

Natural dog nutrition: The Barf manual

- BARF made easy: basics, recipes and tips-

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The diet of our dogs has changed drastically over the years. A lot has happened from the beginning, when dogs still hunted and ate naturally, to the commercial feeds that are widely available today. In the midst of these developments, BARF, short for "Biologically Appropriate Raw Food", is becoming increasingly important.

BARF means feeding dogs raw meat, bones and vegetables to make their diet as natural as possible. This method is based on the original diet of the wolves from which our dogs descend. BARF supporters believe that such a diet offers numerous benefits for the health and well-being of dogs.

Why has BARF become so popular? Many dog owners have realized that commercial foods, which are often highly processed and contain artificial additives, are not always the best choice for their pets' health. BARF allows the diet to be individually tailored and controlled, which is particularly beneficial for dogs with allergies or special health needs.

In this book we will examine the origins and development of BARF, introduce the different types of BARF and provide detailed instructions and recipes for practical implementation. We will also consider the special needs of dogs with allergies and intolerances and critically examine the advantages and disadvantages of BARF.

Each chapter of this book is designed to give you in-depth knowledge and practical instructions. You will learn how to analyze and improve your dog's diet, how to prepare healthy and balanced BARF meals and how to avoid common mistakes. We address all dog owners, regardless of whether they are new to BARF or already have experience.

This book is aimed at all dog owners who are interested in feeding their four-legged friends naturally, whether for health reasons, out of conviction or simply out of the desire to offer their dog the best. With this manual, we want to give you all the necessary information and tools to successfully BARF and ensure the best possible nutrition for your dog.

We start with a comprehensive introduction to the history of BARF, followed by the basics and different methods of BARF. We then move on to the practical aspects such as calculating the right amount of food and creating recipes. Finally, we look at special nutritional needs and the advantages and disadvantages of BARF.

Get ready to take your dog's nutrition to a new level and give him what he really needs: a species-appropriate, healthy and natural diet.

Chapter 2: The history of BARF

The practice of BARFing, feeding dogs raw meat and natural ingredients, may have become popular in recent years, but its roots go back a long way. To fully understand the concept of BARFing, it is helpful to look at its origins and historical development.

Origins and development

BARF is based on the natural diet of wild dogs and wolves, the ancestors of today's domestic dogs. These animals fed mainly on prey, which they hunted and consumed entirely, including meat, bones, organs and sometimes the stomach contents of the prey. This original diet provided all the necessary nutrients and became the basis of BARF.

With the domestication of the dog and its integration into human society, the diet of dogs also began to change. While dogs in rural areas often continued to be fed waste and leftovers from slaughterhouses, urban environments increasingly saw the introduction of commercial feeds that were often highly processed and contained artificial additives.

The return to a natural diet for dogs began in the 1990s when Australian veterinarian Dr. Ian Billinghurst coined the term BARF. BARF originally stood for "Bones and Raw Food," but was later developed into "Biologically Appropriate Raw Food." Billinghurst argued that the diet of modern dogs should be closer to their original, natural diet to avoid health problems that could be caused by commercial feeds.

Important milestones

- 1993: Dr. Ian Billinghurst publishes his book "Give Your Dog a Bone," in which he explains the principles of BARF and the benefits of a natural diet for dogs. This work is considered to be instrumental in popularizing BARF.
- 2001: Billinghurst follows up with another book, "The BARF Diet," which provides detailed instructions and recipes for raw feeding. The books help to create a community of BARF followers and spread knowledge about this diet.
- 2000s: Numerous studies and reports from veterinarians and dog owners confirm the health benefits of BARF, leading to wider acceptance and use of the method.
- 2010s: BARF is becoming increasingly mainstream. Specialized BARF shops and online platforms are emerging that offer ready-made mixes and individual advice.
- 2020s: BARF is experiencing another wave of popularity as more dog owners recognize the health benefits and are willing to invest the extra time and effort to prepare meals. The availability of frozen and vacuum-packed raw foods also makes BARF more convenient.

BARF in different cultures

The practice of BARF has taken hold in different parts of the world. In Western countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and much of Europe, BARF has become established as a popular alternative to commercial dog foods. In these regions, there are a variety of resources available, from textbooks to online communities to specialized retail stores.

BARF is also becoming increasingly popular in Asian countries, particularly Japan and South Korea, although the availability of resources and information there is still evolving. Traditionally, many Asian cultures have fed dogs home-cooked meals that often included raw meat and fresh ingredients, which is a natural affinity for BARF.

In African and South American countries, the concept of BARF is less widely practiced, mainly due to economic factors and the availability of ingredients. However, there is still a growing community of dog owners interested in natural nutrition for their pets.

Importance of BARF in modern times

The increasing popularity of BARF reflects the growing awareness of healthy and natural nutrition for both humans and their pets. Many dog owners have noticed positive changes in their dogs' health through BARF, including better coat quality, higher energy levels, improved digestion and fewer allergies.

In addition to the health benefits, BARF also helps strengthen the bond between dog and owner. Carefully selecting and preparing meals can create a sense of satisfaction and responsibility, as the owner is investing directly in the health and well-being of their dog.

Chapter 3: Basics of BARF (Advanced)

BARF has established itself as a popular and healthy method of feeding dogs. In this chapter, we will explain the basic principles of BARF, highlight the nutritional needs of dogs, introduce important foods and ingredients, and provide instructions on how to prepare and store BARF meals.

Definition and principles of BARF

BARF, short for "Biologically Appropriate Raw Food", is based on the idea of adapting the diet of dogs as closely as possible to that of their wild ancestors, the wolves. This means that dogs are fed raw meat, bones, offal and vegetables to ensure a natural and balanced diet.

The principles of BARF include:

1. Naturalness: Use of fresh, unprocessed ingredients.
2. Variety: Different types of meat and plant components to ensure a balanced nutrient intake.
3. Individualities: Adaptation of the diet to the specific needs of the individual dog.
4. Transparency: Control over the origin and quality of the ingredients.

Nutritional needs of dogs

Dogs have specific nutritional needs that must be met by a balanced BARF diet. The main nutrients include:

1. Proteins: Essential for muscle building, the immune system and many metabolic processes. Sources are meat, fish and eggs.
2. Fats: Important source of energy and necessary for the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins. Healthy sources of fat are fish oil, coconut oil and animal fats.
3. Carbohydrates: Although dogs do not necessarily need carbohydrates, they can provide energy in small amounts. Sources include vegetables and fruits.
4. Vitamins and minerals: Necessary for many body functions. These should be provided by a variety of ingredients such as organ meats, bones and vegetables.
5. Water: Essential for all life processes. Fresh drinking water should always be available.

Nutrients in detail

- Amino acids: Essential and non-essential amino acids from proteins are the building blocks of muscles and tissues. They are abundant in raw meat and fish.
- Fatty acids: Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids are important for skin and coat health, as well as for the functioning of the immune system. These can be found in fish oil, linseed and animal fats.
- Vitamins: Vitamins A, D, E and K are fat-soluble and found in animal organs and fish oil. Water-soluble vitamins such as B vitamins and vitamin C are found in meat and plant ingredients.
- Minerals: Calcium and phosphorus from bones are important for strong bones and teeth. Other minerals such as zinc, copper and magnesium are found in various meats and vegetables.

Important foods and ingredients

A balanced BARF diet includes a variety of foods to provide all the nutrients. Here are some of the most important ingredients:

1. Meat: Muscle meat from various animals such as beef, chicken, lamb, rabbit and game.
2. Offal: Liver, kidney, heart and spleen provide important vitamins and minerals.
3. Bones: Raw and edible, they are a good source of calcium and help keep teeth clean. Chicken wings, necks and meaty bones are suitable.
4. Vegetables: Carrots, spinach, pumpkin and zucchini provide fiber and vitamins.
5. Fruit: Apples, berries and bananas in moderation as sources of vitamins and treats.
6. Additives: Fish oil for omega-3 fatty acids, eggshell powder for calcium, and probiotics to aid digestion.

Preparation and storage

The preparation and storage of BARF meals is crucial to ensure freshness and nutritional quality. Here are some important steps:

1. Purchasing and storage: Buy fresh ingredients from trusted sources. Store meat and bones in the freezer to preserve their freshness.
2. Preparation: Defrost the ingredients in the refrigerator or under cold water. Avoid thawing at room temperature to minimize bacterial growth.
3. Processing: Cut the meat into suitable portions. Chop or puree vegetables to facilitate the absorption of nutrients. Mix all components into a balanced meal.
4. Portioning: Prepare meals for several days in advance and store them in the refrigerator or freezer, making sure to adjust portion sizes to suit your dog's needs.
5. Hygiene: Clean all work surfaces, utensils and your hands thoroughly after preparation. Change your dog's water and food dishes regularly to ensure hygiene.

Preparation tips

- Add variety: Change the types of meat and plant ingredients regularly to ensure a wide range of nutrients.
- Add supplements: Supplement meals with natural additives such as spirulina, seaweed lime or turmeric to provide additional nutrients and health benefits.
- Control portion sizes: Calculate the amount of food based on your dog's weight and activity level. A rough guideline is 2-3% of body weight per day, divided into one or two meals.

Chapter 4: Different types of BARF

Classic BARF

Classic BARF is based on the principles established by Dr. Ian Billinghurst. It includes a balanced mixture of muscle meat, bones, offal, vegetables and fruit. This method places emphasis on a varied diet and the use of high-quality ingredients.

Prey Model Raw (PMR)

Prey Model Raw is a type of BARF that is even more closely aligned to the natural diet of wolves. Whole prey animals or parts of them are fed without the addition of plant ingredients. The typical composition is 80% meat, 10% bones and 10% organs.

Whole Prey Feeding

This method goes a step further than PMR by actually feeding whole prey animals such as rabbits, chickens or fish. This is intended to make the dogs' diet as natural as possible and to ensure that all nutrients are consumed in the correct proportions.

DIY Barf

DIY BARF (Do-It-Yourself BARF) allows dog owners to design meals themselves based on their dog's individual needs. This method requires a thorough knowledge of nutritional requirements and the ability to create a balanced diet, but it offers maximum flexibility and control over ingredients.

Chapter 5: Detailed Barf Applications and Possibilities (Advanced)

In this expanded section, we'll dive even deeper into the many applications and possibilities of BARF, including additional health benefits, detailed diet adjustments for specific conditions, and more case studies and testimonials.

Advanced health benefits of BARF

In addition to the benefits already mentioned, there are other positive effects of BARF on the health of dogs.

1. Strengthening the immune system: Fresh, raw ingredients contain natural enzymes and antioxidants that strengthen the immune system and increase resistance to disease.
2. Improve joint health: Natural sources of collagen found in raw bones and meat promote joint health and may help relieve arthritis and other joint problems.
3. Better kidney and liver function: A diet rich in natural and easily digestible proteins supports kidney and liver health, especially in older dogs.
4. Reducing allergy symptoms: A targeted BARF diet can help minimize allergic reactions by avoiding known allergens and incorporating anti-inflammatory foods.

Detailed adjustment of the diet for specific conditions

BARF for allergies and intolerances

For dogs with allergies and intolerances, it is especially important to create an individually adapted BARF diet.

- Choosing hypoallergenic proteins: Meats such as horse, kangaroo, ostrich and goat are less allergenic and are well suited for elimination diets.
- Anti-inflammatory additives: Turmeric, ginger and omega-3 fatty acids from fish oil or flaxseed can help reduce inflammation and support the immune system.
- Probiotics and prebiotics: These supplements promote healthy intestinal flora and can help minimize allergic reactions. Natural sources include fermented vegetables and special dietary supplements.

BARF for illnesses

Adapting the BARF diet can address specific health problems and improve the dog's well-being.

- Kidney disease: Reduce phosphorus levels by using lean meat and avoid raw bone material. Supplement the diet with calcium from eggshell powder.
- Heart disease: Include taurine-rich foods such as heart and seafood. Reduce sodium by avoiding salty additives and use fresh vegetables as a base.
- Joint diseases: Promote joint health through the use of gelatin, bone broth and nutritional supplements such as green-lipped mussel extract.

More case studies and testimonials

Case study 3: The active sports dog

Rocky, a four-year-old Border Collie, is an active dog who regularly competes in agility competitions. Switching to a raw food diet high in protein and healthy fats has increased his stamina and performance. His muscles are better developed and he recovers faster from strenuous training sessions.

Case Study 4: The Convalescent Dog

Luna, an eight-year-old Golden Retriever, was recovering from serious surgery. Her owner switched her diet to raw food to aid healing. The fresh, raw ingredients provided the necessary nutrients to boost Luna's immune system and speed up the healing process. Within weeks, she showed significant improvements in her health and energy.

Advanced diet adjustment for puppies and older dogs

Puppies

A detailed look at the nutritional needs of puppies helps to optimally support their growth and development.

- Calcium to phosphorus ratio: Aim for a ratio of around 1.2:1 to promote healthy bone growth. This can be achieved by feeding meaty bones and supplementing with eggshell powder.
- Energy requirements: Puppies have a higher energy requirement per kilogram of body weight than adult dogs. Feed 4-5 small meals a day and adjust the portions according to growth.
- Vitamin D: This vitamin is important for calcium absorption and bone growth. Make sure your puppies get enough vitamin D through fish oil or liver.

Older dogs

The nutritional needs of older dogs vary depending on their health status and activity level.

- Protein quality: Older dogs need easily digestible proteins to maintain muscle mass. Fish, eggs and lean meats are ideal sources of protein.
- Joint health: Supplement the diet with natural sources of glucosamine and chondroitin, such as green-lipped mussels or chicken cartilage.
- Fiber: Older dogs may benefit from higher fiber intake to aid digestion. Add pureed vegetables and some fruit to promote gut health.

Chapter 6: Barf combinations in 10 dishes

In this chapter we present ten different BARF recipes that are suitable for small, medium and large dogs. These recipes take into account the different needs and preferences of the dogs and offer a balanced mix of proteins, fats and nutrients.

Recipe 1: Chicken liver and vegetable mix

Ingredients:

- 200 g chicken liver
- 100 g carrots (grated)
- 100 g zucchini (washed and diced)
- 1 tsp olive oil

Preparation:

1. Cut the chicken liver into small pieces and fry in a pan with a little olive oil until cooked through.
2. Cook the carrots and zucchini in a steamer until soft.
3. Mix everything together and let cool before serving.

Special features: This recipe is rich in iron and vitamin A, ideal for healthy skin and energy.

Recipe 2: Beef with pumpkin and spinach

Ingredients:

- 300 g minced beef
- 150 g pumpkin (cooked and pureed)
- 100 g fresh spinach (chopped)

Preparation:

1. Fry the ground beef in a pan until cooked through.
2. Add pumpkin and spinach and mix well.
3. Allow to cool and serve.

Special features: Pumpkin is good for digestion, and spinach provides important vitamins and minerals.