

## Carla Oates



## The Beauty Chef

Carla Oates, otherwise known as Sydney-based skincare guru *The Beauty Chef*, believes that beautiful skin begins in our digestive tract. As *The Beauty Chef*, Oates provides formulas and recipes that help revive problematic skin by rebalancing our all-important gut bacteria. The former beauty editor and author of *Feeding Your Skin* has a line of topical products, as well as powders, that are centered on organic wholefoods with a strong focus on natural pre and probiotics. Rather than a quick fix, Oates is dedicated to providing healthy and natural solutions to all of our skincare woes.

**Tell us about your background and how it has influenced your work as *The Beauty Chef*.**

I was working as a beauty editor about 15 years ago and became concerned with the amount of toxic chemicals in skincare. I had always been interested in holistic health so I started researching the benefits of looking after your skin with clean ingredients, predominantly super active plant compounds that rejuvenate the skin from the inside out. I made the decision to write only about natural and organic health and beauty, and to delve deeper into researching and formulating organic products to offer women healthier options. I had eczema as a child and when I was a teenager I saw a naturopath who changed my diet. This had a profound impact on my skin. From there, I understood the importance of what you put in your body for good skin health.

I was offered a book deal with Penguin and I wrote *Feeding Your Skin*. It was after this that I began formulating recipes and products. *The Beauty Chef* believes that good skin begins in your gut. Our motto is "Beauty begins in your belly" and natural, active skincare follows. I have been researching and writing about the positive effects of natural and organic skincare for the last decade, and at the same time I have been formulating products for myself and my research.

**Our stomach is often referred to as our second brain. Can you explain what this means?**

If you're working toward more radiant and glowing skin, you might be surprised to know that the answer lies more in your digestive tract than on how much you're spending on creams and cleansers.

Our gut is where 70 percent of our immune system lies: where we make nutrients, metabolize hormones, neutralize pathogens, and make detoxifying enzymes. All of these things can wreak havoc on our skin if they are not in balance. More and more research is showing this gut/skin link. For example, a lack of hydrochloric acid in the gut is implicated in skin problems such as acne and rosacea. Lactic acid bacteria (found in our fermented products) helps increase levels of this acid. Poor digestive health means that the lining of our gut becomes more permeable than it should (also called "leaky gut"). Food particles can slip through and our immune system sees those as foreign substances. This leads to an inflammatory response in the body, and one of the main effects we see is skin disturbance, such as eczema, acne and dermatitis. When we restore healthy digestion, our skin can

revitalize. The fermentation process and probiotics found in our Glow Powder work together to help get the digestive system back on track. Fermented foods promote better digestive health, leading to greater absorption of nutrients and an improved liver. Probiotics are billions of good bacteria that keep the digestive system healthy and boost the immune system of the body and skin.

**You mention that gut flora plays a huge part in our physical wellbeing—both inner and outer. What are some common culprits (food and general lifestyle) that can disrupt this inner harmony?**

Our unique bio-fermentation process, Flora Culture, causes food to become much more digestible and tolerated. The Flora Culture process unlocks nutrients and magnifies their benefits, as well as creates probiotics. Our formulas are living foods, packed with natural pre and probiotics, which aid digestion, boost immunity and help balance the digestive system for optimal internal and external health. At *The Beauty Chef*, our powders are designed to help balance you on the inside, so you glow on the outside. Stress, pollution, refined and processed foods, unfiltered water, sugar, as well as foods that are hard on the digestive system such as gluten and dairy, can all disrupt our gut flora, triggering inflammation. Also, we are made up of ten times more bacteria than cells, so the nature of that bacteria is very important for our overall health—it is the very fabric of what we are made up of.

**Your philosophy is based on a diet of organic and whole foods. What are some simple ways that this can be integrated into everyday living?**

Eating well (lots of organic greens and veggies, clean sources of protein and good fats) encourages the growth of good bacteria. Try to go not only low GI, but low HI—opt for low human intervention foods. That means eating plenty of whole foods that are provided by nature, not foods that are tainted by human hands or processed in a lab. Also eat foods rich in prebiotics. Prebiotics help boost the growth of friendly bacteria. These include non-digestible food substances found in asparagus, bananas, endive, chicory, garlic, globe, Jerusalem artichokes, leeks, onions, sauerkraut, shallots and yoghurt. Lacto-fermented foods such as sauerkraut and kefir are great as well. The combination of prebiotics and probiotics helps promote a healthy gut more than either consumed alone. I always favor organic foods—they're far richer in nutrients and free of nasty chemicals that compromise gut health.