

# Top Nutrition Trends for 2016

A registered dietitian scouts the Food and Nutrition Conference and Expo and shares her findings for families.

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What are the top trends nutritionists will be buzzing about for kids in 2016? I got a sneak peek when I recently attended the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' Food and Nutrition Conference and Expo in Nashville, TN, the world's largest meeting of food and nutrition professionals. Here are some of the most noteworthy trends that will be shaping food conversations—and families' grocery lists—in 2016 and beyond.



## “Sprouted” and “Raw” Foods Soar in Popularity

Raw and sprouted foods have been hot trends in natural kitchens for years, but they seem to be moving mainstream in 2016. Companies big and small are featuring these ingredients as part of a mission to bring more “living” foods into the packaged food aisles. The Expo revealed some fresh takes on raw seed snacks, such as the delightfully addictive raw watermelon seeds from Go Raw (\$10, [goraw.com](http://goraw.com)), and a bevy of new bars and cereals that feature sprouted ancient grains as a star ingredient, such as Kashi's Organic 100% Sprouted Whole Grain flakes (\$5, [kashistore.com](http://kashistore.com)).

Although seeds and whole grains are already nutrient-dense foods, raw and sprouted foods are thought to offer additional benefits, namely enhancing nutrient availability and improving digestion. Sprouted grains germinate after moisture is added; the sprout is then harvested before it turns into a full-fledged plant. While it depends on the grain being sprouted, some studies have found sprouted grains to be lower in starch and gluten and higher in protein, folate, vitamin C, zinc, iron, and fiber than their regular grain counterparts. It's still unclear, however, whether the trend of eating raw and sprouted seeds and grains over regular seeds and whole or ancient grains translates into real health advantages.