



# **Simply Divine:**

**Discovering Perfect  
Nutrition for Your Dog**

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## How to Use This Book

The book that you're reading now was created with one main goal in mind: to educate the loving dog owner about to how to create healthy meals for his or her pet dogs. Obesity and other health problems arise in dogs because of poor meals and diets, which is why this book has a cautionary tone when it comes to giving your dogs table scraps and human food items. The first part of this book covers a comprehensive range of topics so that you have *complete knowledge* of your dog's nutritional needs.

The three major macronutrients are covered in the sections "The Truth About Proteins," "Should Fats Be Avoided?" and "Carbohydrates in a Dog's Diet." Mineral supplementation is also covered in detail in the first part of the book, right after the section "In Focus: Micronutrients." You can find out more about foods that are harmful to dogs by reading the section "Danger Ahead: Foods That Are Toxic to Dogs." For owners of senior dogs with feeding problems, you may want to skip ahead to the section "Feeding Older Dogs: The Puzzled Owner's Guide."

All the recipes for homemade meals can be found in Part 2 of the book. Part 2 of the book has two sections: "Treats Galore" and "Snacks and Quick Meals."

## Part 1: Introduction

Coming from a family of animal lovers – my parents, brothers, sisters, and I cared for a variety of animals since I was young, including a lot of dogs – I was naturally fascinated with the idea of providing optimal care to domestic pets, and especially dogs.

For a very long time, people have been walking into pet stores and coming out with puppies without any idea about how to provide the optimum care for their new pets.

One of the central principles of optimum dog care is good *nutrition*. You might be surprised when you find out about the actual needs of our canine companions. The answers to questions about dog nutrition *cannot* be found on labels of dog foods – in fact, that’s the last place you should be looking if you’re uncertain about your dog’s daily nutritional needs.

If you want your dog to live a long, active, and happy life free from the common health problems associated with modern dogs (who are fed *the wrong food* every day), then this book is definitely for you.

Contained within these pages are insights and discoveries that I have made through the years, as I’ve taken care of multiple canines. It is a gift to the present and future generation of dog lovers who know how precious the companionship and love of dogs really are. This is for you, my dear friend. Welcome to the world of optimum nutrition for dogs!

## History: How Commercial Dog Foods Came To Be

Half a century ago, giving dogs left-over food was the norm. If you had a Fido at home, you simply had to collect table scraps so the family's beloved pet could eat once or twice a day. Life was simple back then, and dogs were considered hardy members of the family that could live with less than ideal nutrition.

As the years progressed and values changed, people slowly realized that canines needed the *right kind* of nutrition, the same way that people need a balanced diet in order to live long, productive lives...and to escape the plight of modern day diseases like hypertension, diabetes and cancer.

Today, the term "dog food" equates to *commercially-sold dog food*. Nowadays, having a dog at home means you have to regularly stock your home with dry, semi-dry, or wet-variety dog food.

It's generally accepted that the most convenient way of feeding a Fido is to give the dog commercial dog kibble or moist dog food packets. But when did this practice begin, and why has the commercial pet food industry been sustained to such an extent that it has become a strong and dominant producer?

Well, the pet food boom actually occurred after the Second World War. With the steady increase of the country's population after the war (known as the Baby Boom) came *increased consumption* of meat products in the country. Increased meat consumption meant there was also a marked increase in the *byproducts* created by the meat processing industries.

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When the raw materials for pet food became available, enterprising individuals like R. Purina developed industrial processes that paved the way to mass production of food for hogs and chickens.

From an economist's point of view, it was indeed a beautiful development in the industries. Mass-produced food pellets increased the output of hog raisers and poultry farms. The meat processing industry made the meats suitable for commercial distribution. Usable byproducts from the meat processing industry were purchased by the pet food companies.

The pet food companies adapted the various industrial processes used by food pellet manufacturers to produce commercial dog food, cat food, rabbit food, etc.

The clamor for a "balanced diet" or a steady protein source in commercial dog food meant that pet food manufacturers had no choice but to add meat to their products. Making viable, meat-based pet food wasn't a problem at all, because the technology had already been there for a while.

Slowly, the modern pet food industry developed more strategies to respond to the needs of specific markets. The strongest market is the dry pet food market.

Dry pet food or *kibble* is produced by combining flour (derived from various grains, including wheat), ground animal meals (meat scraps from meat processing plants are ground by heavy machines to produce a moist meal), and milk products. Some manufacturers make it a point to add vitamins and mineral content to the dry kibble, which is an important selling point used by many pet food manufacturers.



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Before the actual kibble is packed and distributed to supermarkets, the carbohydrate base of the dry pet food is first spray-coated with oil (which forms the fat content of the food) and various milk products (which improves the taste of the pet food).

Dry kibble must have a carbohydrate content of at least forty percent for this existing industrial process to work -- so you now know that *all* dry kibble for dogs is composed of at least forty percent carbohydrates.

Let's move on to semi-moist dog food. What makes this type of dog food tick? How come it's moist, and yet it can stay "fresh" until such time that you want it to feed Fido? It all boils down to *humectants*.

Humectants are chemical compounds added to dog food to keep the food product wet or moist, and are also used to prevent the common chemical processes that cause spoilage.

Unlike dry kibble, semi-moist dog food makes use of at least two protein sources: ground soybeans and fresh meat (in the form of meat scraps or regular meat). Fat is also added to the final product to increase its caloric content.

Before packaging, the semi-moist dog food is molded into different shapes. Don't be deceived though: dogs couldn't care less if the food you're giving them is in shape of a heart or a chunk of meat.

Pet food manufacturers make it a point to improve the physical appearance of pet foods to attract buyers. The

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appearance of the food does not necessarily have a positive impact on the animal's nutrition.

Let's move on to the third type of dog food/pet food: canned food.

There are four general categories of canned dog food. The first one is called *rationed dog food*. Rationed dog food is the *wettest* variety of dog food because the base of the dog food (meat scraps, internal organs, etc.) is cooked in highly pressurized environments until a liquid state is achieved.

The resulting liquefied food is then packed in sterile cans and shipped. *All-meat canned food*, on the other hand, is composed mostly of animal tissue and meat byproducts. The meat base of this type of canned food is not cooked until a liquid state is achieved. Preservatives are used to maintain the physical appearance and freshness of the meat base of the canned food.

Chunky canned food and "stews" in cans are manufactured specifically to cater to the requirements of dog owners who want to give their pets moist, "fresh" food that tastes good. Unfortunately, these foods are only aesthetically pleasing to owners, and are not necessarily pleasing to the pets themselves.

Our focus should be turned to what actually goes into the creation of the dog food, and not necessarily *how the food looks*. In addition to preservatives and humectants, pet food manufacturers have also been known to add *artificial colorants* to create vibrant-looking food. The pigments used to mask the *real* color of the dog food are indigestible and can actually taint your dog's feces.

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This is the main reason why I'm advocating that you prepare your dog's food *at home* so you know exactly what your beloved pet is eating. It may sound daunting at first, and it's perfectly fine if you can't implement this type of change overnight.

Alternating homemade food and dog food is a good way to balance your dog's diet. But in the final analysis, if you *can* invest time and energy in giving your canine companion food prepared at home, your dog has a better chance of living a *longer* and *healthier* life, especially compared to dogs that are given commercial food that only has the *minimum* amount of nutrients needed to sustain a healthy canine body.

### **Canine Nutrition Demystified**

To better understand the nutritional needs of dogs, we must explore each of the major nutrients that our canine companions need in order to live long and healthy lives.

Like humans and other animals, dogs need a balanced intake of nutrients for continuous growth and tissue repair. Lack of sufficient nutrients in a dog's diet can cause stunted growth, poor healing after injury, and a decidedly shorter lifespan compared to dogs who are receiving optimum nutrition.