe a bit more approachable.

You could also use yams. You could use butternut squash. You could use turnip. There's a few other vegetables you could use in place of this potato. And remember, when you cook it, it will definitely reduce in size by about half, so the amount should be a bit more than you think you need, because again, it will shrink as it cooks.

All right, I think I'm just going to do a piece of this one. And for the sake of time, I also washed everything. I washed the sweet potato, I washed my kale, my broccoli, everything is cleaned and ready to go. If you didn't, I'll kind of take my time and let you catch up.

With this one, I'll just cut the end off, cut a nice piece off that side, and then I'll save this for later. About a half an inch from the flat side, and then take those pieces, turn them on their side like that, get another flat surface. You could do a mix. You can mix purple sweet potatoes. You can mix butternut squash in here, and make it really colorful. A lot of things you could do with this part of the recipe.

So, that's it. Looking at, honestly, it came out to be probably about three cups of sweet potato. Toss that with a little bit of avocado oil. I like to cook with avocado oil. It's got a high smoke point, and also the flavor isn't strong

at all, so pretty neutral, but also it's just a healthy fat to cook with. So, a decent amount. Give that a toss, and then we'll put that right onto a sheet pan that's been lined with parchment paper, just right across the whole sheet pan, kind of spread it out evenly. And then we'll get it the oven at 400 for about 15 to 18 minutes.



All right, sweet potato is done. Now, for the meat, I chose ground chicken. It's kind of what was available. And for the sake of simplicity, I just did a whole pound, and we'll sort of see what that gives me cooked. It should be about just what I need. With ground chicken, you'll lose about 20% of the weight to liquid, to water, so if you're trying to get about a cup and a half, I'd say about a pound should be good.

Again, we'll start with the avocado oil, about medium heat, about two tablespoons of avocado oil. Just use the wooden spoon to kind of break it up. You can always break it up more at the end after it's cooked. It's going to

be a lot easier to break it up then. Just get a lid on there, and we'll just kind of come back and stir every two or three minutes or so.



All right, so going right down the list, the next thing we'll do, we will break down the broccoli. Actually, I ended up getting broccoli and not broccolini, getting really good organic broccoli at AC Kitchen, so that's what I decided to use.

You could use broccoli rabe, you could use spigarello. There's a lot of different green vegetables you could use. Brussels sprouts.

I'm just going to cut right there at the stem. I honestly think two of these will be enough. And so, most of the time you throw away this stem, and from the looks of it, the outside is pretty woody. You wouldn't want to bite into that. It's not going to be, it's really, you might even choke, that's how woody it is. But what we forget is the middle of this stem is really sweet, sweeter than the actual floret itself.

So, at AC Kitchen and other kitchens I've worked in, simply take the butt of the stem off, make that flat edge, and then take the knife and just peel along as if you were peeling like a pineapple or something, and just get that

layer of skin off. And you can sort of see where the sweetness, the sweet inside is and where the stem is lot thicker.



So, just cut along, all the way around. And it won't be much. This isn't the biggest head of celery, but... I mean, sorry, head of broccoli, but definitely worth the work, I think. This, you could put it into a stock or you could just simply compost it. This is the sweet part here. This, I would even put in a crudites. That's how delicious and sweet it is. Simply cut it in pieces about this big. So sweet. Like I said, you could put that on a platter next to carrots and cucumber in a crudites and it will go really well. In this case, I'm going to simply put it with the florets. Let's just check on our chicken. You can see the water coming out of the chicken is already quite a bit, and that's going to happen. We'll just kind of break it up a little bit more.

Back to the celery. I mean, back to the broccoli. For the sake of the stem cooking at the same time as the floret, I'm going to make it a little bit bigger than what I just did, about right there, and when I steam the florets, I'll throw these in and they'll cook at the same time.

And then with the floret, something you could do to keep the nice shape of the leaves, you could just cut it from the base. You wouldn't want to cut it this way, because if you like to keep the natural look of the broccoli, cut it right from the base, right? Just go around and just cut each floret off, and you see, they just kind of naturally come off that way.

And then when you get to the center, then you can just kind of cut it right down the middle and you kind of pull it apart, and now you've kept the florets kind of intact and they look a bit more natural than if you cut them straight on. That's about the right size. Just cut this one a little bit. You notice, I never put the knife all the way through. I just put it about midway up and then just break it, and then the top will stay nice and natural.

Okay, so we'll do this other stem here. Just cut off the base, cut it right from the top down. Peel it just like a pineapple. You could use the whole stem and cook it down really, really soft and puree it and make a base for a broccoli soup. That's something else that I really like to do with it. All right. Again, this is so sweet and so soft. Once you discover the middle of the stem, you'll always go for it, because like I said, it's sweeter and more delicious than the broccoli itself.

Again, from the base, just kind of pop those florets off, maybe two at a time. When you get, there's no more hanging out like that, cut it right in the middle, break it off. That's it.

We'll check on our chicken. Wow, quite a bit of liquid in this one. What I might end up doing is just straining it. Once it's cooked through, I'll strain it, get that liquid out, and then I'll sort of break it up that way. This is actually fully cooked. I'll let it go for another second because I used the spoon with the raw chicken. I'll actually get that in the dishwasher, grab a new spoon.

I'm going to grab a colander to strain the chicken with. Let's get some of that liquid out of there. And so, this is a one part method as well. Once I strain this chicken out of here, I'm going to use the same pot again for the next few steps in the recipe. All about less dishes, less time wasted. Just get that right back. Actually, let it sit right there for a second. Chicken drain, cool off a bit.

All right, so our potatoes in the oven, our broccoli is cut into beautiful florets and the stems have been broken down. Next up, we've got onion and ginger. The onion, I couldn't find a small one. I think if yours is this big, I'd say about a third of this is what I'm going to want to use. I'll just cut it right off the side. Save that for later. Just cut the end, both ends off. Just peel back that skin.

All about a clean station. Spilled a little salt earlier. Let me just get that up. I don't know if you guys have had the same issue that I had, but for the sake of keeping things clean, I'm just going to get that out of the way.

All right, so we've got our onion. We're going to dice our onion. Oh, actually, mince. We're going to mince our onion. It will be better, actually, minced in this case. Mince is just smaller. It's about an eighth by an eighth of an inch. Again, always the flat surface down, hand down, fingers kind of go up naturally in order to prevent them from sagging down. You don't want to hit them with the knife.

Onion, flat knife at the same parallel as the hand and then



just kind of right down across, but not all the way through. Going to leave that end piece intact so that the onion stays together. Maybe, let's say for this chunk, maybe one more is good. No need to get too crazy and get too close to the hand.

So, I've gone this way. I have cuts all the way to about the end. Now I'm going to go the same direction. Some chefs will stop here to keep it intact. I honestly think it's okay to now cut all the way through, as long as you kind of hold it with your other fingers to keep it together, and I'll tell you why in a second.

It's better at this point, once you've cut both ways across, now it's still all together, but when you get to the end, there won't be that butt left at the end. You'll be able to

just cut all the way through and have a nice mince all the way through. Let's now cut through. Again, fingers are bent, knuckles are hitting the knife, so you never cut yourself. If your fingers are like this, if they're like this, you're going to hit them. You always learn to hold the vegetable or the meat with your knuckles hitting the knife, and you'll never cut the tips of your fingers.



Again, just right back in. And let the knife do the work. You don't want to really push down. You want to sort of slide in and let the sharpness of the knife get through it. And when I get to the end, it's all about the same size. It's kind of a pet peeve of mine. I don't like to deal with the end of the onion at the end, so I do cut it all the way through. Much easier that way. We'll just get a little bit of avocado oil in the pan. Just turn that heat on, just a little bit.

All right, so now we'll start with the ginger. All right, so ginger, I'd say it's about an ounce. It's maybe about two,

three inches. I'm going to get some flat edges on this as well. I'm going to cut it all the way around this. This, you could certainly save it. You could put it in a soup. You could simmer it with water and just make a ginger tea, is really good. That's honestly probably the best way to deal with this. You don't want to have to peel these little pieces, and I'd say a tea, or you could blend it up and throw it into a smoothie.



And then with this, the same way we did the broccoli stem, you could use a peeler at this point. I'm all about less dishes, so the knife is the best utensil in the kitchen. We'll just go right down, super close, just get that skin off. No need to take anything more than the skin off, unless you're going to make

a tea with it and you actually want to have more pieces. But in this case, as close to the ginger as possible, right down. Then we'll mince that ginger. Save these scraps separately. You may decide to do a tea later.

All right, so with the ginger, you could use a mandoline at this point and shave it really thin and then mince it. In this case, I'm just going to get a flat edge. Now it's going to be a lot more steady, a lot more even. Right down the middle, slices. Back on the flat edge, kind of like we did with the sweet potato. Just cut it in little strips like this.

Back to that flat edge again with the knife. All right, and this first piece too is also going to get sliced thin.

All right, so now we've got all of our ginger in nice thin strips. Bunch it all together like this. The same technique, so knuckles against the knife, sort of pinky and thumb, kind of keep it in line. And then just, you choose how big you like to cut it from there. You could grate it. You could smash it. There's other ways to get the ginger to be the size you want if you don't want to take the time to really use the knife skills to break it down. You get a lot more this way. You don't waste as much.



That's it. I'd say we've got about two, three tablespoons with the ginger, with the onion. All right, so we'll go right in with the avocado oil. Going to turn that heat up a little bit. All right, we'll let that get nice and caramelized. It may look like a lot now, but when it cooks through and when it breaks down, it will be much less and it will be really where all the flavor comes from.

We'll dump out this liquid, dump the chicken right back in that bowl. All right, you could use, yeah, let's stick to the

wooden spoon. Just going to use the wooden spoon to just kind of break up that chicken a bit. You could use your hands if you want. Might get a little messy. We'll also check in on our sweet potatoes in a second, see how they're doing. Maybe they need to be mixed up. Maybe parts of the oven are colder than others, so that may need to be rotated.

You could use ground turkey. You could use ground lamb. You could use almost any meat in this case. Really, all about. You could even use tofu or tempeh if you want to go fully plant-based. Or you could use lentils. You could use white beans. I mean, the protein in this dish, it doesn't really matter what it is. I think it's pretty versatile, so it can handle any type of protein.

All right, I think that's looking pretty good. Set that aside. Going to give our, I'll give the ginger a little mix. It's starting to smell really, really good. I don't know about you guys. I might add a touch more avocado oil. Check on our sweet potatoes, are looking good. Pretty even. They look like they need about six, seven more minutes and they should be good to go.

All right, we're about halfway through. We've got our sweet potatoes in the oven. We've got our broccoli broken down, ready to get steamed. We've got our kale that I just simply picked off the stem. I did about a half a bunch of kale, and now I'm going to... Now I'm just going to slice it. Or shave it. Let's just follow the recipe. It says we're going to shave it. So, I like to just grab it in big bunches like this. Let's check on our onion and ginger. Oh yeah, looking really nice. The smell is amazing. Onion starting to



caramelize. Ginger's starting to caramelize. Really nice. I like to ride it through all the way until it's almost about to get overdone, because that flavor will come through so much more than if you play it safe and take it when it's just light golden brown. It's such a different taste.

All right, so kale, bunch it up like this. Again, always keep the knuckles against the knife and just kind of follow it down. When you shave it like this, it will also cook a lot quicker, so the time that you steam it will be a little bit less. The thing about mincing it is that it will go from cooked to burnt, and really, really quick, so just keep an eye on it. Keep the pan about medium heat. Let the oil dry up. You don't want there to be too much oil in there anyway. You want it to get caramelized. Great.



Grab another bunch of kale. Just kind of follow the path all the way through. You don't want to get caught up and grab it while you're slicing it, so make sure you grab it and

then slice it. With a light vegetable like this, I noticed it's easy for the fingers to get kind of stuck up underneath because it's so soft, but a little reminder to always sort of work the hand backwards that's holding the actual leaf. I actually think this is enough. I'm going to save that with the broccoli for another day.

All right, we got kale. Oh yeah, that's what I'm talking about. Right there at the edge. The smell is amazing, caramelized. It smells almost like, nutty. Just going to let that rest. The heat from the pan will actually keep it going for another minute or so. That's it.

All right, so we've got our sweet potatoes in the oven, we've got our meat cooked, our broccoli and kale, we've minced. Our ginger and an onion, we've sweated that out as well. We're going to add the ginger and onion to the meat now. Ground meat is a little bit more than I wanted, so I'm just going to take a little bit out of there. We only want about two portions, so I'm thinking cup and a half. Right about there should be good. I love leftovers. I'll keep these for meal prep. And then we'll just add this. Again, for the sake of saving on pans, I like to just use the same pan again and again. So, we'll add the ginger and onion right back to the chicken.

All right, I'm just going to give this pan a quick rinse. All right, drop that right back on the stove. To steam the broccoli and the kale, you could set up a whole pan with a steamer basket and a lid. But in this case, I want to show you how to just simply use the saute pan, pan with the lid, put a little bit of water on the bottom, throw the broccoli in, cover it, and really that's all you need to do. Save

dishes, save time. Use the same pan you sauteed with. I'll add just about half a cup of water. Throw the lid on there, get it going.

Check on our sweet potatoes. I'm just trying to give them the little mix. Because they have the avocado oil, the side on the bottom, it's going to get a little bit of color, so it's kind of nice to mix it up. Just grab a fork, see how tender they are. They're actually done, but I want to get a little bit more color on them, so I'm going to put them back in, let them go until we're done with the broccoli. They're sweet, they're delicious. So good.

The water's already steaming, which is nice when you have a burner that will do that so quick. We're going to throw the broccoli right in, just the way it is. I like my broccoli a bit al dente, so I'll say just about two, two and a half minutes.



While that's going, our meat will also get the hemp hearts and the pumpkin seeds. And the reason for that, I'm trying to show you guys how to balance with omega-3s and omega-6s. The hemp hearts, the pumpkin seeds, they have a lot of vitamins and minerals and the fatty acids that the meat might not have. So, how do we balance those things in a meat-based dish? Simply fold

them in and let them become the texture without really becoming the star of the show. I think if we were to have a bowl of hemp hearts with the sweet potato and kale, it

wouldn't be as exciting, but you can certainly add them to your ground meat and just reap the benefits of them without having them meet the star of the show.



I'm just going to fold those in. Again, it's texture. It's got a little bit of flavor. Actually a nice... More texture than anything, and the health benefits are really the reason why they're in there. Just mix that up.



All right, so I'm actually going to just pull the broccoli out the last minute before I put the kale in. Let's get our avocado going, too. We'll just cut this right in half. The safest way to do it is on the bench. A lot of people will do it in mid-air, but the problem is that that knife can go right in the middle of the hand, and that's a really common accident.



So, for the sake of safety, let's start on the cutting board, down and just follow... We all know that pit's in the middle, so just follow that pit keep the knife right in the middle, and you'll meet right back where you started again. Just turn it, open it up. And then, even in this case, instead of this where you could technically go in either direction and hit your hand, let's start with away from yourself, hit it like this, and then turn it and then get it out.

I think the broccoli is good for my liking. Just going to put it right in the strainer, let it cool off a little bit. You could shock it. If you were going to meal prep this and you wanted to keep the color, you could add the broccoli right to a bowl of ice water and that will shock it. It's called blanching, and that will keep the green color, as well. I

mean, you'll keep some of the green color, but not as nice if you were to shock it.

All right, a little bit too much water for the kale, so I'm going to just dump some of that off, and then we'll go right in with the kale. I'm just going to slice this avocado. Again, keep it simple. Keep it right on the board and just kind of cut along.

All right, next is the kale. Dump it right in. Get our sweet potatoes out. They're great. Turn the oven off. All right, so the kale is also good to go. Kale is way quicker than the broccoli. I'm just going to take the lid and use that to sort of strain that little bit of water out. And as fast as it cooked is as fast as it will also cool off, so if you just set it over here, it should be good to go in just a minute.



I'm going to actually put these sweet potatoes right in this bowl. All right, so a little bit of avocado oil. Avocado oil seems to be the star tonight. I actually don't have extra virgin olive oil, so avocado oil will definitely do. A little bit

of avocado oil just to help that togarashi stick. Togarashi is a blend of sesame, chili, it's got a little bit of seaweed in there. It's something that I really like. It's super complex. It can be as hot or as mild as you like, depending on how much you use. It really is the only spice in this dish, so you really can determine how spicy you want this dish to be.

Just give it a little toss. I'm actually going to go a little heavier than that. It's also got a little orange peel in there, so you could go in any direction you want with this one. It's got a little hemp heart, as well. Perfect. Little bit of salt. It doesn't have salt, which is nice, so you control the salt.

All right, so we've got our ground chicken. We've got our avocado. We have our sweet potatoes that have been tossed with togarashi. We have some nice fresh lime here, as well. Now we're going to start to plate.



I always like to plate things side by side so you can see it. It's a little bit more presentable. We'll start with the kale. You could also season this. I tend to like to leave it just the way it is, let the guests decide if they want to add oil, they want to add salt to it.

I'm a big fan of macro bowls. Macro bowls are macrobiotics, so they usually have kale and they have some type of root, usually squash. They have lentils, some kind of rice, and usually like a tahini

sauce with a broth underneath. And I always tend to do a play on them, because when I eat them, I feel so good. They go down so well and they're pretty light.

All right, so the broccoli can go right on the other side to keep the color contrast. Actually, I'm going to put the potatoes in first. Yeah, let's do the potatoes first. Little taste. Oh wow, that's good. Right next to the kale. Definitely enough for two, if not three people. Sorry, that togarashi, right up the nose. Yeah, the chili gets up there. You're going to definitely sneeze. If you couldn't find togarashi, you could use a blend. You could make sesame sort of chili, a little seaweed blend of your own.



All right, we'll put the meat on the other side. Actually, the meat needs a little love, too. A little bit of salt in here, a little bit of pepper. Delicious. Right on the other side. My portion is probably enough for three, depending on how big you like to eat. It's going to be light, because mostly it's just veg and meat, so it won't be, not a lot of carbs. It's not going to be too filling.

We're going with the broccoli. Again, if you did break down the stem the way I did, I hope you're going to try it now, see how sweet it is, the broccoli. Or if you use the

broccolini, you would use the whole thing. So, you just cut it the same. Some people might throw away the stem, but with broccoli, it's actually sweet all the way through, and it doesn't really get woody. So, it's just really the very end of the broccolini you'd cut away, but the rest you could steam it just like the broccoli. You wouldn't have to remove the skin.

All right, this looks delicious, and now we're going to add the avocado. I don't know about you guys, but I usually like to have at least a half an avocado with my dish. In this case, yeah, I'll do almost a half with each one.

All right, a little bit of fresh lime juice. The best way to get the juice out of the lime is to roll it up, get those juices flowing, get it nice and soft. I grabbed two because sometimes you get a dry lime and you don't have any juice in there, so just in case, I got two. Cut it right down the middle. And with limes, you don't have to worry about seeds, so just squeeze it right on top. Hit the avocado first, over to the broccoli and the kale. I think a half, this one's pretty juicy, so we're just going to use a half for both.

A little bit of salt on the avocado, maybe a little bit on the broccoli and the kale as well. And then, just for color, let's put a little togarashi right on top of the avocado. Wow, I feel like I'm back in California with this, in the middle of the winter in Boston. This is what I love. I hope you guys like it too.

So, we've got spicy sweet potato bowl with broccoli, avocado, ground chicken with lime, pumpkin seeds and hemp parts for those omega-3 fatty acids to balance them out with the omega-6s and the chicken. I hope you like the recipe.

ALLEN CAMPBELL

February 28 Recipe Virtual Cooking Demo

Spicy Sweet Potato Bowl, broccolini, avocado, togarashi, lime

2 sweet potatoes
1 ½ cup cooked ground meat
1 bunch broccolini
½ bunch curly kale
1 knob ginger
1 small yellow onion
1 ripe avocado
2 tbsp hemp hearts
2 tbsp pumpkin seeds
2 tbsp avocado oil
1 tbsp togarashi
1 Lime
Salt
Pepper

Method:

Preheat oven to 400.

Dice sweet potato. Lay flat on baking sheet lined with parchment. Bake 15-18 minutes.

In a sauté pan over medium heat, cook ground meat in a drizzle of avocado oil breaking up into small pieces.

Slice broccolini into 1-inch pieces.

Shave kale.

Peel and mince ginger. Mince onion. Over medium heat sweat the aromatics in avocado oil.

Steam broccolini.

Steam kale.

Fold cooked meat together with ginger, onion, hemp hearts and pumpkin seeds.

Season with salt and pepper.

Toss baked sweet potato with avocado oil and togarashi.

Add ingredients side-by-side in a bowl. Add avocado and squeeze lime.

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