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10 MINUTES  
20 MINUTES  
BIG BATCH

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# QUICK & EASY

PLANT-BASED  
DELICIOUSNESS



OVER 100 VEGAN RECIPES

DELICIOUSLY  
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To Skye, the centre of our world

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**QUICK  
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Food photography: Nassima Rothacker  
Portrait photography: Sophia Spring  
Food Styling: Tamara Vos  
Prop Styling: Olivia Wardle  
Hair and makeup: Sjaniël Turrell  
Senior Production Controller: Susan Spratt

Yellow Kite  
Hodder & Stoughton Ltd  
Carmelite House  
50 Victoria Embankment  
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[www.deliciouslyella.com](http://www.deliciouslyella.com)



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- NUT FREE indicates recipes that are, or can easily be made, nut free – often that simply involves switching almond milk to oat milk. If you have any allergies read the recipe carefully.
- FREEZES WELL highlights the recipes we think are brilliant for batch cooking and freezing, so that you have meals for busy days.
- LUNCH BOX suggests great on-the-go options that taste delicious when you're out and about or at your desk. Some of these are best at room temperature, others – like the stews and dhals – need to be reheated, either quickly in a pan or in a microwave.

# A FEW NOTES BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

These are a few notes about the ingredients, methods and equipment we use – they should help make the recipes even easier for you to cook with.

We use medium-sized fruit and veg unless otherwise stated.

Onions and garlic are assumed to be peeled unless we've suggested otherwise.

We like to cook with sea salt, but feel free to use whatever you like best and adjust the levels to suit your taste. Where the recipe does specify a certain type (sea salt flakes) it's because the flavour and/or texture will make a difference to the outcome of the recipe.

We don't use any fancy equipment, but a blender and a food processor are pretty essential for making these recipes (we have a Magimix and a NutriBullet). We also use a spiraliser in one or two, but you could use a Y-shaped peeler or julienne peeler to the same effect (except for the Lemony courgetti with spinach pesto [here](#) where we do recommend a spiraliser to get the right texture).

## SWAPS

### GLUTEN-FREE FLOUR

We use spelt flour in some of our recipes for the texture and taste. Spelt flour contains the gluten protein, and therefore isn't gluten free. For any recipes where we use spelt flour, you can replace this with plain gluten-free flour. Sadly buckwheat, rice or coconut flours don't work as substitutes – using one of these will completely change the texture of the recipe so we recommend plain white gluten-free flour which will work perfectly.

## **COCONUT SUGAR**

Coconut sugar has a rich, caramel flavour, which we love, but this sugar can be a little harder to come by, and more expensive, so you can replace it with brown sugar or golden caster sugar for a pretty similar result. Unfortunately, you can't swap it for maple, date syrup or any other liquid sweetener as the consistency of the recipe would not be the same.

## **NUTS**

The majority of nuts and nut butters can be swapped for alternative nuts, especially when used as a topping or a base in smoothies. If you can't eat nuts, however, you can also replace nuts with sunflower seeds most of the time. With cashews, which we use to make thick, creamy sauces, you can swap them for sunflower seeds for the best result, or silken (not firm) tofu for a similar effect. You can swap nut butters for sunflower seed butter or tahini, but the taste will be a little different.

## **PLANT-BASED MILKS AND YOGHURTS**

Oat and almond milk can be used interchangeably, so any recipe using almond milk can be made nut-free this way. We use coconut yoghurt in place of plain yoghurt, so you need to ensure that it has no sweeteners added. We like COYO's best but

Coconut Collaborative is also good. You can also swap it for Greek yoghurt.

## **CHICKPEA WATER**

We use chickpea water in some of our baking recipes to create a light, fluffy texture – it's the best replacement for eggs that we've found. If you're not looking for a vegan recipe it can be replaced with egg whites (substitute 1 egg white for 45ml of chickpea water) and whipping the egg whites into stiff peaks. We don't think there is any other vegan substitute for this and it has to be the water from a tin; you can't get the same effect by using the water from boiling dried chickpeas.

## **TIPS AND TRICKS**

### **MELTING COCONUT OIL**

If a recipe calls for you to melt coconut oil, it is important to do this before using it to ensure the recipe mixes well. Simply place it in a saucepan over a medium-low heat, and heat gently until it melts, which takes just a couple of minutes. Don't let the coconut oil come to the boil otherwise it will give the recipe a burnt taste.

### **ROASTING NUTS AND SEEDS**

Preheat the oven to 180°C fan. Place the nuts or seeds on a baking tray and roast for 10 minutes until golden.

### **ROASTING GARLIC**

Preheat the oven to 180°C fan. Separate the cloves, peel them and place on a baking tray – you can bake them dry or use a



drizzle of olive oil. Roast for 10 minutes, then leave to cool before storing in an airtight container in the fridge for up to a week.

## **FREEZING LEFTOVER VEG**

Harder vegetables (like green beans, broccoli, carrots, cauliflower) all keep their texture when frozen. Allow them to thaw a little before roasting or adding to cooking. Softer vegetables that become very soft during cooking (such as spinach and kale) all freeze well in blocks and can be added directly into soups and stews.

## **REHEATING RICE**

Rice can be a hazardous ingredient to work with because it is very susceptible to bacteria. It should not be left out of the fridge for long periods of time and should never be reheated more than once. Our general rule is to eat rice fresh when you first make it, or cool it down in the fridge very quickly to enjoy the next day – reheat it very thoroughly, ensuring it's piping hot.

## **BLENDER VS. FOOD PROCESSOR**

Whenever we are making something with a more liquidy consistency (smoothies, sauces, dressings) we use a high-speed blender (like a NutriBullet). Blenders are designed to use liquid in order to break things down and have smaller blades, so can be overwhelmed by thicker, harder consistencies. We use food processors for any recipe that doesn't have a liquid. A general rule we tend to follow is that food processors can be used in place of blenders, but blenders should not be used in place of food processors, as they can often overheat and break.

# STORE CUPBOARD INGREDIENTS

These are the staples that make cooking easy. We use them time and again so once you've got them in your cupboard, you have what you need to make the recipes in the book. This list might look like a lot, but it covers all the basics, from dried herbs and spices, to vinegar, mustard and flour, and since we use them repeatedly you'll be using them all the time. I promise you won't have to buy anything that'll just sit and collect dust on a shelf!

## OILS, VINEGARS & CONDIMENTS

- Olive oil
- Toasted sesame oil
- Tamari
- Apple cider vinegar
- Rice vinegar
- Balsamic vinegar
- Mustard (Dijon and wholegrain)
- Nutritional yeast (we like Marigold Engevita)
- Vegetable stock cubes
- Brown rice miso paste (we like Clearspring)
- Harissa paste (or see recipe [here](#))
- Tomato purée
- Maple syrup

## NUTS, SEEDS & NUT BUTTER

- Tahini (we like Belazu)
- Sesame seeds
- Pumpkin seeds
- Sunflower seeds
- Almond butter (we like the one by Biona and Pip & Nut)
- Peanut butter (we like Manilife and Pip & Nut)

## DRIED HERBS & SPICES

Mustard seeds  
Ground cumin  
Ground turmeric  
Chilli flakes  
Cayenne pepper  
Cinnamon  
Ginger  
Paprika  
Medium curry powder

## **TINS**

Chopped tomatoes  
Coconut milk (we like Biona)  
Chickpeas (plus the water from the tin)  
Black beans  
Butter beans

## **DRIED INGREDIENTS**

Dried green lentils  
Pasta Rice

## **MILK & YOGHURT**

Cartons of oat/almond milk (we use Rude Health)  
Coconut yoghurt (we use COYO)

## **BAKING**

Bicarbonate of soda  
Baking powder  
Buckwheat flour  
Spelt flour  
Plain flour (gluten-free or normal)  
Jumbo and porridge oats  
Almonds  
Cashews  
Cacao powder  
Coconut sugar (or brown sugar)  
Coconut oil  
Chia seeds  
Bar of dark chocolate (we like 70% cocoa solids)  
Medjool dates

Raisins



# INTRODUCTION

My interest in the health and wellness space started in 2011. For those who don't know the back story, that's when I was diagnosed with a condition that impaired the functioning of my autonomic nervous system, and after a few months in and out of hospital, I was prescribed a list of medications the length of my arm, none of which really worked. A year later, my mental and physical health reached rock bottom, and I knew something had to change; that's when I started wondering whether diet and lifestyle could help in some way. In 2012 I started eating a plant-based diet, which at the time felt so alien to almost everyone around me. I can't tell you how many eye rolls and exclamations of 'but what will you eat?!' I got, and the looks of utter horror my green smoothies would receive. Nonetheless, I persevered, and eventually got my friends and family on board by showing them how delicious it could be, and over the last eight years I have totally fallen in love with plant-based cooking and a calmer, gentler, more natural lifestyle. It has truly been transformational.

The world has changed a lot since the 'what will you eat?' days of 2012, and I've been enormously humbled to see Deliciously Ella credited as a trailblazer in the health revolution. I've had what feels like a front seat at the development of wellness and have watched with fascination as this space has transitioned from niche to mainstream. It feels as though the wellness industry has developed at lightning speed and with

that has come a whole host of absolutely brilliant concepts, as well as a series of weird, wonderful and downright bizarre offerings. On the more unusual end of the spectrum I've seen snacks made out of crickets and other dried insects; been invited to stand in my pants in a near freezing cryotherapy chamber; been emailed about vitamin IV drips, offered cups of non-caffeinated lattes made of medicinal mushrooms and \$35 bowls of açai with goat's colostrum and collagen; tried a turkey made of tofu ('tofurkey'), as well as vegan 'prawns', vegan 'smoked salmon' and so much more. We've had peaks of media-backed trends (you couldn't move for kale a few years ago, when even Beyoncé wore a jumper emblazoned with the word KALE on it) and an array of fads that have created quite a buzz. There have been some great conversations around the potential power of lifestyle changes, but there have also been fallouts over whether the space has gone too far and has reached a point where it's intimidating and confusing rather than welcoming and inclusive.

But however you feel about health and wellness, and whatever your views on the need to add medicinal mushrooms to your diet or not, the culture that exists both around food and health in general has undoubtedly changed, and we're no longer simply a meat and two veg kind of country. Plant-based diets and flexitarianism are sky-rocketing in popularity and human health is no longer the sole consideration for the shift in the way we are eating in the twenty-first century. Environmental and ethical concerns have heightened as a result of stark new studies showing the positive effect of a plant-based diet on the environment; the realities of the meat and dairy industries on animal welfare have been exposed; and we're now at a point where every major high street chain

has a vegan offering of some kind as a result of this shift. The speed of this change and the sometimes niche offerings, however, have caused a lot of confusion and it feels right to start the book from this position.

I'm a very open-minded person and love challenging the status quo, but I can also be slightly sceptical. Prior to changing my own diet, I would never have imagined that something I had totally dismissed up until that point could be so life-changing. Likewise, I had no idea that practising yoga would lead me to a place of calmness and peace within myself that I didn't know existed, so I always encourage anyone coming to this space to do so with a sense of open-mindedness and exploration. I have tried a lot of wellness concepts, from acupuncture to reflexology, reiki, energy healing, colonic irrigation, acro yoga, infrared saunas, craniosacral therapy, sound baths, crystal healing, CBD oil, Ayurveda, gratitude journals and an array of other alternative therapies. Some of these practices I have loved: acro yoga, for example, feels unbelievable; CBD oil helped the joint pain that I've suffered with forever; I totally understand the power of a gratitude journal in helping to reframe our thinking from negative to positive; and I would definitely go back to an infrared sauna and a sound bath. That said, some of these treatments can feel a bit strange or alienating, and can even be off-putting or feel elitist, as they can be hard to access or are expensive. The more I think about this, the more I start to ask myself what it is that actually defines 'wellness', why does it matter, and how do we make it accessible for everyone?

It sometimes worries me when I see people posting photos of their adaptogenic mushroom collagen latte on Instagram, not



because it might not taste good or provide a health benefit, but because what happens if we feel that this is the only way to be healthy, and a simple veggie stir-fry or a banana, spinach, oat and almond smoothie can't do the trick? This begs a second, and arguably even more important question; are we making these changes for self-care and self-preservation, and genuinely doing them to positively impact our physical and mental health, or are we doing them solely for aesthetic purposes – just to look a certain way – and in doing so could we be doing things that aren't so good for us? Are there moments in which we're using these wellness concepts in a negative way or feeling alienated by them?

It feels to me as though the simplicity of making small changes to feel happier, healthier and just more excited about life can get a little lost among the weird and the wonderful, and the more I see this the more passionate I feel about trying to make the wellness space feel more reasonable, achievable, enjoyable and sustainable, which is where I hope this book comes in.

***I've learnt that there is no one clear definition of being healthy, and certainly no one right way to do it.***

Before we get any further into this, I just want to take a moment to flag that even though I appreciate the phrase 'wellness', it may not resonate with everyone. I realise it can sound a little cheesy and perhaps even self-indulgent or elitist to some, but there is a huge amount of science behind so

many of the practices that sit under the umbrella term of 'wellness'. With the rising decline in our mental and physical health, making lifestyle changes and incorporating some of these practices into our daily habits and lives does feel timely and incredibly important. We're at a point in the UK where only one in four of us gets our five fruit and veg a day and roughly one in four of us will also experience a mental health problem this year. As anxiety, low mood, depression and lifestyle-related diseases rise, and our choices around the way we consume are having such a profoundly negative impact on the planet, we're at a point where the need to change the way we eat, cook and live appears more evident and relevant than ever.

So please try and ignore any frustration you may have with the terminology if it doesn't immediately connect with you, and come back to the core of the rationale behind it – finding simple, everyday tools, resources and recipes to help us all feel a little healthier and happier.

So, what does wellness mean? As I started writing this book I asked our readers to define what wellness meant to them. From the thousands of responses I received there were some clear themes, all of which tap into the importance of the concept, even if the wording isn't quite right for us all. The main answers were: balance; self-love; happiness; nourishing my mind and my body; listening to my body; being content in all aspects of my life; feeling good physically and mentally; taking steps every day to feel healthy and happy; feeling good in my own skin; waking up feeling strong; positive and healthy; being kind to myself, others and the planet; and being happy and healthy so that I can live my life to the

fullest. The World Health Organization defines wellness as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'. Evidently, there's a collective belief that it's about nourishing our mental and physical health, so the next question; is what are the tools we need to do that and how do we achieve the ever-elusive 'healthier and happier'? And most importantly, how do we achieve it in a way that fits into a busy lifestyle and without it breaking the bank?

Ultimately, I've learnt that there is no one clear definition of being healthy, and certainly no one right way to do it. Since I started my own journey, I've come to learn that feeling healthy is not just about what goes on to my plate. It isn't solely defined by how much broccoli or kale I eat or even whether I get my 10 portions of fruit and veg a day. If I'm overly stressed, tired or run down then I don't feel my best. Likewise, if I don't make time just to stop and consciously breathe for a minute or move my body then I don't feel as energised and positive as normal. As some of you may have read in *The Plant-Based Cookbook, 2017* was an extremely challenging year for me and my family. Work was incredibly stressful; Matt's totally extraordinary mum was suddenly diagnosed with terminal brain cancer; my parents were going through a difficult divorce; and a few of my old health issues started flaring up again. I was still making healthy meals, but I definitely wasn't taking care of myself properly and it quickly became clear that I needed to do that in order to find the inner strength required to get through this difficult period. I learnt that yoga before work changed my outlook on the day, that listening to positive podcasts on my way to work or when I was out walking put me in a better frame of mind, and that

calming music made us relax so much better at home; a 10-minute meditation before bed helped us sleep better and dissolved a lot of those late-night worries; as did turning my phone off and reading a chapter of a book before bed rather than emailing and scrolling through social media. They were simple changes – they weren't about adopting big fancy trends, crazy expensive undertakings or huge commitments – but those small tweaks made the world of difference and I wanted to learn more about why they helped.

Following a tough year with lots of self-exploration and the habit changes I've outlined, as well as reading a swathe of new studies on health, Matt and I launched the Deliciously Ella podcast with the aim of learning more about the impact the way we lead our lives has on our health and well-being. I've always been fixated with the concept of 'why'; I think you have to know why you're doing something and why it works in order to feel motivated to do it. When it comes to our health, we're constantly told to do things: eat five portions of fruit and veg a day (it's actually now 10 portions); walk 10,000 steps a day; get our heart rate up for 30 minutes five or so times a week; meditate; sleep for eight hours; manage our stress; eat more fibre... but why?! We decided to invite a leading expert on to each episode to give us the why: to help us understand what happens in our brains and our bodies when we do these things, whether it actually matters and what potential biological or chemical difference the changes can make to us.

Since the podcast launched back in 2018, we've learnt about gut health and the way in which our gut is connected to the brain; we've learnt about the power of exercise on our mental

health and how moving our bodies in certain ways can even help forge new pathways in our brains. We've talked about the powerful impact of veganism on the environment as well as the astonishing issues surrounding food waste. We've looked at our stress levels and how they can result in loneliness, technology addiction and fragmented relationships, as well as how they can negatively affect our physical health. We have spent hours looking at cultivating optimism and a glass-half-full attitude, as well as what we can learn about happiness from other cultures.

We've talked through how to get a balanced vegan diet and have unpicked diet myths; what calories really are and how to navigate all the conflicting advice within the nutrition space. Each guest has offered us a fascinating new insight, and Matt and I have embedded the advice we've received into our lives and seen brilliant results in our overall sense of well-being. This was especially important in our journey to parenthood last year, as things were busier than ever. I decided to make these incredible takeaways the cornerstone of this book and I hope they'll be as insightful and helpful to you as they have been for us.

Like so many of you, Matt and I have busy lives juggling work and home in what can feel like a game of spinning plates. Building Deliciously Ella is something we are both so incredibly proud of, but it hasn't been without its challenges. Feeling great isn't easy and takes day-by-day dedication, but it doesn't need to be nearly as complex as it's sometimes made out to be – that's what the advice and recipes in here are all about: fuss-free, simple, delicious ways to feel better. I hope

you'll love cooking the recipes – we can't wait to hear how you get on.

***Feeling great isn't easy and takes day-by-day dedication, but it doesn't need to be nearly as complex as it's sometimes made out to be.***





CHAPTER 1  
BREAKFAST



# HOW TO EAT A BALANCED PLANT-BASED DIET

When it comes to our health, there seems to be a slight disconnect between being told something is good for us, and us following through on implementing that information. We all know, for example, that we should eat our five to ten portions of fruit and veg a day; it's one of the only non-disputed concepts in nutrition, yet we're such a long way off making that happen – just one in four adults and one in five children in the UK get five-a-day right now. Why is that? I believe a big part of this is because most of us don't really know why we should do it. It's no good being told what to do, if we don't understand how and why it'll benefit us, and I'm the ultimate case study for this.

If I'm honest, I'd never adhered to these guidelines before I got unwell and changed my diet, not because I wasn't aware of them but because I didn't understand the reasoning behind them and why my body needed the vitamins and minerals they referred to. Like so many others, I also thought veggies were mostly pretty boring compared to a burger or pick-and-mix so I tended to lean towards those foods instead. It wasn't until my health hit rock bottom in 2012, when I could no longer cope with the fear, depression, pain and exhaustion that I was living with as I grappled with my illness, that I realised I needed to learn more.

It was one thing to say I needed a transformation, but it was

another actually to implement such a huge shift, especially as I disliked almost all of the foods that I now love and that fill my kitchen and the pages of this book. The way I motivated myself was by learning, and as I started to get to grips with the phenomenally-intricate, awe-inspiring processes that are going on inside our bodies every second of every day, making a change became easier and easier.

Each bit of information I read pushed me one step closer to finding a way to love the foods I didn't before because I came to respect the fact that eating a plant-rich diet was central to my mental and physical health, and I knew that I'd be so much happier if I could live the life I wanted to rather than feeling ill and being bed-bound. It was equal parts empowering, inspiring and depressing. Part of me couldn't believe I didn't know this before and that learning about the power of nutrition wasn't a central part of our school curriculum (that's an issue for another day!), but at the same time I was really excited by the information I now had and the idea that implementing it could have such a profound impact on my life, which it did. It took me four years to get my health stable, but it is stable now and I treasure that more than I can say, so I continue to look after myself and focus on prevention for the future, and I want Deliciously Ella to be a resource for anyone that wants to do the same.

There are endless facts, stats and figures on the benefits of eating more plants on our podcast, which is my favourite way to explore this topic as each week we interview experts in their field and get a detailed understanding of specific issues. One of the areas that stands out most though is how good it is for our gut and how impactful that is for our overall health.

I've been really interested in the gut since I started my health journey. I had a lot of digestive issues, from swelling and severe bloating to pains, cramps, upset stomachs and lots more. I actually looked more pregnant when I was ill than I did when I was over five months pregnant with our daughter; that's how bad it got. In the past I've swallowed cameras and had tubes stuck down my throat in a bid to understand what was going on, but no one could ever really explain my health issues or find a traditional medicine for them, however changing my lifestyle was a turning point. Improvements didn't happen overnight by any means, and they came hand in hand with the work I did with a nutritionist, as well as things like taking probiotics and introducing a regular yoga practice, but my lifestyle shift made the world of difference and registered dietician Dr Megan Rossi was one of the people that really helped me understand why. In our podcast interview with Megan she explained just how central our gut health is to our overall wellbeing:

- Our gut is directly linked to our brain via the gut-brain axis, which means that our gut is in constant communication with our brain and therefore impacts on our mental health, as well as our physical health.
- About 90% of our serotonin, our happy hormone, is made in our guts, again showing the link between our gut and our well-being.
- A staggering 70% of our immune cells live within our guts, so we need a healthy gut for a healthy immune system.
- Our gut needs fibre, which we find in plant-based foods: fruit, veg, grains, nuts, seeds and pulses. Megan describes

fibre as the gut bacteria's 'favourite food' and suggests that for optimal gut health we should aim to include 30 different plant-based foods in our meals each week. I tried making a note of my list each week and it was so interesting to see how easy it is to just stick with a few favourites, so try switching up your veggies in a stir-fry, blending some roasted veggies into hummus, adding a handful of greens into your pasta, adding different toasted nuts and seeds to salads, and extra beans and pulses to your curries and stews.

- When it comes to our current fibre intake, the guidelines say most adults should be aiming for about 30g of fibre each day, but the UK average is about 19g a day, so we're a pretty long way off. To give you a few examples of how you could get 30g today: one cup of cooked chickpeas gives you about 12.5g of dietary fibre (best reason to eat lots of hummus); one cup of oats gives you about 8g of fibre (overnight oat time!), one cup of cooked quinoa gives you about 5g of fibre (Green quinoa risotto for dinner, see [here](#)); three Medjool dates give you about 4.8g (dip them in a jar of nut butter for such a good snack).

***Our gut needs fibre, which we find in plant-based foods: fruit, veg, grains, nuts, seeds and pulses. For optimal gut health we should aim to include 30 different plant-based foods in our meals each week.***

If you are thinking about shifting your diet to include more plants or plant-based meals then you may be wondering how to make it a healthy, balanced diet – that was certainly one of my first questions. I did a lot of reading when I first changed my diet to get to grips with the fact that you could actually get calcium, iron, protein etc. from a vegan diet, something that I'd never really appreciated before. I've since had a lot of questions from friends, family and readers curious about the same thing, so I wanted to devote the rest of this chapter to clearing up any confusion and outlining exactly how to eat a balanced vegan diet.

We did a podcast on this, which you'll find in season two, with the brilliant Alice Mackintosh, a registered nutritional therapist who supported me in getting my health back, and this is a summary of what she had to say, alongside a little insight into why plants are so good for us and why we at Deliciously Ella care so much about them.

## **WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A PLANT-BASED DIET**

### **PROTEIN**

Your body contains thousands of different proteins, all of which are made from amino acids. There are 20 different amino acids that combine to form these proteins, 11 of which can be made by your body and 9 of which can't be; these ones must come through your diet. Lots of plant sources of protein only contain four or five of these amino acids, which means you need to eat a variety of ingredients each day to get the full spectrum and create complete proteins. The average adult

needs between 45g and 56g of protein per day (this increases if you are more physically active or pregnant) and reaching this by choosing plant-based sources isn't too difficult as long as you're aware you need to. In terms of getting adequate protein, a typical day might look like the following (you would need to include all of these, not just one): two tablespoons of hemp seeds in your porridge or overnight oats; a cup of beans with a handful of toasted almonds in a salad at lunchtime; one tablespoon of peanut butter with crudités or crackers as a snack; and one cup of quinoa with roasted veggies and a tahini dressing for dinner.

Good sources of vegan protein are:

- Tofu, tempeh and edamame: these are all complete proteins. For anyone wondering about the difference between tofu and tempeh – tofu is made from bean curds pressed together and tempeh is made by cooking and slightly fermenting mature soybeans before pressing them together. Tofu doesn't really taste of anything on its own but absorbs all the flavours of anything it's cooked with, so preparation is key here. Tempeh has slightly more flavour, but again mostly takes on the flavour of a marinade. I much prefer the texture of tofu which is why I use it more.
- Quinoa: like tofu, tempeh and edamame, quinoa is also a complete source of protein.
- Lentils, chickpeas and beans: as well as being a source of protein, they're all full of dietary fibre and important nutrients.

- Hemp seeds: I find these an easy way to get more protein in; they don't taste of much and can easily be sprinkled on to a variety of dishes and drinks – I add them to smoothies, breakfast bowls and my avocado toast. You want to buy the shelled version; these are much softer than the ones still in their shell, which are very hard, crunchy and not easy to cook, blend or eat.
- Peas: such a simple ingredient but really rich in protein, I always have some in my freezer.
- Nuts, nut butters, seeds and tahini: these are great as they are so versatile – I add nut butters to my porridge, granola bowls, overnight oats, muesli, pancakes and smoothies, as well as sauces and dressings. Similarly, you can add a sprinkling of nuts and seeds to pretty much any recipe – I find they're more delicious when lightly toasted as they give a great crunch (see [here](#) for how to do this).

## IRON

Iron has many important roles in the body. It's crucial for energy, hair health, thyroid health, immunity and brain function. About 70% of your body's iron is found in red blood cells where it binds and transports oxygen around the body – this means that if levels drop you can really notice it, with low energy, feeling dizzy/faint, struggling with exercise and concentration. Because of menstruation and child bearing, women have a higher risk of deficiency and therefore need to eat more iron (around 14g/day) than men (around 9g/day). Iron comes in two forms in our food: haem iron is only found in animal sources and is easily absorbed, whereas non-haem iron is found in plant sources and isn't absorbed as efficiently, so

we need to be conscious of eating enough iron-rich foods to keep our levels high enough. That being said it's a mineral that a vast number of people are deficient in no matter what diet they follow, so eating enough iron is something we all need to be aware of.

Iron requires vitamin C for absorption, so having vegetables or fruit alongside grains and nuts is recommended and it's worth noting that tea and coffee can also reduce absorption of iron, so leaving space between these drinks and meals can help.

Don't be afraid of cooking veggies either: they shrink when they are heated so cooking iron-rich vegetables like spinach, kale or coriander means you can eat more of them, meaning you get more iron.

Great sources of plant-based iron include: lentils, chickpeas, beans, tofu, quinoa, beetroot, cacao, sesame seeds, tahini, pumpkin seeds, spinach, Swiss chard, kale, dried apricots, dates, figs and raisins.

## **CALCIUM**

Calcium is required structurally by the body for bones and teeth, but also keeps our blood at the right pH and is needed for muscle contractions. We tend to associate calcium-rich foods with dairy products, but plant-based foods contain equally good levels of calcium meaning it isn't difficult for vegans to get enough, as long as you're eating a variety of different foods. Eating a wide variety of ingredients every day makes getting all the vitamins and minerals you need a lot easier. Vitamin D is required for calcium absorption in the gut, so having your levels checked yearly is really important,



especially if you aren't exposed to much sunlight or have darker skin tones, as vitamin D comes from sunlight.

Great sources of plant-based calcium include: cabbage, kale, bok choy, okra, broccoli and cauliflower, sesame seeds and tahini, almonds, edamame, tofu, flaxseeds, lentils, dried figs and prunes.

## **HEALTHY FATS**

There has been a lot of fear around fat for decades, but our bodies need a constant supply of the right types of fat to stay healthy. Healthy fats work to support our mood, memory, hormone balance, immunity, cardiovascular health and joints, as well helping to keep skin glowing and hair glossy, so we want a good amount of omega-3, -6 and -9 fatty acids. Unlike the typical antiquated 'diet advice' we used to hear, research now shows that we don't need to be afraid of saturated fats, as they are supportive of immunity, energy and brain health. The plant-based foods that contain some beneficial saturated fats (such as those found in peanuts, macadamia nuts, avocado, coconut oil) also tend to contain other nutritious compounds such as fat-soluble vitamins, fibre and anti-oxidants. When possible, we want to lessen the amount of the not-so-good fats such as trans-fats found in margarine and deep-fried food. A plant-based diet rich in nuts, seeds, avocado and olive oil tends to contain good levels of omega-6 and -9 fatty acids, however deficiency of omega-3 is more common since these are predominantly found in oily fish. It is important to keep the ratio of omega-3 to -6 balanced. Walnuts, flaxseed, milled chia, green leafy

vegetables and spirulina are good plant-based sources of omega-3 so look to include these whenever you can.

It is worth remembering that these plant-based omega-3s (ALA) need converting into active forms (EPA, DHA) in order to fulfil their functions in the body and this requires magnesium, B6 and zinc, again showing how important a balanced diet is overall as nothing works alone in our bodies. A plant-based diet is naturally lower in saturated fats, but getting a modest intake from coconut oil, tahini, peanuts and macadamia nuts is still recommended.

## **ZINC**

Another important nutrient to consider is zinc, which is needed throughout the body, and is involved in over 300 reactions that keep immunity, mood, energy, hormones, skin and memory working properly. It is a nutrient that becomes easily depleted in those that are stressed, drink alcohol, smoke or do a lot of long-haul air travel. Zinc is found in lower levels in plant-based foods, so it is important to make sure you give special attention to it to help discourage deficiencies, especially as it helps you process omega-3 properly in the body. The best sources are tahini, sunflower seeds, cashews, pumpkin seeds, chickpeas, lentils and raw cacao. Hemp seeds are also a good source, and three tablespoons will provide almost 40% of the recommended daily intake of zinc for women – I try and add two tablespoons to my breakfast every morning.

## **IODINE AND CHOLINE**

These are two lesser-known nutrients that we should all be aware of. Around 90% of adults in the UK don't reach the daily recommended levels of choline, and this is especially important for pregnant women who require higher levels. Choline is important for many bodily functions as it is involved in methylation reactions that help to support DNA formation, detoxification and fertility. It's also needed to keep the brain healthy and to support concentration, memory and mental agility.

Good plant-based sources of choline come from tahini, edamame, chickpeas, chard, broccoli and sprouts.

A recent analysis of women in the UK found that 77% are deficient in iodine, which is needed for thyroid function, hormone balance and energy. Iodine is found in seafood and dairy, so plant-based eaters can be at higher risk of deficiency. However, topping up levels is easy – seaweed, samphire, green beans, kale, spring greens and watercress are all good sources, with seaweed being especially rich in iodine, although not as easy to come by.

## **SUPPLEMENTING B12**

If you're eating a varied, balanced plant-based diet then you should be able to get everything you need from your diet except B12, which is found solely in animal products. B12 is required for DNA synthesis, detoxification, fertility, hormone balance, brain function and the nervous system. The impacts of B12 deficiency are far-reaching, so getting your levels checked every year is a must if you have eaten plant-based for more than 6 months and plan to continue. If you do need to supplement, then it's advisable to consult your doctor or a

nutritionist about what dose you might need but choosing an absorbable form is a good idea such as methyl-cobalamin and adenosylcobalamin. I use one from the brand Cytoplan.

I've been taking B12 for the last five years or so – it's the only supplement that I take continuously, with vitamin D during the winter. I get my levels of everything mentioned above tested every year through Alice and they're all at great levels, so it's definitely more than doable.

If you have a listen to our podcast episode with Alice (How to Get a Balanced Vegan Diet), as well as Nutrition 101 and Diet Myths Unpicked with Rhiannon Lambert then you'll get even more information on the above, but the most important thing to remember is that there is no such thing as perfect; some meals will be more balanced than others and that's okay – it's about what we do over a lifetime, not a day, that matters.



# TURMERIC & COURGETTE PANCAKES

We've been making variations on these pancakes for years and they're still a firm favourite; the ideal savoury brunch recipe and a dreamy quick lunch or dinner too, especially with lots of pesto. This recipe makes more pesto than needed for the two pancakes, but you can keep the leftovers in an airtight container in the fridge for up to two weeks. It's very versatile, so is great to have in the house; we use the extra in pasta, spread on toast and sandwiches, stirred through quinoa, mixed into a salad dressing or tossed through roasted veggies.

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**MAKES 2 LARGE PANCAKES (ENOUGH TO SERVE 2); THE PESTO MAKES 1 SMALL BOWL**

olive oil

1 small red onion, finely diced

1 garlic clove, crushed

150g gram flour (chickpea flour)

handful of coriander (about 10g), roughly chopped

1 teaspoon ground turmeric

½ teaspoon cayenne pepper

juice of 1 lime

1 small courgette, grated using the large holes on a grater

## **FOR THE ALMOND & AVOCADO PESTO**

1 ripe avocado, peeled and stoned

100g almonds, toasted (see [here](#))

25g basil

juice of 1 lemon

sea salt

2 garlic cloves, roasted (see [here](#))

5 tablespoons olive oil

pinch of sea salt  
5–6 tablespoons water

## TO SERVE

handful of cherry tomatoes, chopped  
handful of rocket  
handful of sunflower/pumpkin seeds

- 1.** Start by making the pesto. Place all of the ingredients, except the water, in a blender or food processor with a pinch of salt and blend until it all comes together. We like to pulse the mix so that the almond stays a little crunchy, but you can also whizz it until it's totally smooth if you'd rather. Add a tablespoon of water at a time until you reach your desired consistency.
- 2.** For the pancakes, place a large frying pan over a medium heat and add a drizzle of olive oil and a pinch of salt. Once the pan is warm, add the onion and garlic and cook for 5–10 minutes, until soft.
- 3.** While the onions and garlic cook, continue making the pancake mixture. Place the gram flour in a bowl and slowly pour in 200ml of water, whisking until the mix is smooth and there are small bubbles on the surface.
- 4.** Stir in the coriander, spices, lime juice and a pinch of salt and give it a final whisk, then stir in the cooked onion and garlic and the grated courgette.
- 5.** Place the frying pan back on a medium heat, adding a drizzle of olive oil if needed. Once warm, pour in half of the pancake mix – you want it to be about 1cm thick. Let the pancake cook for 2–3 minutes, until the top side is no longer runny. Then flip and let it cook for a further 2 minutes on the other side. Repeat with the other half of the pancake mixture.
- 6.** To serve, place the pancakes on two plates, pile high with the pesto, cherry tomatoes, rocket and seeds.





# FOUR SAVOURY TOASTS

 NUT FREE

I know it can be harder to think of easy savoury breakfasts, so I wanted to share four of my staples. They all take about 10 minutes to make and come together so quickly. I quite often end up making one of these for dinner too; after a long day you can't beat a pile of creamy mushrooms on toast or simple smashed avo with mustard.

# PAN-FRIED BALSAMIC TOMATOES

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SERVES 2

olive oil

1 small red onion, finely diced

2 garlic cloves, finely diced

250g cherry tomatoes, halved

1-2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

2 slices of toast (we like rye or sourdough)

salt and pepper

- 1.** Place a frying pan over a medium heat and add a drizzle of olive oil and some salt. Add the onion – it should cook for about 10 minutes before you add the other ingredients.
- 2.** Stir in the garlic then add the tomatoes and a tablespoon of the balsamic vinegar and taste, then add the other tablespoon if you need it. Let everything cook together for 2 minutes or so, until the tomatoes soften.
- 3.** Divide between the slices of toast and serve.



# GARLICKY BEANS

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SERVES 2

olive oil

4 large garlic cloves, diced

1 teaspoon dried rosemary

1 teaspoon dried thyme

1 × 400g tin of butter beans, drained and rinsed

1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar

2 slices of toast (we like rye or sourdough)

salt and pepper

- 1.** Place a frying pan over a medium heat and add a drizzle of olive oil. Once warm, add the garlic, dried herbs and a pinch of salt. Cook for a minute or so, then add the beans and apple cider vinegar. Give it all a good stir and leave to cook for another 5 minutes, until soft.
- 2.** Add a good pinch of salt and pepper, divide between the toast, adding lots of olive oil before serving.

# CREAMY GARLIC MUSHROOMS

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SERVES 2

olive oil

2 garlic cloves, diced

1 teaspoon dried thyme

200g chestnut mushrooms, thinly sliced

3 tablespoons plain yoghurt (we use a pure coconut yoghurt)

squeeze of lemon juice

2 slices of toast (we like rye or sourdough)

salt and pepper

- 1.** Place a frying pan over a medium heat and add a drizzle of olive oil. Once warm, add the garlic, thyme and a pinch of salt. Cook for a minute or so, then add the mushrooms and give it all a good stir. Leave to cook for another 5 minutes until the mushrooms are golden and tender.
- 2.** Just before serving, add a good pinch of salt and pepper and stir through the yoghurt and lemon juice.
- 3.** Divide between the slices of toast and serve.



# SMASHED MUSTARD AVOCADO

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SERVES 2

2 ripe avocados, peeled, stoned and chopped

1 teaspoon mustard seeds

½ teaspoon Dijon mustard

squeeze of lemon juice

pinch of chilli flakes

1 tablespoon olive oil

handful of sunflower seeds, toasted (see [here](#))

2 slices of toast (we like rye or sourdough)

salt and pepper

- 1.** Mash the avocado with all the ingredients, except the sunflower seeds, adding salt and pepper.
- 2.** Divide between the toast and sprinkle the sunflower seeds over the top.

# QUINOA BREAD

● FREEZES WELL ● LUNCHBOX

This is one of my favourite recipes in the book and a real staple. It's such a delicious breakfast, either on its own with some olive oil and a sprinkling of salt, or with lots of nut butter, smashed lemony avocado, or hummus and a handful of rocket. I also use it as a snack; it's filling and a nice savoury option to have on hand. It's meant to be a little soft and crumbly, so it isn't brilliant in the toaster.

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## MAKES 1 LOAF

100g quinoa (either white or tricolour works well)  
2 tablespoons chia seeds  
200g jumbo oats  
100g ground almonds  
4 tablespoons olive oil  
350ml almond milk  
4 tablespoons tahini  
1 tablespoon maple syrup  
2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda  
pinch of salt  
60g pumpkin seeds, plus a small handful for the top

1. Preheat the oven to 175°C fan. Line a 23 × 13cm loaf tin with baking paper.
2. Place the quinoa in a saucepan with 400ml of boiling water and cook until the water is absorbed and the quinoa is fluffy – this should take 10–12 minutes. Once cooked, remove from the heat and leave to cool.



- 3.** While the quinoa cooks, place the chia seeds in a small bowl with 3 tablespoons of water, and stir every now and again until a thick, gel-like mix forms – this should take about 10 minutes.
  
- 4.** Next, place the oats in a food processor and pulse until a rough flour forms – you want some oaty texture but not whole oats. Add the ground almonds, olive oil, almond milk, tahini, maple syrup, apple cider vinegar, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda and salt and blend until it all comes together.
  
- 5.** Transfer the mixture from the processor to a mixing bowl. Stir the quinoa and the chia seed gel into the bowl along with the pumpkin seeds. Mix well.
  
- 6.** Spoon the bread mix into the lined tin, scatter over the extra pumpkin seeds and bake for 90 minutes, until cooked through – you can check it by inserting a knife; it should come out clean.
  
- 7.** Once ready, take the loaf out of the oven and leave to cool in the tin for at least 1 hour. The loaf will finish setting in this time so it is really important to try and leave it to stand – the longer you leave it, the easier it will be to cut. The loaf will last for up to a week when stored in an airtight container at room temperature.





# MUSHROOM & MISO PORRIDGE

 NUT FREE

I know this sounds weird; I found the concept of savoury porridge very strange at first too, but you've got to trust us on this one – it's incredibly delicious. Think of it as more of a hearty, savoury breakfast or brunch risotto rather than your classic sweet porridge with some mushrooms on the top. I also make this for a speedy dinner during the week; it's warming, delicious and so easy after a long day.

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## SERVES 2

120g jumbo oats (don't use porridge oats as they'll cook too quickly)

1 onion

1 garlic clove

olive oil

250g mushrooms (any variety will work; sliced if large)

3 teaspoons brown rice miso paste

juice of 1 lemon

100ml boiling water, plus more for soaking the oats

50ml almond or oat milk

1 tablespoon almond butter (to make it nut-free you can leave this out)

1 ripe avocado, sliced

salt and pepper

- 1.** Start by soaking the oats. Place them in a heatproof bowl with a pinch of salt and cover with boiling water – pour the water to the top of the oats, so that they're just covered. Leave them to sit for about 10 minutes.
- 2.** While the oats soak, finely dice the onion and garlic – you want the onion to be really small so that it mixes with the oats and you don't have big chunks.

- 3.** Place a saucepan over a low heat, add a drizzle of olive oil and a sprinkling of salt. Once warm, add the onions and garlic and cook for 10 minutes, until soft – you want them to melt into the porridge, so you need to cook them slowly and gently until they’re soft and translucent.
- 4.** Place a separate pan over a medium heat and add a drizzle of olive oil. Once warm, add the mushrooms and a pinch of salt and pepper and cook for 5–10 minutes. Once the mushrooms have softened and browned, stir through 1 teaspoon of the miso paste and half the lemon juice, then turn the heat down until the oats are ready.
- 5.** Once the onions are soft, stir the soaked oats into the onion pan – the oats should have absorbed all the water they were soaking in at this point. Turn the heat up to medium and add the oat milk, then gradually add the 100ml of boiling water, while continuing to stir every few minutes.
- 6.** Add the other half of the lemon juice, the rest of the miso and the almond butter (if using), stirring them through and checking the consistency of the oats, adding a splash more water if they feel too thick.
- 7.** When the oats are ready, stir half the mushrooms into the porridge.
- 8.** Spoon the oats into two bowls and top with the remaining mushrooms, followed by the sliced avocado. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.

**TIP** *A little sriracha or hot sauce on the top is delicious.*

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# BEETROOT PANCAKES

 NUT FREE

I know beets aren't always the most popular veggie, but they bring such great colour and flavour to these pancakes. Who doesn't want to start their day with a pink meal?! They're delicious for an easy lunch or dinner too. I love them served with the dip that goes with our Crunchy Mexican salad (see [here](#)), or with the Horseradish sauce [here](#).

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## SERVES 2

120g plain flour (we use a gluten-free flour)  
75g cooked beetroot (try not to get ones with flavourings; see TIP)  
150ml almond or oat milk  
juice of ½ lemon  
handful of parsley, finely chopped  
olive oil  
salt

## TO SERVE

about 2 tablespoons coconut yoghurt  
Pan-fried mushrooms (see TIP)

1. Place the flour, beetroot, almond milk, lemon juice and salt in a food processor and pulse until you have a smooth mixture.
2. Tip into a bowl and stir through the parsley.
3. Place a large frying pan over a medium heat and add a drizzle of olive oil. Once warm, add 2 tablespoons of pancake mixture to the pan and let it cook for 2–3 minutes, until the top is no longer runny. Flip the pancake over and

let it cook for a further 2 minutes. You can make several at a time, depending on how large your pan is.

**4.** Repeat until you've used up all your mixture – you should be able to make six small pancakes.

**5.** Top each serving with 1 tablespoon of coconut yoghurt and half of the pan-fried mushrooms.

**TIP** *We usually use store-bought cooked beetroot. If you're doing this, you need to buy it without added vinegar or other flavourings. If you'd like to use fresh beetroot, preheat the oven to 180°C fan. Peel and cut the beetroot into small pieces and place in a baking tray with a drizzle of olive oil and cook for 35–40 minutes until soft. Once soft, remove from the oven and leave to one side to cool a little.*

**TIP** *To pan-fry the mushrooms; roughly chop 100g mushrooms. Place a frying pan over a medium heat and add a drizzle of olive oil. Once warm, add the mushrooms with a pinch of salt and pepper and cook for 5–10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until soft.*

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# SIMPLE FIVE-INGREDIENT BREAKFAST COOKIES

## 🟡 LUNCHBOX

These are not fancy cookies at all, they're simple, quick, healthy cookies filled with fibre and plant protein. They're the kind of recipe that I make for keeping our family nourished when we're busy. We use them for on-the-go breakfasts, as well as mid-morning pick-me-ups and our daughter Skye absolutely loves them. If I'm having friends over, I'll make our Nut butter chocolate chip cookies [here](#) – they're a little fancier and sweeter, but these are our go-to at home and I couldn't recommend them more for anyone needing a naturally sweet, healthy, speedy bite.

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### MAKES 6 COOKIES

2 large (or 3 small) overripe bananas (about 270g), peeled  
1 tablespoon coconut oil, melted  
130g porridge oats  
3 tablespoons almond or oat milk  
4 tablespoons smooth peanut or almond butter (it needs to be creamy not dry)  
handful of raisins, pinch of cinnamon, chocolate chips or a pinch of salt (optional)

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C fan. Line a baking tray with baking paper.
2. Place the bananas in a mixing bowl, then mash until smooth and creamy. Add the coconut oil, oats, almond milk, nut butter and any extras to the mixing bowl, before stirring it all together.
3. Spoon 1 large tablespoon of the cookie mixture into your hands and mould into a ball. Place the ball on the lined tray and flatten a little to make a

cookie shape. Repeat until all of the mixture has been used and you've made about six cookies. Bake for about 15 minutes, until golden, then remove from the oven and leave to cool to room temperature. Store the cookies in an airtight container for up to 5 days.



# SWEET POTATO MUFFINS

● NUT FREE ● FREEZES WELL ● LUNCHBOX

If you need a great on-the-go breakfast, then these are for you. They're not too sweet, really nice and fluffy and easy to take around with you. If I do want something a little more indulgent then I love adding some dark chocolate chunks and/or raisins – both taste brilliant.

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MAKES 12

2 sweet potatoes (about 350g), chopped into cubes no bigger than 1cm  
250g spelt or buckwheat flour  
200g ground almonds (or use plain flour for a nut-free version)  
5 tablespoons maple syrup  
300ml almond or oat milk  
3 tablespoons coconut oil, melted  
1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
pinch of salt

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C fan. Line a 12-hole muffin tray with cases.
2. Place the sweet potato on a baking tray and cook in the oven for 30–35 minutes until soft. Once soft, remove from the oven and leave to one side to cool.
3. Once the sweet potato has cooled, place it in a food processor with all the remaining ingredients and pulse until smooth.

**4.** Divide the mixture evenly among the muffin cases, spooning it in until they are each around two-thirds full (you may have a little mixture left) and bake in the oven for 25–30 minutes, until well-risen and cooked through. Store the muffins in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

**TIP** *If you want sweet muffins, add around 100g chocolate chips or raisins into the mixture after processing.*

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# FOUR FAVOURITE SMOOTHIES

## 🟡 LUNCH BOX

These have been my go-to smoothies for the last year. I love the green ginger smoothie when I want a health kick (I usually make it with celery juice as the base to up my greens); the tahini, banana and yoghurt smoothie as an afternoon pick-me-up; the mocha and peanut butter for my sweet tooth and when I feel like a tired mama who needs an energy boost; and the mango raspberry smoothie bowl for a midweek breakfast, topped with lots of granola (see [here](#) and [here](#)).



# GREEN GINGER SMOOTHIE

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SERVES 1

200ml apple juice, almond or oat milk, or celery juice (see TIP below)

1 ripe banana, peeled

½ ripe avocado

small piece of ginger (about 2cm), peeled

1 heaped tablespoon almond butter

handful of spinach (frozen or fresh)

2–3 ice cubes

**1.** Place all the ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth and creamy.

**TIP** *If you want to make this using celery juice, roughly chop 3 large stalks of celery (about 100g) and place them in the blender with 200ml of water. Blend until smooth, then strain the liquid using a nut milk/jelly bag or a fine sieve to remove the pulp – this should leave you with about 250ml of juice.*

# TAHINI, BANANA & YOGHURT SMOOTHIE

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## SERVES 1

150ml almond or coconut milk

1 ripe banana, peeled

2 teaspoons creamy tahini (we love Belazu)

1 tablespoon plain yoghurt (we use a pure coconut yoghurt)

1 tablespoon porridge oats

1 Medjool date, pitted

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

½ teaspoon ground turmeric

3 ice cubes

1 teaspoon shelled hemp seeds (optional)

**1.** Simply place all the ingredients in a blender and pulse until smooth and creamy.

# MOCHA & PEANUT BUTTER SMOOTHIE

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SERVES 1

150ml almond or oat milk

1 ripe banana, peeled

1 heaped tablespoon peanut butter

1 shot of espresso coffee

1 heaped teaspoon cacao powder

1 tablespoon porridge oats

3 ice cubes

**1.** Simply place all the ingredients in a blender and pulse until smooth and creamy.

# FROZEN MANGO & RASPBERRY BOWL

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SERVES 1

large handful of frozen mango (about 100g)

large handful of frozen raspberries (about 60g)

handful of frozen blueberries (about 40g)

1 tablespoon chia seeds

1 tablespoon almond butter

100ml almond, oat or coconut milk

handful of granola (see [here](#) and [here](#)) if you want to make your own, to serve

**1.** Simply place all the ingredients in a blender and pulse until smooth. As this one is a thick, creamy bowl you want to have the texture of soft-serve ice cream, which means it will be a little trickier and slower to blend – we stop the blender a couple of times and give the mixture a good stir to make it easier.

**TIP** *Add 1 tablespoon of açai powder to turn this bowl into an açai bowl with a really rich berry-like flavour.*

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# BUCKWHEAT GRANOLA

 NUT FREE

This is a staple at home. It's simple, crunchy, filling and so speedy. I have it most days just with almond or oat milk, but it's also delicious sprinkled on to a smoothie or açai bowl. For anyone not familiar with them, buckwheat groats are the hulled seeds of the buckwheat plant – they are small and round, and have a pretty mild flavour. Despite what the name suggests, they are gluten free, and are a nice alternative to oats at breakfast or rice/quinoa at lunch and dinner. They go much crunchier than oats when baked, which is why I love them in granola.

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MAKES 1 MEDIUM JAR

50g unroasted buckwheat groats  
120g jumbo oats  
2 tablespoons maple syrup  
25g coconut oil, melted (or sunflower oil)  
handful of sunflower seeds (about 20g)  
handful of pumpkin seeds (about 20g)  
handful of coconut chips (about 20g)  
1 tablespoon desiccated coconut  
large handful of raisins (about 60g)  
50g puffed rice

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C fan.
2. Place the buckwheat groats in a baking tray and roast for 35–45 minutes until golden, stirring occasionally.
3. Turn the oven down to 140°C fan.

**4.** In a large baking tray, stir together the oats, maple syrup, coconut oil, sunflower seeds and pumpkin seeds. Spread the mixture evenly over the tray and bake for about 40 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes or so, until golden. Add the coconut chips and desiccated coconut for the last 5 minutes.

**5.** Remove the tray from the oven and leave to cool. Once the granola reaches room temperature, mix through the raisins, puffed rice and roasted buckwheat groats.

**6.** When the granola is completely cool, store it in an airtight container at room temperature. This granola will last for a few weeks.

**TIP** *If you don't let the granola cool completely before storing, it will go soggy rather than staying crunchy.*

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# SALTED COCONUT & CACAO GRANOLA

 NUT FREE

We're all big granola fans at Deliciously Ella – it was one of our original recipes and one of the things we wanted to roll out into shops across the country. This chocolate version is our most moreish yet; the buckwheat makes it extra crunchy and the subtle salty hints in each bite give it depth. I eat this by the handful from the jar, but it's also delicious with coconut yoghurt and fruit for breakfast, sprinkled over porridge for crunch, or poured on to a creamy smoothie bowl.

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## MAKES 1 LARGE JAR

200g unroasted buckwheat groats

100g jumbo oats

60g coconut chips

40g desiccated coconut

3 tablespoons coconut oil

4 tablespoons cacao powder

6 tablespoons maple syrup

4 tablespoons coconut sugar

sea salt

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C fan.
2. Place the buckwheat, oats, coconut chips, desiccated coconut and a large pinch of sea salt in a bowl and mix well.
3. Next, place a saucepan over a low heat and gently heat the coconut oil, cacao powder, maple syrup and coconut sugar, stirring as you go, until the

coconut oil has fully melted – be careful not to let it come to the boil as that can burn it and ruin the flavour.

**4.** Once melted, pour into the dry ingredients and stir, making sure that everything is well mixed.

**5.** Finally, spread the granola over a large baking tray and bake for 30 minutes, stirring halfway through to make sure it toasts evenly. Once it's nice and crunchy, remove from the oven and leave to cool completely.

**6.** Store in an airtight container at room temperature. The granola will last for a few weeks.

**TIP** *If you don't let the granola cool completely before storing, it will go soggy rather than staying crunchy.*

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# 10-MINUTE APPLE PANCAKES

 NUT FREE

Matt is a pancake obsessive – he would have them every day for breakfast if he could – so these are a staple in our house. They couldn't be easier to throw together and I love the mix of cinnamon, apple and maple – it gives them such great flavour. We normally have them just with lots of almond butter during the week or with these baked apple slices at the weekend.

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## MAKES 6 PANCAKES

200g plain flour (we use gluten-free) or use self-raising flour to make them extra fluffy  
150g porridge oats  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon, plus extra to serve  
300ml almond or oat milk, plus more if needed  
5 tablespoons unsweetened apple purée (we like the Biona one)  
2 tablespoons maple syrup  
1 teaspoon chia seeds  
coconut oil, for frying

## FOR THE BAKED APPLE

1 apple, halved and cored  
½ tablespoon coconut oil, melted  
1 teaspoon coconut sugar  
ground cinnamon

**1.** If you're making the baked apple, preheat the oven to 180°C fan. Cut each apple half into around 5 slices and mix with the coconut oil, coconut sugar and a pinch of cinnamon. Spread out on a lined baking sheet and bake for 10 minutes until golden.

- 2.** Place the flour, oats, baking powder and cinnamon in a bowl and slowly pour the almond or oat milk into the mixture, whisking until smooth.
- 3.** Add the apple purée, maple syrup and chia seeds and stir through then give the mixture a final whisk. It should be a smooth, thick batter – but you can add a little more almond or oat milk if you need to.
- 4.** Place a large frying pan over a medium heat and add the coconut oil – we normally start with about half a tablespoon. Once melted, spoon 3 tablespoons of batter into the pan to make a round pancake. Let it cook for 1–2 minutes, until the top is no longer runny, then flip it over and let it cook for a further 2 minutes.
- 5.** Repeat with the rest of the mixture until all of the pancakes are ready. You can keep them warm in an oven set to 120°C fan if needed.
- 6.** Serve the pancakes with the baked apple slices and a pinch of cinnamon.





CHAPTER 2

DIPS & DRESSINGS

# MAKING HEALTHY EASY, MORE AFFORDABLE AND SUSTAINABLE

We've talked a lot about why we should take care of ourselves, and why eating more plants and nourishing our minds and bodies makes a difference to our overall well-being. In this chapter I want to talk about the how: how to make eating well a little easier, how to do it on a tighter budget, how to cut down on food waste, eat more seasonally as well as offering other tips and tricks to make a healthy lifestyle a little more sustainable and enjoyable. Before we get into that though I just want to touch on why a plant-rich diet can be so beneficial for the planet.

## PLANTS FOR THE PLANET

It has become increasingly clear in the last few years that we are facing a climate emergency and that one of the easiest, most plausible ways to make a positive impact is by changing our diets. For the podcast we were lucky enough to interview the Oxford scientist Joseph Poore, who led the biggest study to date on farming and the environment. Joseph studied 40,000 farms in 119 countries and concluded that a vegan diet was 'the single biggest way to reduce your impact on the earth'. As with the power of veggies on our health, there is so much to say here:



- We could reduce global greenhouse gases by up to 28% if the entire world went vegan. Half of this would come from planting trees on the farmland that would no longer be needed, as we'd need 3.1 billion hectares less farmland to meet the needs of a vegan population.
- Agriculture is one of the most polluting industries on the planet, and the meat and dairy industries produce about 60% of agriculture's greenhouse gas emissions – believe it or not the meat and dairy industries create more greenhouse gases than the transport industry.

Do we have to go fully vegan to reap the benefits above? I know this is a big ask for a lot of people and I'm not a huge fan of making massive changes overnight – it's tough to make them last. I think things like this need to feel gradual so that they're not overwhelming. The good news is that you can still have a huge positive impact on the planet by switching to a flexitarian diet (following a semi-vegetarian diet, not permanently excluding any meat or fish but with the majority of your meals being focused around plants), which I think is really exciting as it feels like a more plausible solution and something that we could all start to do right now.

According to the latest research, taking this approach means the average world citizen would need to eat 75% less beef, 90% less pork and half the number of eggs, while tripling their consumption of beans and pulses and quadrupling the amount of nuts and seeds they eat. In rich nations like the UK and the US, the dietary changes required are even starker; we'd need to cut beef consumption by 90% and milk by 60% while increasing beans and pulses by between four and six

times. The study estimated that doing this would halve harmful emissions from livestock.

One of the negatives I hear all the time about healthy eating is that it's very expensive. Somehow it has become synonymous with superfoods, fancy powders and hard-to-get-hold-of ingredients, which can be off-putting for some and totally out of the realms of possibility for others, and we really appreciate that. However, cooking nutritious, plant-based meals really doesn't need to be expensive, especially not your everyday recipes and weeknight staples. Beef can cost about four times the price of dried green lentils, for example, while chicken can be about three times more. It's just about choosing your recipes and making staples like lentils a big part of your shopping list. I've shared a few other tips below, because removing cost as a barrier for entry feels incredibly important if we want to change the way we're eating as a society:

- Stock your cupboard with our kitchen staples (see [here](#)) – it makes the world of difference. You can buy them in bulk which means that you're ready to go when you get home from work – you just need to stop and pick up a couple of fresh ingredients. The easier it feels to make the recipes the more likely you are to make them, or at least that's what I find. If I know that all I need to buy is onion, garlic and spinach then I'm much more likely to stop, buy them and cook from scratch.

***The easier it feels to make the recipes the more likely you are to make them,***

***or at least that's what I find. If I know that all I need to buy is onion, garlic and spinach then I'm much more likely to stop, buy them and cook from scratch.***

- Focus on ingredients like beans, pulses and grains, which are all relatively cheap, easy to cook with and easy to get hold of. They are really filling too, as they're full of both fibre and protein, so you can make them the centre of a healthy, balanced meal. These kinds of recipes are also ideal for batch cooking and freezing, which cuts down on food waste as you can use a whole bag of carrots, spinach etc. and you can make extra so that each meal goes a little further, saving you time and energy later in the week.
- Shopping seasonally helps, especially if you are able to get to a farmers' market, but I know that's often easier said than done.
- Buying frozen berries, frozen spinach and other frozen veggies makes a big difference. Not only are they normally cheaper, they again make healthy eating easier as you can stock your freezer with them and know that you've got them ready to go.
- If I'm short on time and don't have any fresh food I'll make a quinoa, butter bean, spinach and pea bowl, which is delicious and so simple. I boil some quinoa, stirring in some frozen spinach and a tin of butter beans at the end, once that's hot, I add some mustard, salt and cider vinegar. As

the quinoa cooks, I boil some frozen peas, then once soft I blend them with salt, olive oil and a splash of cider vinegar (or a lime/lemon if I have one), then pop the quinoa and the pea purée in a bowl. I have a 10-minute meal straight from my cupboard and the freezer – easy, cheap, filling and packed with good stuff.

Some of our favourite recipes for cooking on a budget

- [Easy red lentil dhal](#)
- [Camilla's risotto](#)
- [Tomato risotto](#)
- [Mushroom & miso porridge](#)
- [Garlickly beans on toast](#)
- [Lemony potato, asparagus & courgette \(just swap the asparagus if not in season\)](#)
- [Aubergine & lentil Bolognese](#)
- [Simple five-ingredient breakfast cookies](#)

***The other thing that makes a huge difference, both to our wallets and to the environment is using our leftovers. The stats around food waste are terrifying:***

*currently a third of food produced around the world goes to waste.*

## **AVOIDING WASTE**

The other thing that makes a big difference, both to our wallets and to the environment is using our leftovers. The stats around food waste are terrifying; we've been working with the brilliant food-sharing app Olio since we opened the deli and have learnt a huge amount from the research they've conducted. Right now, a third of all food produced around the world goes to waste, which amounts to about a trillion US dollars' worth of produce every year. What's more, we're using an area roughly the size of China and 25% of the world's fresh water supply to grow the food that goes straight into the bin. To put that into context, if food waste was a country it would be the third largest emitter of greenhouse gases after China and the US.

It's easy to dismiss the problem as something that happens in shops and restaurants, but sadly that's not the case at all. In most developed countries, over half of all food waste is happening at home and in UK households we throw away about 25 million slices of bread, 6 million potatoes and over a million bananas every day. While, in the US, a third of all bread produced goes to waste and about 150,000 tons of food is thrown away every day – equivalent to about a third of the daily calories each American consumes.

We all want to stop climate breakdown and make a difference, and avoiding food waste is one of the easiest,

most straightforward things that we can do, and we can do it today. We don't need government schemes, engineering breakthroughs or new laws to make a change, we can simply take control of what we buy and how we use it so that we never throw anything away again. If we all did this and moved to a largely plant-based diet, we could make a fundamental shift that would help protect the planet for our future. Here are some of the ways that I've changed our habits at home and helped us use everything:

- Don't be nervous about freezing food. Always freeze leftover bread; that way you can just pop a slice straight into the toaster from frozen and have peanut butter banana toast in minutes, for example. Frozen ripe bananas make the best smoothies. So if you're not sure you'll use your bananas straight away or they're too brown and spotty to snack on, just peel and slice them, pop them into a bowl or a freezer bag and keep them in your freezer. It'll make each sip of a smoothie so much thicker and creamier and again means that you will always have what you need on hand for a healthy breakfast. If you have leftover stews, curries, sauces and soups, freeze them in batches, portioning them out and letting them cool before you pop them in the freezer. The recipes in the Big Batch chapter are perfect for this (see [here](#)).
- Adapt recipes. Lots of recipes can be added to or adjusted really easily to use leftover odds and ends in the fridge like a spare carrot or potato. I find stews, soups and curries are the best places to sneak in leftover veg. Our Aubergine & lentil Bolognese (see [here](#)) would be delicious with things like tomatoes, spinach or peppers, for example, while our

Giant couscous & almond salad (see [here](#)) would taste great with some grated carrot stirred into the mix, and our Peanut & sesame veggie noodles (see [here](#)) would honestly work with just about any veg from cauliflower to green beans, kale, peppers, celery and so much more.

- Try spicing up your leftover ingredients by turning them into delicious dips, sandwich fillings, salads or soups. If you make an excess of hummus, for example, then use it in a sandwich the next day, layering it on to rye with roasted veggies and rocket; add it to a packed lunch with a grain salad or adapt it a little by putting it back into the blender with a new ingredient like roasted red peppers with smoked paprika, an avocado (the dream) or some leftover roast carrots and sweet potatoes. Likewise, if you have leftover Aubergine & lentil Bolognese (see [here](#)), which you served with rice for dinner then bake a jacket potato a few days later, fill it with the Bolognese, top with a squeeze of lime and you have a quick, easy and inexpensive way to stop waste.
- If you can, try to find a local greengrocer so that you can buy what you need rather than having to get a big bag of each veggie when you might only want two carrots or one potato. These places don't have to be fancy or expensive, just smaller scale producers where you can buy single, seasonal ingredients.

We've had lots of questions from readers on seasonal recipes, as our audience is based all over the world and we have readers cooking the same recipes in London, Melbourne and LA, so it's tricky to do a one-size-fits-all with seasonal options

as it'll be different depending on where you're based. If you're able to, have a look at what's in season for you and try to include those ingredients whenever you can as they tend to taste a lot better, be a little cheaper and a little more sustainable.

I love the flavours you get from seasonal produce. We're lucky enough to have a Saturday farmers' market around the corner from our house and I grew up next to London's Borough Market, so I've always loved going around the stalls and seeing what's on offer. It's a fun way to shop and makes menu planning so much easier because you're immediately filled with inspiration and a sense of connection to the earth, to where the produce actually comes from, and the changing of the seasons.

We've included a little list of what fruit and vegetables to look out for if you're UK-based. This doesn't include everything – we've focused on the ones that we use most, which should give you a sense of the types of foods that grow brilliantly at each time of the year and which recipes will be best when.

## SUMMER

- **Tomatoes:** you can't beat local, seasonal tomatoes when they're sweet, juicy and plump. When they taste that fresh, I love serving them as simply as possible so that you can really appreciate just how brilliant the flavour is. All summer I pan-fry sliced cherry tomatoes with olive oil, crushed garlic and lots of salt and pile them high on fresh sourdough – it's absolute heaven.



- **Courgettes:** my mum used to grow a lot of courgettes and by the end of the summer we'd have stacks of them, so we'd have to eat them with every meal! Courgetti with fresh pesto was a real favourite, as were pan-fried courgettes tossed into pasta with fresh tomatoes and basil. We'd add them to every salad too – they're great raw, when really thinly sliced, adding a gentle crunch to recipes.
- **Aubergines:** try our Pulled aubergine dip (see [here](#)) or roast until tender with toasted sesame oil and miso.
- **Cucumbers:** the ultimate summer veggie, I like them best in noodle bowls or juiced with fresh apples, celery, lemon and ginger.
- **Berries:** blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, strawberries, cherries. I only buy fresh berries in the summer (the rest of the year I go for frozen ones), so I always really appreciate that first punnet. They're amazing baked in cakes, made into compotes, served fresh or even frozen in ice lollies.
- **French beans:** another from my mum's garden and Matt's favourite. I love them with red onion, mustard seeds and lime, or stirred through Camilla's risotto (see [here](#)).

## AUTUMN

- **Mushrooms:** possibly my most used vegetable, they're so easy to cook with and are brilliant when you're short on time as they cook quickly. I use them for pastas, stir-fries and warm salads at this time of year. I try to use seasonal mushrooms as much as I can. I pan-fry them with crushed

garlic, olive oil, sea salt and pepper and pile them on to sourdough for the most delicious brunch.

- **Squash:** you can get every type of squash at this time of year; butternut squash is the one we all know and love, but there are many other delicious types including acorn, carnival, Delicata squash and many more. Kabocha squash is incredible – it's so sweet and tender when you bake it.
- **Apples and pears:** perfect for those autumn fruit crumbles with toasted maple, cinnamon and oat toppings and sides of coconut ice cream. I'm also a huge fan of apple compote, which is perfect on porridge on a cold morning.
- **Celeriac:** one of the ugliest vegetables around, but such a delicious ingredient. My family love baked celeriac fries – they're absolutely delicious. My mum always used to make us celeriac mash too, which she'd mix with potatoes, olive oil and lots of salt and black pepper; it was my sister's absolute favourite.

## WINTER

- **Beetroot:** I've always found that a lot of our readers are a bit nervous of beetroot and it has never been a massively popular ingredient at the deli either. I think it's one of those veggies that works brilliantly when you cook it well and feels overly earthy and a bit bland when you don't. My go-to is to use it in hummus; I love blending roasted chunks of beetroot into thick, creamy tahini and lemon hummus.

- **Cauliflower:** one of the most versatile veggies. I love keeping it simple, roasting it with ground turmeric, chilli flakes, black pepper, salt and olive oil.
- **Celery:** a great staple for all stews, curries and soups, it just adds so much flavour.
- **Potatoes:** who doesn't love a roast potato, crispy on the outside, fluffy on the inside – heaven!
- **Jerusalem artichokes:** a really underrated vegetable, but delicious when you get it right. I absolutely love them roasted until really tender and tossed with crispy kale and toasted hazelnuts in a warm salad.
- **Kale:** so good for us and very easy to use. The Creamy kale & mushroom salad [here](#) is my go-to; I'm obsessed with it and couldn't recommend it more.
- **Brussels sprouts:** another hit-or-miss veggie, but really good sliced then roasted until golden and crispy with lots of salt, balsamic and toasted hazelnuts.
- **Parsnips:** always remind me of Christmas. I love them roasted in a tray with carrots and sweet potatoes with a little maple syrup – they make the easiest, most delicious side.

## SPRING

- **Broccoli and Tenderstem:** something I always have in the fridge, versatile and easy to cook with.

- **Lettuce, rocket, spinach and salad leaves:** leafy greens are really good for us; I try and have a couple of portions a day if I can.
- **Carrots:** perfect in soups, stews, salads and as crudités. I always drizzle over lemon juice and add a sprinkling of salt to the carrot sticks to give them more flavour.
- **Asparagus:** something I look forward to all year, asparagus just tastes so good when it's fresh. In season it's delicious served simply, just lightly charred on a griddle pan with olive oil and salt. It always feels like such a treat when you get the season's first bunch.
- **Fresh peas:** my mum used to grow these and we loved podding them! They taste exceptionally delicious fresh, and we add them raw to salads and quinoa bowls, or have them lightly cooked with lime juice and salt.

As we've said throughout the book, there's no such thing as perfect with any of this. I hope this has given you some good ideas when it comes to being a little more mindful about the way we cook, shop and live but equally it's close to impossible to buy and make everything from scratch every time, and I certainly don't do that.

## **FINDING INSPIRATION EVERY DAY**

Finding inspiration and connection sits at the root of everything we've talked about so far – it's not just about connecting to the food we eat, but to how we feel and the life we're living. In many ways we're living in a world of

contradiction: the words wellness and self-care are thrown around like there's no tomorrow; they're seemingly at the front and centre of everything we see and do these days, yet so many of us don't feel 'well' at all, we struggle to keep up with the trends in this space and there's a growing dichotomy between rising rates of lifestyle-related diseases and others committed to a healthier life, often with an economic chasm in the middle. This needs to change.

We're all looking for meaning, purpose and connection in our lives and are constantly being told that we're more connected than ever thanks to technology and social media, yet we feel increasingly lonely and isolated and are struggling to make those meaningful connections – levels of loneliness in younger generations are soaring. We're trying to create and even emulate the sense of perfectionism that we see in the highlight reels of the online space, comparing ourselves to others and in doing so heightening our innate fears of not being enough. It feels that we need to simplify things, to go back to basics, to connect to how we feel: to those around us, to what we buy, how we shop, the meals we make and how we look after ourselves.

It's okay to slow down a little, to say no to something in order to make a little more time for yourself, to care about how you look after yourself and to invest time and energy into educating ourselves so that we can make the little changes that make us healthier and happier.

I've learnt so much in the last eight years and feel as though I'm only just starting to scratch the surface. By no means is this book intended to be a comprehensive guide to life – that's

certainly not a plausible concept – but I hope it gives you a little inspiration, some food for thought and some ideas for quick, easy recipes to make plant-based cooking a little more fun, a little simpler and a lot more delicious.



# ARTICHOKE & CANNELLINI BEAN DIP

● NUT FREE ● LUNCH BOX

While I was pregnant, I was obsessed with artichokes; I couldn't get enough of them and would eat jars and jars a day. While I'm not eating them in such an intense way anymore, those months did really rekindle my love for them and I've been trying to use them more often. This dip is one of my favourite ways to use artichokes – it's so incredibly creamy thanks to the mix of yoghurt and beans, while the sautéed onion and garlic give it real depth.

---

## MAKES 1 BOWL

olive oil

½ onion, roughly chopped

2 garlic cloves, finely chopped

1 × 400g tin of cannellini beans, drained and rinsed

juice of 1 lemon

1 × 190g jar of chargrilled artichokes in oil, plus 3 tablespoons oil from the jar

2 tablespoons plain yoghurt (we use a pure coconut yoghurt)

salt and pepper

- 1.** Place the onion in a frying pan over a medium heat with a drizzle of olive oil and a pinch of salt and let it gently sauté for 5–10 minutes, until soft and translucent.
- 2.** Add the garlic to the pan and cook for a couple more minutes. Remove from the heat and leave to cool then put them into a food processor or blender.



**3.** Add the beans, lemon juice, drained artichokes, the 3 tablespoons of artichoke oil from the jar, the yoghurt and lots of salt and pepper. Blend until smooth and creamy.

**4.** Store this dip in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 5 days.

**TIP** *To save time for other recipes, chop the whole onion and freeze the other half in a sealable container. Use for other recipes.*

**TIP** *For a super speedy version of this dip, simply leave out the onion and garlic.*

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# SMASHED CHICKPEA SANDWICH

● NUT FREE ● LUNCH BOX

I used to love a tuna sandwich – there was something about the creaminess of the mix that did it for me and when I first went vegan I really missed that chunky, filling feeling you get from a sandwich like that. Then I started making this and it all changed! This filling takes just five minutes to put together and really hits the spot, it's a perfect busy day lunch and I love it with smashed avocado, slices of salty tomato and a little handful of lettuce, rocket or cress.

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MAKES ENOUGH FOR 2 GENEROUS SANDWICHES

1 × 400g tin of chickpeas, drained and rinsed  
1 small red onion, diced  
4 tablespoons Plain vegan mayo (see [here](#))  
juice of 1 lemon  
1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar  
4 tablespoons tinned sweetcorn, drained  
salt and pepper

## TO SERVE

4 slices of bread (we like rye or sourdough)  
1 ripe avocado, peeled, stoned and sliced  
1 large tomato, sliced  
handful of lettuce, rocket or cress

**1.** Place the chickpeas in a blender or food processor with half the onion, the mayo, the lemon juice, cider vinegar and some salt and pepper. Pulse a couple of times so that the chickpeas break down and form a chunky mixture.

You still want some of them to be mostly whole though – go slowly so that you don't blend them into a hummus!

**2.** Place in a bowl and stir in the sweetcorn and the rest of the red onion, mixing well.

**3.** Serve in a sandwich with the avocado, tomato, lettuce, lots of pepper and a pinch of salt.



# HARISSA-SPICED HUMMUS

🍷 NUT FREE 🍷 LUNCH BOX

Harissa is one of those ingredients that brings life to any recipe. It's just got such a brilliantly rich flavour and vibrant colour – a spoonful of it can make all the difference. As lots of our readers might have realised, I am a hummus fiend – it's one of my all-time favourite foods, and I think this is one of the most delicious versions. I make a batch for the week and have some with roasted veggies and quinoa for dinner and the rest for easy lunches. Try it in a pita with roasted veggies and a handful of fresh herbs.

---

## MAKES 1 BOWL

1 × 400g tin of chickpeas, drained and rinsed  
juice of 1 lemon  
2 garlic cloves, roasted (see [here](#))  
2 tablespoons tahini  
6 tablespoons olive oil, plus extra to serve  
1 heaped tablespoon harissa paste (see recipe, or TIP below)  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
1 teaspoon smoked paprika  
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon  
½ teaspoon ground turmeric  
salt

## HARISSA PASTE (MAKES 1 JAR)

35g dried red chillies (we like Chile New Mexico), roughly chopped  
5 sun-dried tomatoes, plus 3 tablespoons of oil from the jar  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
3 garlic cloves, roasted (see [here](#))  
1 teaspoon ground cumin

1 teaspoon ground coriander  
1 teaspoon smoked paprika  
1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar

## TO SERVE

pita breads or slices of toast  
roasted veggies  
pomegranate seeds  
pine nuts (optional; leave out to keep this nut free)  
chopped parsley

- 1.** First make the harissa paste (or see TIP below). Place the chillies in a bowl and cover with boiling water. Leave to soak for 1 hour.
- 2.** Drain the chillies and place in a blender, along with the rest of the ingredients – pulse until a paste forms.
- 3.** Place all of the hummus ingredients in a food processor or blender with 4 tablespoons of water and pulse until smooth. You can add a little more olive oil to make it a little smoother if you like. You may also find you need to add more liquid if you're using a blender rather than a food processor.
- 4.** Spoon generous amounts of hummus into each pita, top with the roasted veggies and a good sprinkle of pomegranate seeds, pine nuts, parsley, olive oil and salt.
- 5.** Store any leftover hummus in a sealed container in the fridge for up to 5 days.

**TIP** *Store-bought harissa also works well here (we love Belazu).*

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# CREAMY GREENS

 NUT FREE  LUNCH BOX

This is a great way to up your greens. It's so vibrant and really creamy thanks to the mix of avocado, tahini and almond milk. I use it as a spread in a sandwich with a handful of whatever I have in the fridge, such as rocket, pan-fried tofu and courgettes, or dollop it on to a bowl of brown rice, roasted sweet potatoes and veggies.

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MAKES 1 LARGE BOWL

150g frozen edamame beans  
2 small ripe avocados, peeled, stoned and roughly chopped  
juice of 1 lime  
25g jalapeño chillies (optional)  
large handful of coriander (about 10g)  
1 garlic clove, roasted (see [here](#))  
5 tablespoons almond or oat milk  
1 tablespoon tahini  
salt

- 1.** Start by blanching the edamame. Put them into a bowl, cover with boiling water and let them sit for 2–3 minutes, then drain well.
- 2.** Place all of the ingredients in a food processor, adding the chillies if you like it a bit spicy, and some salt, and pulse until smooth. You can add a little extra almond milk if you like it more creamy.



# ROASTED GARLIC & CHIVE SPREAD

🟡 LUNCH BOX

This recipe makes more spread than needed for one sandwich but you can keep the leftovers in an airtight container in the fridge for up to two weeks. It's so versatile – we use it as a dip with lots of delicious veggies, spread it on bagels and mix it into all kinds of sauces and dressings.

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MAKES 1 BOWL

4 large garlic cloves, roasted (see [here](#))

200g cashews (see TIP below)

150ml almond or oat milk

juice of ½ lemon

15g chives

salt and pepper

1. Squeeze the garlic out of the skins and put it into a high-speed blender with the cashews, almond milk, lemon juice, 10g of the chives and a pinch of salt and pepper. Blend until totally smooth and creamy. Spoon into a bowl.
2. Finely chop the remaining chives and stir them through the mixture before serving.

**TIP** *It's really important to let the garlic roast the full until really soft so that its flavour is balanced and it loses the sharpness of raw garlic.*

**TIP** *If you don't have a high-speed blender (we use a NutriBullet), soak the cashews in a bowl, covered with cold water, for at least 1 hour beforehand, as it'll help to soften and break them down, then drain them before using.*

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# SUN-DRIED TOMATO & CASHEW SPREAD

## 🟡 LUNCH BOX

I love having things like this in my fridge – it makes healthy eating so easy. I'll make a batch of this spread, which takes five minutes, and use it throughout the week – spreading it on rye and adding sautéed tomatoes and rocket for lunch one day, serving a big spoonful with a bowl of roast veggies and quinoa another, day and using it as a dip for crackers and crudités too.

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### MAKES 1 BOWL

200g cashews (see TIP below)

195g sun-dried or semi-dried tomatoes in oil, plus 3 tablespoons of oil from the jar

2 garlic cloves, roasted (see [here](#))

1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar

1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar

25g basil

200ml water

salt and pepper

- 1.** Place the cashews in a high-speed blender, along with the tomatoes, the oil from the jar, garlic, both types of vinegar, basil, a large pinch of salt and pepper and half of the water.
- 2.** Pulse until a smooth spread forms. Add more water, 1 tablespoon at a time, until you reach the consistency you like best.

**TIP** *If you don't have a high-speed blender (we use a NutriBullet), soak the cashews in a bowl, covered with cold water, for at least 1 hour beforehand, as it'll help to soften and break them down, then drain them before using.*

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# VEGAN MAYO, FOUR WAYS

 NUT FREE

These vegan mayos literally take two minutes to make, it's magic! We use these in everything; they're ideal in our Smashed chickpea sandwich (see [here](#)), but are also great for using as a dip for homemade chips or sweet potato fries. The spicy miso one is a real favourite of mine. The mayos can be kept in a sealed container in the fridge for up to five days.

# PLAIN MAYO

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MAKE 1 SMALL JAR, AROUND 350G

1 × 300g block silken tofu, drained

3 tablespoons chickpea water (see [here](#))

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar

1 teaspoon maple syrup

salt

**1.** Blitz the tofu in a blender with all the remaining ingredients, seasoning with salt to taste, until very smooth – we use a NutriBullet.

# GARLIC MAYO AIOLI

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MAKE 1 SMALL JAR, AROUND 350G

1 × 300g block silken tofu, drained

4 garlic cloves, roasted (see [here](#))

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

juice of ½ lemon

salt

**1.** Blitz the tofu in a blender with all the remaining ingredients, seasoning with salt to taste, until very smooth – we use a NutriBullet.

**TIP** *For an extra garlicky taste, you can add one small raw garlic clove.*

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# SPICY MISO MAYO

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MAKE 1 SMALL JAR, AROUND 350G

1 × 300g block silken tofu, drained

2 tablespoons brown miso paste

juice of ½ lime

1 teaspoon maple syrup

1 teaspoon chilli flakes

salt

**1.** Blitz the tofu in a blender with all the remaining ingredients, seasoning with salt to taste, until very smooth – we use a NutriBullet.

# TURMERIC MAYO

---

MAKE 1 SMALL JAR, AROUND 350G

1 × 300g block silken tofu, drained

½ teaspoon ground turmeric

2 teaspoons thick tahini

juice of ½ lemon

1 teaspoon maple syrup

salt

**1.** Blitz the tofu in a blender with all the remaining ingredients, seasoning with salt to taste, until very smooth – we use a NutriBullet.









# DRESSINGS

## LUNCH BOX

Some of these recipes have been made in quantities that serve one person so that you can easily make a single portion and add them to a lunchbox – if you're dressing a larger salad just multiply the ingredients by the number you need. Other recipes need to be made in bigger batches so that they blend well. Either way, any leftovers can be kept in the fridge for up to three days.

# JAPANESE DRESSING

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MAKES ENOUGH FOR 1 PORTION OF SALAD

1 tablespoon olive oil  
1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar  
1 teaspoon coconut sugar  
1 tablespoon sesame oil  
juice of ½ lemon (or lime)  
1 garlic clove, roasted (see [here](#))  
4–5cm piece of ginger, peeled and roughly chopped  
1 teaspoon sesame seeds  
salt and pepper

**1.** Put the olive oil into a blender, then add the apple cider vinegar, coconut sugar, sesame oil, lemon (or lime) juice, garlic and ginger. Season with salt and pepper and pulse the mixture until smooth. Spoon into a bowl and stir through the sesame seeds.

# TAHINI DRESSING

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MAKES ENOUGH FOR 1 PORTION OF SALAD

2 tablespoons tahini

1 tablespoon tamari

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar

juice of 1 lime (or lemon)

salt

**1.** Place the tahini in a bowl and add the tamari, olive oil, apple cider vinegar and lime (or lemon) juice. Season with salt and stir everything together until smooth.

# ALMOND PESTO DRESSING

---

MAKES ENOUGH FOR 2 MAIN PORTIONS OF SALAD, OR 4 AS A SIDE

50g almonds, roasted (see [here](#))

10 basil leaves (or more depending on how herby you like it)

1 garlic clove, roasted (see [here](#))

juice of ½ lemon

2 tablespoons olive oil

80ml water

salt

**1.** Place the almonds in a food processor or blender then add the basil, garlic, lemon juice, olive oil and water. Season with salt and pulse until smooth.

**TIP** *You can change the nuts and herbs for any combination in this recipe. Brazil nuts and parsley are also delicious.*

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# CREAMY GREEN DRESSING

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MAKES ENOUGH FOR 2 MAIN PORTIONS OF SALAD, OR 4 AS A SIDE

60g cashews

8 tablespoons almond or oat milk, plus a little extra (optional)

1 small ripe avocado (or ½ large one), peeled and stoned

juice of 1 lime

handful of coriander

1 garlic clove, roasted (see [here](#))

salt and pepper

- 1.** Place the cashews in a food processor and pulse until a smooth paste forms. You may need to add a few tablespoons of almond milk to help this along.
- 2.** Pour in the rest of the almond milk, then add the avocado, lime juice, coriander and garlic. Season with salt and pepper and pulse to make a smooth dressing. You can add more almond milk depending on the consistency you like best.

**TIP** *For a creamy white dressing, simply replace the avocado, lime and coriander with the juice of half a lemon, 1 tablespoon of nutritional yeast and 1 teaspoon of Dijon mustard.*

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# SAUCES

## LUNCH BOX

These sauces are delicious drizzled over salads, mixed through roasted vegetables or tossed through stir-fries or pasta dishes.

# MISO COCONUT SAUCE

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MAKES ENOUGH FOR 2–4 PEOPLE (ABOUT 1 LARGE STIR-FRY)

1 tablespoon brown rice miso paste

½ × 400g tin of coconut milk

juice of 1 lime

1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil

1 teaspoon maple syrup

salt

- 1.** Put the miso into a saucepan and add the remaining ingredients, seasoning with salt, then place the pan over a medium heat. Stir everything together and warm through to make a smooth sauce.
- 2.** Once smooth, remove from the heat and serve warm or cool.



# SPICY RED PEPPER SAUCE

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MAKES ENOUGH FOR 4 PEOPLE

1 red pepper, deseeded and chopped  
75g red chillies (about 7), deseeded and chopped  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
3 garlic cloves, roasted (see [here](#))  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
1 teaspoon smoked paprika  
1 teaspoon ground coriander  
1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar  
1 tablespoon tomato purée  
salt

**1.** Place the pepper and chillies in a food processor. Add the oil, garlic, the spices, apple cider vinegar and tomato purée. Season with salt then pulse until the mixture comes together, but still has some texture to it.

# SUNFLOWER SEED SAUCE

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MAKES ENOUGH FOR 4 PEOPLE

100g sunflower seeds

30g basil

juice of ½ lemon

100ml olive oil

2 garlic cloves, roasted (see [here](#))

salt

**1.** Place the sunflower seeds in a food processor or blender, then add the basil, lemon juice, olive oil and roasted garlic. Season with salt and pulse until all the ingredients come together, but the mixture has some texture to it.

**TIP** *You can swap the sunflower seeds for any kind of nut here. Roasted almonds also taste delicious.*

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CHAPTER 3

10-15 MINUTES

# FINDING BALANCE AND MAKING A CHANGE

I've talked a lot about diet in the previous two chapters and I want to spend the rest of the book contextualising this because what we eat is just one piece of the puzzle when it comes to our well-being. For most of us, feeling great mentally and physically is a constant work in progress and something that requires us to make a conscious effort every day to look after ourselves. As also mentioned, it's easier said than done, so what are the practical, day-to-day tools that we can use to find this sense of health and happiness? For the podcast, Matt and I have been lucky enough to talk to a lot of experts about the little tweaks we can make to our daily routines to create this sense of balance, how to implement these changes and why they matter.

The more I understand about the wider context of well-being, from reframing our thinking, to sleep and stress management, the more inspired I am to make these positive habits a part of my life whenever I can. Just knowing that there is science behind wellness is incredibly important, especially because it's a space that we can come to with a pretty closed mind. I came to it from a sceptical place too, so I really relate to anyone raising an eyebrow at this point, and I know some of our readers have felt the same way. In fact, someone emailed me the other day and said: 'When I first came across Deliciously Ella, I was a bit judgmental. I thought:

“Ella’s beautiful, and using that to sell an unattainable lifestyle to gullible people.” However, a year or so later I started to have problems with my own health, and I found myself turning to your books and Instagram for help. I am so thankful you decided to share your journey with your health and carve out a much-needed space; through all your hard work you’ve inspired so many people to take ownership of their health and well-being.’

I share this not to give Deliciously Ella undue credit, but to acknowledge that we are completely aware of that scepticism. Some people have labelled us as self-indulgent and privileged, and in moments of weakness that has made us want to retreat, but we feel the conversations about our well-being are too important not to share at a time where we’re reaching a tipping point in our modern lifestyles. Our company has given us an extraordinarily privileged position where we have access to some of the leading scientists and thought-leaders in the world, and we’re passionate about sharing what we’ve learned.

It’s not sustainable for us as a society to feel more and more anxious and struggle more and more to cope with the demands of life, just as we can’t continue to eat in a way that we know is playing a fundamentally negative role in our ill health and climate breakdown. Taking care of our health and having open, honest conversations about it matters a lot to us at Deliciously Ella. I’ve been there and struggled with both my mental and physical health and I’m passionate about making conversations around both topics normal – especially in a world of social media, where we can feel alone in a connected

society and where there is an ever-widening gap between how we feel and how we express ourselves to the world.

It's not about striving for perfection, a concept which is totally elusive, subjective and unattainable anyway, but about finding a balance that suits us at any given time in our life. Most days I love yoga, green smoothies and meditation and other days I love pizza from our local Italian and watching Friends in bed for hours while I mindlessly scroll social media watching videos of dogs. That's balance; listening to your body and simply being human. Yet I love knowing why self-care can help, what tools resonate with me and when I need them to nourish my mental and physical health, and the next few chapters are dedicated to those learnings and where to begin with them.

The first thing to say is that it's really important to create that sense of perspective if we want to live a genuinely happy, healthy, balanced life, focused on true mental and physical health, rather than solely on the way we look. We'll come on to stress later, but it's worth noting that if trying to eat healthily is in itself stressing you out, something isn't right and it needs to change, a concept supported by every expert I've spoken to. It really struck me when registered dietitian Dr Megan Rossi said in her podcast interview with us that while IBS studies show equal levels of success between stress management and diet change, almost all of her clients want to know first and foremost about diet changes, and I've seen a similar trend. Diet plays a part in our health, of course, but it's not the be-all and end-all.

I want the next few chapters to support you in a more holistic sense, showing why a 360° approach is the way forward when it comes to our well-being, and offering some inspiration on creating a life where we give equal weight to how we move, how we listen to and respect our bodies, our stress levels, our work and our hobbies, our relationships both with others and ourselves, our sleep and our general levels of happiness, as well as the depth to which we feel a sense of purpose in our lives. In essence, it's about finding sustainable, enjoyable balance in every aspect of our day-to-day.

## **SMALL CHANGES**

Trying to change everything in our lives at once can often seem overwhelming, if not impossible; when we start to imagine doing 30 minutes of exercise, walking 10,000 steps, meditating, getting eight hours of sleep, having a hobby, cooking fresh food and eating our five- to ten-a-day in among trying to live our normal lives, see our friends, spend time with our families and succeed at work. It feels like a big ask. I absolutely relate to this; I certainly can't fit it all into any given day, especially as a new mum, and there's no way I could have embodied that whole list on day one of my lifestyle change. I've built up to a life centred around well-being over eight years – it's been a slow and steady evolution rather than an overnight shift. I co-run a business, I work seven days a week, I'm up early and back late, travelling all around the country for meetings and looking after our little one, so I can only fit in so much before it does more harm than good. Finding that tipping point is where the answer lies – what can you add to your routine that makes your life better, that

enhances your life and how you feel every day, and what makes you feel like you're chasing an elusive concept of perfection that just makes you stressed? A good start is to look at the stuff you're adding in, instead of what you're taking out – go for the positive not the negative.

I sometimes worry that the pressure to do it all is what makes the world of wellness feel inaccessible, as though the space is not designed for anyone trying to look after themselves while working, raising a family and living a busy life, but I don't think that has to be the case. It's just about identifying what's important to you and what's not, and then finding easy ways to make the practices that help you an easy part of your day-to-day. I found it easiest to start small and focus on one change at a time, so that I could find a way to make it an enjoyable, exciting part of my life.

I started by overhauling my diet, and I know this is often the easiest place to start for most of us, as what we buy, the recipes we use, and what we eat normally sit more within our control than dealing with stress levels influenced by external factors, for example. Likewise, getting into practices like meditation or yoga can feel more intimidating and further removed from our day-to-day than pan-frying some broccoli or making a bowl of porridge. I found this to be the case; I thought meditation was all about sitting cross-legged for an hour in silence and that felt, and often still feels, close to impossible when life is so busy or when I'm in a difficult headspace. However, I have subsequently learned that meditation can be something very different from that and it's a practice that I now love and use to keep my mind in a healthy place, control my anxiety and keep stress levels under



control. I've been incredibly inspired by Gelong Thubten, a brilliant Buddhist monk whom we spoke to on the podcast and whose meditations we now have on our app. He broke it down brilliantly for us and we both swear by a 10-minute session before we get Skye up in the morning and have our coffee.

***Trying to change everything in our lives at once can often seem overwhelming, if not impossible.***

Once I'd started to feel in control of what was happening in my kitchen, I wanted to look at my mental health. Truthfully, my mental health had been really damaged by my illness; I would say that it's taken me much longer to recover on an emotional level than on a physical level. The sense of not being 'as good as' everyone around me, the fear of being seen as boring for being the first to go to bed every time, the sense that no one would like me because I ate a little differently or couldn't drink, and the lowered sense of self-worth that I'd created over years of seeing myself as broken really needed fixing, especially as Deliciously Ella started to take off and the pressure of running a start-up bubbled to the surface as well.

To begin with I really struggled, and I had pretty crippling anxiety the summer after my first book was published. Imposter syndrome gripped my thought patterns, I was scared of the vulnerability that came with suddenly having a public profile and I was still grappling with the negative thought patterns that had developed while I'd been ill. I knew that something had to change in this part of my life too. It was no

good managing the physical symptoms of my illness if my mental health was then going to hold me back – I had to find a way to take control of my thought patterns, and that was the point at which I really started to understand that being healthy and happy was so much more than broccoli and kale.

I began researching and reading as much as I could on the concept of happiness. The more I read, the clearer it became that happiness, self-confidence and feeling great in ourselves is something most of us have to work on every day. I appreciate this might sound boring, in fact I know it does sound boring, the idea of working on happiness almost feels counterintuitive and slightly ironic – shouldn't we just feel it instinctively, shouldn't we just be happy? Of course, this comes more naturally to some of us, but for a lot of us, me included, we need to nurture it, to cultivate it and to recognise how we can make it more instinctive over time. I wish happiness wasn't so fleeting and that it didn't ebb and flow – after all, who wouldn't want to do something once and keep the results forever – but I have noticed that daily practices can make achieving happiness significantly easier, and over time consciously reframing my thinking to adding in a bit of positive gratitude, rather than focussing on a shortcoming, has become much more intuitive.

Matt has been a huge part of this shift in mindset for me and he was a massive support whilst I struggled with that bout of anxiety. When I first met Matt, now my husband, business partner and ultimate inspiration, I was really blown away by how happy and easy-going he was. He has a brilliant ability to always find the positives, to seek joy in everything and to see every glass as half full, which is exactly what I needed in my

life. The more I got to know his family the more I saw that it was a trait they all shared; their enthusiasm was incredibly infectious and as someone who has suffered with their mental health and been through darker periods, I was almost a little envious of how easily they found it just to be happy. One day I asked him about it, and he said he just felt that happiness was a choice and that he had come to realise that he could make that choice every day. Some days were harder than others, but he dug deep to do it no matter what.

Throughout all the ups and downs of the last few years – and anyone who's started their own business will know that there are many speed bumps and cliff edges on the road to success – Matt has maintained this steady sense of optimism. Two years ago his ability to make the choice to be happy was pushed to its limits, when his mum was diagnosed with an aggressive, terminal form of brain cancer. He spent the next 11 months watching his guiding light and his mentor go through the turmoil of the condition, as he continued to work tirelessly as our CEO, getting the business through the start-up phase and into more stable territory.

The resilience he managed to foster through that time inspired me beyond belief, really reinforcing what I'd come to appreciate in internalising happiness. He shared an insight into his thinking during the toughest points on our podcast that I wanted to include: 'Last year was technically the worst year of my life. I lost my extraordinary mum. The thing that I'm most proud of is moving from a place of utter desperation and grief, to a place of gratitude and stability. Knowing we have free will enables us to look at the world through whatever lens we choose. However desperate a situation is,

deep within us always lies the ability to move from something that feels eternally bad, to balance. Knowing you have that within you is enabling, powerful, and available to anyone so long as you're willing to dig deep enough. I learned it's a choice.'

Finding that ability to dig deep is of course incredibly difficult. So many of us have habits and patterns that we'd like to change but struggle to – I definitely found that to be the case, both when I was changing my diet and when I was shifting my lifestyle to improve my mental health. It's often much easier said than done. In light of this, we invited the brilliant behavioural change specialist, Shahroo Izadi, on to our podcast to talk about how you make those changes last. Shahroo has experience of working in different roles across the the field of addiction and wrote one of my favourite books, *The Kindness Method*. The biggest take-home for me was the idea that so many of us look at making a change from an incredibly negative place, something that felt very familiar to me.

According to Shahroo it's not a lack of willpower that inhibits our success – and framing it in this way ironically only makes the issue of low self-worth worse – but simply the fact that we're coming at it from the wrong angle. Instead she believes we need to recognise that making long-term, sustained change comes with a completely different set of criteria; it has to come from a positive place, a place in which we make ourselves feel worthy of achieving ambitious goals by raising our self-esteem and sense of resilience, rather than depleting it. We have to reframe our thinking and focus from looking at what's wrong to what is right, from what we hate to what we

love and let that positivity be the driver, so that we're moving towards a better place, rather than simply trying to move out of a bad one. I find this perspective both refreshing and potentially life-changing.

The lens we put on any situation can be extraordinarily powerful, as I learnt when I started Deliciously Ella and found a way to take myself from a dark place to the best place I've ever been in, and as I saw Matt do a few years ago. Reframing my thoughts to bring myself back to gratitude every day, and replacing expectation with appreciation, has been an absolute game-changer and as I sit here writing this, I'm incredibly proud of the steps I've taken to get to this point. It's not been a linear journey by any means – I've gone up and down with my health, and we've gone up, down and all round when trying to get Deliciously Ella off the ground – but in both endeavours a clear sense of a positive mission was phenomenally powerful.

I now try and make time to focus on three things I'm grateful for every morning – sometimes it's as simple as a warm bed, a cup of coffee and a hug – but either way it grounds me and reminds me how lucky I am to have the day ahead of me. This, alongside my yoga practice, has totally transformed me as a person; I've never been happier or calmer and I'm so grateful for it.

***We need to recognise that making long-term, sustained change has to come from a positive place, a place in which***

*we make ourselves feel worthy of  
achieving ambitious goals by raising  
our self-esteem and sense of resilience,  
rather than depleting it.*

# CHICKPEA & TOMATO SALAD WITH QUICK PICKLED ONIONS

 NUT FREE

Generally, I don't love fruit in salads, but I'll always make an exception for this one – the mango absolutely makes the dish for me.

We toss chunks of ripe mango with avocado, tangy pickled onions, cherry tomatoes, lightly spiced chickpeas, rocket and fresh coriander to create the most colourful, delicious, speedy salad around.

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SERVES 2 AS A MAIN, 4 AS A SIDE

1 x 400g tin of chickpeas, drained and rinsed  
olive oil  
12 cherry tomatoes  
chilli flakes  
1 ripe mango, peeled and stoned  
1 ripe avocado, peeled and stoned  
handful of fresh coriander (about 15g)  
2 large handfuls of rocket  
salt

## FOR THE QUICK PICKLED ONIONS

1 red onion  
juice of 1 lemon  
1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar  
1 tablespoon maple syrup  
4 tablespoons boiling water  
generous sprinkle of salt

**1.** First make the pickled onions. Dice the onion – the finer you dice it the quicker it'll soften and pickle so we tend to make it as small as we can. Place

in a bowl and pour the remaining ingredients in. Stir and set to one side while you make the rest of the salad. Give the onions a stir every now and again as you go. The longer you leave the onions the better they'll taste, so if you have an extra few minutes let them sit a little longer.

**2.** Next, dry the chickpeas and place them in a large frying pan with a drizzle of olive oil, salt and a sprinkling of chilli flakes – you want the chickpeas to lie flat in the pan, rather than on top of each other. Let the chickpeas toast on a high heat as you prepare the rest of the salad, stirring every now and again to ensure they cook evenly. Take them off the heat once they're cooked through and leave them to cool for a minute or two before you add them to the salad.

**3.** While the chickpeas cook, chop the tomatoes into quarters, cut the mango and avocado into bite-sized cubes and finely chop the coriander. Place these in a salad bowl with the rocket and a sprinkling of salt, then stir in the chickpeas, the onions and half of the pickling liquid – that's what gives the salad a lovely tangy flavour.





# PEANUT & SESAME VEGGIE NOODLES

🟡 LUNCH BOX

This is a go-to lunch recipe. It's so quick – it literally takes minutes – and is full of flavour. The dressing is such a winner, definitely something to use in other recipes too – drizzle it over rice and roasted veggies and tofu, make it thicker and use it as a dip or toss it into a simple salad.

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SERVES 4

## FOR THE NOODLES

2 portions of noodles (we like brown rice noodles; about 80g per person)  
2 courgettes  
2 large carrots  
2 Romano red peppers, finely sliced  
3 spring onions, finely sliced  
handful of coriander (about 25g), roughly chopped  
100g peanuts, toasted (see [here](#))

## FOR THE DRESSING

3 tablespoons tahini  
3 tablespoons peanut butter (or any other nut butter)  
1 tablespoon rice vinegar  
2 tablespoons tamari  
2 tablespoons toasted sesame oil  
juice and grated zest of 1 lime  
3 tablespoons water  
1 tablespoon maple syrup

1 garlic clove  
salt

1. Start by cooking the noodles, following the instructions on the packet.
2. While those cook, spiralise the courgette and carrots. If you don't have a spiraliser, you can cut or grate them into very thin, long slices.
3. Place all the noodle ingredients into a large bowl and mix well, leaving some peanuts and coriander to sprinkle on top.
4. Put the dressing ingredients into a blender with a generous pinch of salt and pulse until a smooth, creamy dressing forms, adding a splash more water if needed. Pour the dressing over the noodle salad and mix well. Sprinkle each bowl with some leftover coriander and peanuts before serving.

**TIP** *If you're having this as a work/on-the-go lunch, keep the noodles and dressing separate until you're ready to serve.*

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# CREAMY KALE & MUSHROOM SALAD

🟡 LUNCH BOX

This is probably my favourite-ever salad, having stolen the crown from the tahini tamari kale salad in our first book. We're very generous with the dressing in this one, which is why it's so good, as the dressing is really creamy. Make sure to rub the dressing into the leaves firmly, so that the kale is nice and soft. Once it's soft, we toss in chunks of avocado, sautéed mushrooms, cumin, toasted seeds and garlicky croutons.

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## SERVES 2

handful of pumpkin seeds (about 25g)  
handful of sunflower seeds (about 25g)  
olive oil  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
200g mushrooms, thinly sliced  
200g kale  
1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar  
2 slices of bread (we love sourdough)  
1 garlic clove  
2 ripe avocados, peeled, stoned and cut into bite-sized pieces  
salt

## FOR THE DRESSING

40g sunflower seeds  
60g cashews  
100ml almond or oat milk  
2 teaspoons Dijon mustard

1 heaped tablespoon nutritional yeast  
3 tablespoons olive oil  
squeeze of lemon

**1.** Heat the oven to 200°C fan. Toss the pumpkin and sunflower seeds on to a baking tray with a tablespoon of olive oil, some salt and the cumin. Roast for about 5 minutes, until crunchy.

**2.** Place the mushrooms in a large frying pan over a medium heat with a drizzle of olive oil and a generous sprinkling of salt. Let them sauté while you make the salad, stirring them every now and again until they turn golden brown.

**3.** Place the kale in a large mixing bowl, then remove any thick stems and tear the leaves into pieces.

**4.** Add 1 tablespoon of olive oil, the apple cider vinegar and a sprinkling of salt and rub them into the leaves using your hands. Massage the kale for a minute or so, being really firm, so that it softens.

**5.** Next, make the dressing. Simply place all the ingredients in a high-speed blender (we use a NutriBullet) and blend until smooth and creamy.

**6.** Toast the sourdough then rub it with a raw garlic clove and cut it into bite-sized chunks.

**7.** Rub the dressing into the kale, massaging it with your hands and letting it soften even more. Then toss in the toasted seeds, mushroom, avocado and sourdough.





# ORZO PASTA SALAD

🍎 NUT FREE 🌻 LUNCH BOX

This was a really popular salad at our deli; we served it with fresh rocket and balsamic tomatoes. The acidity of the tomatoes was perfect with the creamy pesto tossed through the orzo. To make it gluten free use either short-grain brown rice or gluten-free pasta.

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SERVES 2

## FOR THE PASTA

2 portions of orzo pasta (about 80g per person)

## FOR THE SUNFLOWER SEED PESTO DRESSING

60g sunflower seeds  
large handful of basil, about 25g  
2 garlic cloves, roasted (see [here](#))  
juice of ½ lemon  
5 tablespoons sunflower oil  
salt and pepper

## FOR THE BALSAMIC TOMATOES (TO SERVE)

1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar  
1 tablespoon good-quality balsamic vinegar  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
1 small punnet cherry tomatoes, around 250g, halved  
1 small red onion, finely diced

**1.** Cook the pasta according to the instructions on the packet. Drain and leave to one side.

**2.** While the pasta cooks, place all the ingredients for the sunflower seed pesto in a blender, seasoning with the salt and pepper and pulse until it comes together into a pesto and until the texture is still a little chunky.

**3.** In a small bowl, mix together the apple cider vinegar, balsamic vinegar, olive oil and a good pinch of salt. Add the cherry tomatoes and red onion to the bowl and toss well so that the dressing coats the vegetables.

**4.** Once the pasta is ready, place it in a large bowl.

**5.** Add the sunflower seed pesto and mix well. Serve with the balsamic tomatoes alongside.

**TIP** *This pasta is also delicious with cooked chunky green vegetables mixed through – we love peas, courgettes and broccoli.*

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# CUCUMBER & CASHEW NOODLE SALAD

🟡 LUNCH BOX

Everyone loves noodles, so this is the kind of recipe I make for friends and family when they're coming over. It looks beautiful – vibrant and green – and it tastes so fresh thanks to the mint and lime. It's a great lunchbox option too; just take the dressing in a separate little pot and stir it together when you're ready to eat.

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## SERVES 4

4 portions of noodles (we use brown rice noodles but you can use whatever you like best; about 80g per person)

100g frozen edamame beans

1 cucumber, chopped into bite-size pieces

1 avocado, peeled, stoned and chopped into bite-sized pieces

handful of mint leaves, chopped (about 10g)

1 tablespoon sesame seeds, toasted (see [here](#))

1 tablespoon black sesame seeds (if you don't have both black and white sesame seeds, you can double the quantity of one of them)

100g cashews, toasted (see [here](#))

salt

## FOR THE DRESSING

juice of 1 lime

2 tablespoons toasted sesame oil

1 tablespoon tamari

2 tablespoons wine vinegar

1 tablespoon brown rice miso paste

salt

- 1.** Place a large saucepan of salted water over a medium heat and bring to the boil. Once boiling, cook the noodles following the instructions on the packet – adding the edamame beans for the last 3 minutes. Once cooked, drain and rinse with cold water to prevent any further cooking.
- 2.** Whisk all the ingredients for the dressing together in a small bowl with a pinch of salt.
- 3.** Place the cooked noodles and edamame beans in a large mixing bowl and add the remaining salad ingredients. Pour over the dressing and stir through before serving. I like to keep back a few cashews, mint leaves and sesame seeds to sprinkle on top.



# EDAMAME & AVOCADO SALAD

🍎 NUT FREE 🍌 LUNCH BOX

This is a brilliant no-fuss lunchbox salad or speedy dinner and like our Tomato & lentil salad (see [here](#)), it takes just five minutes or so to throw together. I love it with brown rice.

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SERVES 2 AS A MAIN COURSE, OR 4 WITH RICE

250g frozen edamame beans

4 spring onions, finely sliced

25g peanuts (optional; leave out to make this nut-free)

1 tablespoon sesame oil

1 tablespoon maple syrup

1 tablespoon mirin (or apple cider vinegar)

juice of 1 lime

pinch of chilli flakes

1 tablespoon sesame seeds

1 tablespoon black sesame seeds

2 avocados, peeled, stoned and chopped into pieces no bigger than 1cm  
salt

- 1.** Blanch the edamame beans in a bowl by covering them with boiling water. Let them sit for 2–3 minutes, then drain.
- 2.** Place the edamame beans, spring onions and peanuts in a bowl and mix well.
- 3.** Add the sesame oil, maple syrup, mirin, lime juice, chilli flakes, sesame seeds and a large pinch of salt and mix well.

**4.** Finally, add the avocado and mix all of the ingredients together well before serving.

**TIP** *The avocado can go brown if left too long so I usually add it in the morning, rather than the night before if I'm using this in a lunchbox.*





# TOMATO & LENTIL SALAD

🍅 NUT FREE 🌞 LUNCH BOX

If you need a five-minute meal, this is your recipe. There's no washing up, no fuss and very little chopping, but it still has such great flavour and lots of texture too. The tahini gives it a lovely creaminess and the semi-dried tomatoes add punch. It's perfect for a lunchbox or to throw together on a busy day.

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## SERVES 2

1 × 195g jar sun-dried or semi-dried tomatoes in oil, drained and roughly chopped  
100g pitted green olives, quartered  
100g pine nuts (these are even more delicious toasted, see [here](#); use sunflower seeds for a nut free version)  
1 × 400g tin of green lentils, drained and rinsed  
1 red onion, finely sliced  
20g parsley, roughly chopped  
100g rocket  
pinch of sea salt

## FOR THE DRESSING

3 tablespoons of oil from the jar of sun-dried or semi-dried tomatoes, or olive oil  
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard  
1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar  
1 tablespoon tahini

1. Place all of the salad ingredients in a large bowl and mix everything together well.
2. Put all the ingredients for the dressing into a small bowl and stir together.

**3.** Once ready to serve, mix the dressing ingredients through the salad.



# GARLICKY BROCCOLI & BEANS

 NUT FREE

This is one of my staple weeknight suppers: sautéed butter beans with garlic, lemon zest, bites of broccoli and courgette, cherry tomatoes and homemade almond pesto. It sounds fancy, but once you've cooked this a few times it really will just take 10 minutes, and you'll have a delicious, warming, colourful meal that you can make whenever you need something speedy. To make it heartier, serve it with quinoa or brown rice, and for extra greens, wilt some spinach in at the end.

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SERVES 2 AS A MAIN DISH, 4 AS A SIDE

## FOR THE BEANS

1 head of broccoli, thick stalk removed  
4 garlic cloves, crushed or finely diced  
olive oil  
2 x 400g tins of butter beans  
12 cherry tomatoes  
1 small courgette, grated  
1 tablespoon plain yoghurt (we use a pure coconut yoghurt)  
grated zest of 1 lemon  
salt and pepper

## FOR THE PESTO

40g almonds, toasted (see [here](#); swap for sunflower seeds for a nut-free alternative)  
2 garlic cloves, roasted (see [here](#))  
handful of fresh basil (about 20g)  
juice of ½ lemon

6–10 tablespoons olive oil (in a small blender like a NutriBullet 6 should be perfect, in a large blender you may need more)

4 tablespoons water

1 teaspoon nutritional yeast

**1.** To make the pesto, simply add all the ingredients to a blender, season with salt and pepper and blitz until smooth. If you're using a large, or less powerful blender, you may need more olive oil or water to let it blend easily.

**2.** Cut the broccoli into small, bite-sized pieces – the smaller the better in this recipe.

**3.** Blanch the broccoli by simply covering it with boiling water and letting it sit for 2–3 minutes, until it has softened but still has a good bite, then drain.

**4.** Add the garlic to a large frying pan on a medium heat with a generous drizzle of olive oil and a sprinkling of salt. Let this cook for about 2 minutes, then add the broccoli, butter beans and cherry tomatoes. Stir in the courgette, yoghurt, lemon zest, pesto and pepper.

**TIP** *Our dog Austin loves the thick stalk from the broccoli, but if he's not around I add it to veggie soups – just cook it down and blend.*

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# LEMONY COURGETTI WITH SPINACH PESTO

🟡 LUNCH BOX

This is a brilliant speedy supper when you want something with punchy flavours and a good portion of greens. I love the tanginess that the lemon zest brings to it, while the spinach gives the pesto the most brilliant green colour and the mix of courgetti and spaghetti creates the perfect balance of lightness and comfort. For this recipe, we recommend you do use a spiraliser to make noodles out of the courgette. If you use a peeler or another means then the different texture and shape doesn't really work with the spaghetti.

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## SERVES 2

100g spaghetti  
2 large courgettes, spiralised into noodles  
about 50g spinach  
4 tablespoons capers, drained and rinsed  
1 ripe avocado, peeled and cut into bite-sized pieces  
grated zest of ½ lemon

## FOR THE LEMON SPINACH PESTO

50g almonds, toasted (see [here](#))  
2 garlic cloves, roasted (see [here](#))  
large handful of basil (about 25g)  
juice of 1 lemon and the grated zest of ½  
8 tablespoons olive oil  
6–8 tablespoons water  
small handful of spinach (about 30g)  
salt and pepper



**1.** Put the spaghetti on to cook as per the instructions on the packet. While it cooks, put the pesto ingredients into a blender, season with salt and pepper, and blend until smooth and creamy. If you need more liquid, add a drop more oil.

**2.** Once the pasta has cooked, drain it then put it back into the pan with the courgetti, spinach and pesto over a low heat. Let them cook gently together until the spinach wilts and the courgetti and pesto warm through. Remove from the heat and toss the capers and avocado into the spaghetti.

**3.** Place in two bowls, sprinkling the lemon zest on top, followed by a crack of pepper and a pinch of salt.



# SUPER CREAMY TURMERIC PASTA

Sometimes you just need a big bowl of comfort food and this pasta is one of my go-tos for those days. All you do is boil some pasta, fry some garlic and onion and throw all the ingredients for the the sauce into a blender to make it super creamy. It couldn't be easier. I'll sometimes add some crispy oven-baked kale on the top or stir some spinach in if I want more greens, but it's also delicious just as it is.

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## SERVES 4

4 portions of pasta (about 80g per person)

200g frozen peas

1 onion, finely diced

2 garlic cloves, finely diced

100g cashews

200ml oat milk (unsweetened)

4 tablespoons nutritional yeast

1 teaspoon ground turmeric

½ teaspoon brown rice miso paste

pinch of chilli flakes

squeeze of lemon juice

salt and pepper

sprinkling of coriander, to serve

- 1.** Cook the pasta according to the instructions on the packet, adding the peas for the last few minutes. Drain and leave to one side.
- 2.** While the pasta cooks, warm a frying pan over a medium heat, add a drizzle of olive oil and some salt, then add the onion and garlic and cook for 5 minutes, until soft.

**3.** Place the cashews in a bowl of boiling water and let them soak until the onions are cooked.

**4.** Drain the cashews and add all the remaining ingredients to a blender, including the onions and garlic. Blend until smooth and creamy. Stir the sauce through the cooked pasta and peas before serving.

**TIP** *If you want to serve this as a delicious mac and cheese-style dish, you can place the pasta in a medium ovenproof baking dish and scatter with breadcrumbs (you can use crumbled up bread, or dry breadcrumbs). Preheat your oven to 200°C fan and once hot, bake for 5–8 minutes, until crispy and golden on top.*

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# SUN-DRIED TOMATO PASTA

 NUT FREE

This is a go-to in our house; it really does take just 10 minutes and the only fresh ingredients you need are tomatoes, garlic and lemon. You can double up on the sauce too and keep the other half in the fridge for later in the week – it's delicious stirred through sautéed beans, added to a hummus, or pop it in the freezer for the next time you want some speedy pasta. If you'd like to add more veg to this recipe, simply stir some spinach or a handful of sliced mushrooms into the pan of blistering cherry tomatoes.

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## SERVES 4

4 portions of pasta (about 80g per person)  
2 garlic cloves, finely diced  
12 cherry tomatoes  
large handful of spinach (about 50g)  
salt

## FOR THE SAUCE

about 75g pine nuts (use sunflower seeds to make this nut free)  
2 garlic cloves, crushed  
olive oil  
170g sun-dried (or sun-blushed) tomatoes in oil, plus 3 tablespoons of the oil from the jar  
juice of ½ lemon  
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar  
8–10 tablespoons water, depending on the consistency you like best

**1.** Cook the pasta according to the instructions on the packet.

**2.** While the pasta cooks, make the sauce. Place all the pine nuts in a large frying pan (you'll use the same one later to cook the tomatoes) over a medium heat and toast them for 2–3 minutes. Once golden, remove from the pan and place to one side. Place the pan back on the heat.

**3.** Add the crushed garlic to the pan and sauté it with a drizzle of olive oil for 2 minutes or so. Place the sun-dried tomatoes and the oil from the jar in a blender, along with the warmed garlic, lemon juice, two thirds of the toasted pine nuts, balsamic, water and a sprinkling of salt and pepper. Pulse until it comes together to form a sauce – it should be a little chunky, but you can add a splash more water if you like it a little smoother.

**4.** Place the garlic in a frying pan with a drizzle of olive oil and a pinch of salt and cook for a minute while you slice the cherry tomatoes in half. Add them to the pan and let them blister on a high heat for 2–3 minutes. Stir through the drained pasta with the sun-dried tomato sauce and spinach and cook for a final few minutes until the spinach wilts.

**5.** Serve with lots of pepper and the extra toasted pine nuts on top.







# GETTING MOVING

I hated sports growing up. I have double vision, so I'd always see two balls flying at my head, which wasn't brilliant for hand-eye coordination and most team games! When I was very unwell back in 2012, my doctor prescribed me an exercise programme aimed at rehabilitation, trying to get my body more able to function on a day-to-day basis, and it was honestly one of the hardest but most rewarding things I've ever done, and something that really ignited my interest in this area. When I started the programme, I was spending almost all of my time in bed or on the sofa – just a short walk was a genuine physical challenge. My mum recently reminded me that at my worst I wasn't even strong enough to lift some of her pots and pans – I had chronic fatigue, extreme dizziness, faintness and an inability to control my heart rate, which would go from about 65bpm to 180bpm on standing, and finding the motivation to push myself was even harder as my self-esteem and self-worth were so low.

I felt hopeless and stuck in a place of such darkness that I struggled to see that there could ever be light, so I failed to see the point of trying to find it, especially when I knew that it could take months, if not years to truly see a fundamental shift. Having reached my rock bottom though, I recognised that it was worth a try and we started the programme, five times a week, going from five minutes on a reclined bike (which made me so exhausted I'd need to sleep for a few hours afterwards) to 45 minutes on a cross trainer almost a

year later. It was incredibly empowering to regain some of my physical strength, which is what I'd hoped the outcome would be, but what I hadn't factored in was the extent to which this would impact my mental health. I felt the difference in my outlook and a lifting in my mood after a few months. I've held on to that ever since and have made daily yoga and walks non-negotiable in my life as a result; even if I just have five or ten minutes for them, something is always better than nothing. Ever since this realisation, I've been interested in whether this was just anecdotal, something that worked for me, or whether this was something that we could all benefit from. The good news is that there's a huge amount of incredibly compelling research in this area, showing what a powerful effect exercise can have on our brains – just one 30-minute session can improve our cognition, attention and concentration.

We interviewed Dr Brendon Stubbs, a clinical-academic physiotherapist at King's College London, who specialises in mental health and I was honestly blown away by some of the research he shared. On a basic level we wanted to understand what happens when we move, to which he explained that when we do aerobic exercise – things that get our heart rate up like brisk walking, running, swimming – the blood flow to our brains increases, which in turn increases the levels of connectivity between different parts of our brains, and can result in neurogenesis – new cells forming – over time. When we exercise, we also feed back into the brain's reward system, which makes us feel good.

Brendon then went on to share a series of interesting studies that have been done looking specifically at mental health,

depression and exercise and I just wanted to highlight a couple of them, as I found them incredibly insightful. He explained how in over 40 randomised control trials the results consistently showed that exercise has a meaningful reduction in people's depressive symptoms. What's more, in a study he and his colleagues recently conducted over seven years involving 260,000 people from across the globe, all of whom were free of any depressive symptoms at the start, they saw that those who were most active were 14–16% less likely to develop depression compared to those that were least active. The most significant difference was found in people who did 150 minutes of exercise each week (equivalent to 30 minutes, five times a week). At this point there was about a 30% reduced risk of developing depression in the future. That's not to downplay or shun the role of conventional medicine or imply that you should choose one over the other. I don't see lifestyle as a cure-all, but it can be empowering to note the potential potency of something as simple as walking, and how incorporating something as achievable as a 30-minute power walk each day could have a huge impact on our well-being.

The other studies that I found particularly interesting were those related to sedentary habits. We read a lot about the potential damage sitting down all day can have on our physical health, but it was really interesting to understand how, when and why it can impact our mental health too. Brendon has done another study which looked at exactly this, researching the impact on 40,000 people over 13 years. The results showed a fascinating difference between whether we're passive or active, and whether we're engaging our brains fully or not, when we're sitting. He found that those engaging in mentally-passive sitting behaviour – sitting and

staring at a TV screen for example – had an increased risk of developing depression, whereas there was no evidence of any increased risk of developing depression in those engaging in less mentally-passive sedentary behaviour, such as working on a computer. So, it's not just about whether we're moving, but also whether we're engaging our minds and being conscious in the way we're spending our time.

Don't get me wrong, I love a lazy morning in bed watching Grey's Anatomy and a trashy romantic comedy; who doesn't. I even secretly love the Kardashians, so I'm not sharing this in the hope of idealising a sense of perfection in which we're constantly reading, doing crosswords and mastering foreign languages. No one is learning, growing, moving and doing the whole time – flopping feels really good too, but again it's just interesting to note how being more mindful in the way we spend our time can have a real impact on our well-being.

***As with anything, nothing is truly sustainable if it's not enjoyable. It's not about emulating someone else, if what they do doesn't resonate with you or if it feels as though you're actually making yourself feel more exhausted.***

As with anything, nothing is truly sustainable if it's not enjoyable, which comes back to finding what works for you.

It's not about emulating someone else, if what they do doesn't resonate with you or if it feels as though you're actually depleting your body and making yourself feel more exhausted. Again, this goes back to the key question of the book: are we doing something for our physical and mental well-being or just for aesthetics? When I was keen to exercise more a few years ago, I saw so many people who were in incredible shape on social media doing HIIT training or bootcamp classes and all kinds of extremely strenuous workouts, so I tried them, thinking it would be great for me too. In fact, it was the polar opposite. My autonomic nervous system was the crux of the issue when I was ill and while I've found ways to manage the symptoms on a day-to-day basis, there is no magic cure for the illness and the intensity of those hardcore workouts was just too much for my body, as they're so demanding on the nervous system. I'd feel physically sick, exhausted and just rubbish after a class, no matter how many times I tried them, so I quit and moved on to more gentle ways of moving my body.

I now do yoga almost every day. Yoga has been a transformational practice for me – connecting my breath to my body and having quiet time to tune in to myself is magic. I find that physically making space helps me to make space mentally too. Flowing always works to quieten my mind (albeit some days it's much easier than others) and create a sense of peace, positivity and gratitude that I've never been able to cultivate from anything else. It's seen me through the biggest challenges – from serious cash flow pinches and moments of thinking our business is going under, to my parents' divorce and supporting Matt through his mum's passing, as well as the rollercoaster of pregnancy and the

initiation of early motherhood and I feel so lucky to have found the practice.

The interesting thing is that on a superficial level, I'm the strongest and fittest I've ever been, which wasn't the intention when I started yoga, but because I love the practice so much and have subsequently made it such an essential part of my life I've progressed much more than I ever did from burpees and star jumps because I hated them so never did them consistently. Yoga isn't for everyone and burpees might work much better for you, so it's just about finding what you love and that'll make prioritising it so much easier. Yoga and walking work brilliantly for me. I love a long walk outside in nature with our dog Austin, and Skye, while I listen to a great podcast; it's simple, free and so effective at keeping my body fitter and my mind in a more positive place.

Yoga has helped me create a sense of intuition and connection with my body that nothing else ever has. It has been a game-changer for self-acceptance and self-love, allowing me to tune in to how I feel mentally and physically each morning. I couldn't recommend exploring the practice more; it can be simple, quiet stretching for 10 minutes or an intense sweaty flow, there is no right or wrong way to do it and by the very nature of yoga philosophy you can't be good or bad at its physical side. I had always thought it was about learning to do the splits, master a handstand or balance on one arm, but it's actually got nothing to do with any of those things.

I did my first yoga teacher training course two years ago and it was one of the most incredible experiences that I've been

lucky enough to have. I signed up initially because I was burnt out: six years into a start-up was taking its toll and I felt I'd lost a little bit of myself after a difficult period at work and watching Matt lose his mum. I wanted a month to reignite my spark and passion for my work again, to regroup and to qualify to share something I loved with others, but what I learned was so much more. As with everything we've talked about so far, I don't profess to be an expert – I'm a student, hungry for learning – but there are a few things that I wanted to share, as they've really shaped my mindset for the better.

My love of yoga helped guide me towards meditation, mindfulness and again a deeper practice of gratitude, three areas that can be powerful when it comes to finding a little calm, balance and grounding in our lives. I have to be honest and say I've always found these areas a little trickier; they're not as practical as cooking dinner or putting your trainers on for a walk, so they tend to require more self-discipline and as a result I find they're the first things that fall by the wayside when life gets intense, even though I know I probably need them the most at these points. The deeper I've got into the philosophy that shapes these ancient practices, however, the more I've been able to understand why they're so relevant today and that there's a lot to learn from them.

***Yoga has helped me create a sense of intuition and connection with my body that nothing else ever has. It has been a game-changer for self-acceptance,***



## *allowing me to tune in to how I feel mentally and physically each morning.*

One of the main lessons I've learned from yoga comes back to our question of the day – what practices are we doing for our health and what are we doing for aesthetics? In Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, the cornerstone of the modern yoga practice, there are eight limbs or petals of yoga, of which the physical practice – the asanas – only comprises one of them. The rest revolve around ethical considerations (the yamas); self-observations (niyamas); breath control (pranayama), meaning a focus on the breath and using it to guide the mind and the body; sense withdrawal (pratyahara), going deeper into your own body and mind by turning off from the distractions around you; concentration (dharana); meditation (dhyana) and then a state of bliss or enlightenment (samadhi). Now we may not reach enlightenment, but creating more peace, calm and a sense of bliss in among the busyness of the world could do us wonders.

As I touched on before, being happy is normally something that we work on, that we nurture every day, and the yamas and the niyamas help to create a framework for doing just that. They are a practical guide to creating a better relationship with both the world around us and ourselves, how to live our happiest life – one that is focused on creating more kindness, love and compassion in the world, which I love because lots of us need a little guidance on this road.

There are five yamas, which effectively act as a moral compass:

1. Ahimsa: non-violence or non-harmings – the idea of being kind and gentle both to those around us and to ourselves – letting go of destructive thoughts, not speaking badly about others, looking after our environment and going about each day with the desire to only do good. Interestingly, this yama is often interpreted as supporting a plant-based diet, so that we don't cause harm to any living being.

2. Satya: not telling lies or truthfulness – being open and honest with those around us and with ourselves, honouring how we really feel and not living in denial.

3. Asteya: not stealing, which means so much more than simply not physically stealing an item from someone. It's more about being mindful of what we take from others, ensuring that we're always giving back and acknowledging the time and resources that someone has put into anything they share with us, being grateful for that and ensuring we always aim to give more than we take in our lives.

4. Brahmacharya: moderation, which literally refers to moderation of sexual energy, and can be interpreted as celibacy. It's often now described as 'the right use of energy', being aware of how we spend our energy each day, working towards nourishing relationships and practices that help us find contentment rather than fleeting moments of happiness.

5. Aparigraha: non-attachment or non-possessiveness – no longer defining ourselves by what surrounds us and finding a sense of feeling whole just as we are, not needing

possessions or other people to complete us and create fulfilment.

The *niyamas*, or self-observations, are concepts we can practise to create that state of bliss and peace in our lives.

1. Purity (*saucha*): purifying our lives so that we can sit in stillness with ourselves, keeping our environment clean, keeping clarity in our minds, looking after and respecting ourselves through simple practices like showering and wearing fresh clothes.
2. Contentment (*santosha*): being happy where we are today, not looking to the past or the future, not externalising our happiness or pinning it on anyone else and not looking for it in material possessions – simple appreciation for the here and now.
3. Discipline (*tapas*): cultivating self-discipline, showing up and doing our best every time we commit to something and having the courage to push ourselves.
4. Self-education (*svadhyaya*): observing ourselves, noting our patterns and ways of being and looking to better ourselves through this, always seeing ourselves as a student and honouring a hunger to learn and to grow every day.
5. Meditation on the divine or devotion (*isvara pranidhana*): this devotion doesn't need to be to a god or anything spiritual; rather it symbolises the idea that we're all one, we all exist in a universe that is so much bigger than us as individuals and can look to cultivate a sense of collective consciousness. I find this a grounding, humbling thought.

In this sense, yoga and meditation are both so much more than what happens in a gym class, on your mat or when you're listening to an app. They're ever-evolving, ever-deepening ways of being – ways of creating calm, ease, kindness and peace – of grounding and connecting and centering the mind. In the madness of the world that we live in today it feels so relevant and important to help cultivate these elements, and as we now know, stress can impact both our physical and mental health so finding tools to relieve it is incredibly important.

# CRUNCHY MEXICAN SALAD

I am obsessed with the dressing in this salad, it's absolute heaven – so creamy and herby, with lovely hints of lime. It really brings the salad together too, and creates the perfect contrast to the crunchy bites of tortilla chips. I often make double quantities of the dressing so that I can use it throughout the week; it's delicious on crackers and toast, and with our Pea & butter bean fritters (see [here](#)).

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## SERVES 4

1 × 350g tin of sweetcorn, drained and rinsed  
olive oil  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
50g sunflower seeds  
1 teaspoon paprika  
1 large head of lettuce (about 450g), torn into bite-sized pieces  
2 ripe avocados, peeled, stoned and cut into bite-sized pieces  
250g cherry tomatoes, roughly chopped  
large handful of coriander, roughly chopped  
4 large handfuls of tortilla chips, with more for the table  
salt

## FOR THE DRESSING & DIP

100g cashews  
150ml almond milk, plus a little more if needed  
1 ripe avocado, peeled, stoned and roughly chopped  
juice of 1 lime  
handful of coriander (about 20g)  
1 small garlic clove

1. Preheat the oven to 230°C fan.

**2.** Place the sweetcorn in a large baking tray (with space for the seeds) with a drizzle of olive oil, a pinch of salt and the cumin. Mix well and cook for 15 minutes until crispy. Mix the sunflower seeds with the paprika, and add them to the corn for the last 5 minutes of the cooking time.

**3.** While they cook, make the dressing and dip by placing the cashews in a food processor and pulsing until a smooth mixture forms – you may need to add a few tablespoons of the almond milk to help this along, it should take a minute or two. Once smooth, add the rest of the ingredients, along with some salt, and pulse until smooth. You can add more almond milk depending on the consistency you like best.

**4.** Place the lettuce in a large mixing bowl, with the sweetcorn, sunflower seeds, avocado, tomatoes, coriander and a generous sprinkling of salt. Pour half the dressing over the salad and mix well. Spoon the other half into a small bowl to use as a dip.

**5.** Divide the salad between plates and crush the tortilla chips over the top of each – do this right as you serve the salad so that they stay crunchy. Have a bowl of extra tortilla chips on the table to accompany the bowl of dip.

**TIP** *If you want to make this salad more filling, stir through a tin of drained and rinsed black beans.*

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# LEMONY POTATO, ASPARAGUS & COURGETTE

 NUT FREE  LUNCH BOX

This is a lovely simple, everyday kind of salad. The lemon zest, capers and apple cider vinegar give it a great tang. I love it served with a simple green salad and a bowl of creamy hummus for a summery lunch, or for a family barbecue.

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SERVES 4

500g new potatoes, quartered

3 courgettes

2 small or 1 large fennel bulb

200g asparagus

100g flaked almonds, toasted (see [here](#)) and roughly chopped (leave these out for a nut-free version)

## FOR THE DRESSING

1 tablespoon wholegrain mustard

grated zest and juice of 1 lemon

1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar

3 tablespoons capers, drained and rinsed

4 tablespoons olive oil

salt and pepper

**1.** Preheat the oven to 180°C fan.

**2.** Place the potatoes in a saucepan, cover with cold water and a pinch of salt and bring to the boil, then turn the heat down and boil for 15 minutes. Once cooked, drain, rinse with cold water and place to one side.



**3.** While the potatoes cook, thinly slice the courgettes and fennel and chop the asparagus in half.

**4.** Place the courgettes, fennel and asparagus in a baking tray and drizzle with olive oil and salt. Cook for 10 minutes, until soft and slightly charred. In a small bowl, mix the dressing ingredients, with plenty of salt and pepper.

**5.** Place the potatoes and roasted veggies in a large serving bowl, toss with the dressing and sprinkle the almonds over the top.



# SESAME, ALMOND & BLACK PEPPER TOFU BOWL

I've loved cooking with tofu recently; it's a great way to up your plant-based protein and is such an easy way to make a filling dinner too.

This bowl is my go-to after yoga – really high in protein from the beans and tofu, it is quick, filling and a great weeknight supper. I like it served with wilted spinach, brown rice and a little squeeze of lime.

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## SERVES 2

400g firm tofu  
3 tablespoons sesame oil  
2 tablespoons tamari  
100g Tenderstem broccoli, cut into bite-sized pieces  
3 spring onions, finely sliced  
1 red chilli, finely sliced  
2 garlic cloves, crushed  
1 tablespoon pepper  
1 tablespoon maple syrup  
2 tablespoons rice vinegar  
1 x 400g tin of black beans, drained and rinsed  
1 heaped tablespoon almond butter  
salt and pepper

- 1.** Lightly press some of the liquid out of the tofu using kitchen paper. Once it feels dry, chop it into bite-sized cubes, then place these in a bowl with 2 tablespoons of the sesame oil, 1 tablespoon of the tamari and a generous sprinkling of salt.
- 2.** Pour the tofu and all of the sesame oil mix into a large frying pan, making sure there is space for the tofu to sit flat in the pan; you don't want cubes

sitting on top of each other. Fry it on a high heat for about 7–8 minutes, until it's golden and lightly charred, tossing it every few minutes. Remove from the heat and place to one side.

**3.** While the tofu cooks, blanch the broccoli. Simply place it in a bowl of boiling water and drain it after 3 minutes, when it's still al dente.

**4.** Add the spring onions, chilli and garlic to the frying pan you used for the tofu (there's no need to wash it in-between) with the final tablespoon of sesame oil and the other tablespoon of tamari, the pepper, maple syrup and rice vinegar and place on a medium heat.

**5.** After a minute or so add the broccoli, black beans and almond butter and sauté for about 3 minutes, to heat the beans through. Add the tofu right at the end, with 2–3 tablespoons of water, which should loosen the sauce. Leave it all for a minute or so to warm the water a little and let it all meld together before serving.



# SWEET POTATO & BLACK BEAN BOWL

 NUT FREE  LUNCH BOX

This recipe is all about the dressing. I've been using it on everything and it's heaven – quick to make, full of flavour and so versatile and here it brings the beans, sweet potatoes and tomatoes together brilliantly. I always make double and keep the other half in the fridge to add to a salad or bowl the following day. If you're looking to add a little more to your meal then some quinoa or brown rice tastes delicious with this too, plus a handful of butter lettuce or rocket.

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## SERVES 2

2 medium sweet potatoes, chopped into 1–2cm cubes  
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
olive oil  
2 garlic cloves, chopped  
1 large red onion, diced  
1 teaspoon smoked paprika  
1 × 400g tin of black beans, drained and rinsed  
1 lime, halved  
about 12 cherry tomatoes  
handful of coriander, roughly chopped  
salt and pepper

## FOR THE DRESSING

handful of coriander (about 20g)  
1 teaspoon maple syrup  
pinch of chilli flakes  
juice of 1 lime

1 small garlic clove

3 tablespoons plain yoghurt (we use a pure coconut yoghurt)

5 tablespoons olive oil

## **TO SERVE (OPTIONAL)**

1 ripe avocado, peeled, stoned and chopped

- 1.** Preheat the oven to 200°C fan.
- 2.** Place the sweet potatoes on a baking tray, sprinkle with the cinnamon, salt and pepper and drizzle with olive oil. Give them a good mix, then roast in the oven for 15 minutes.
- 3.** Put the garlic and onion into a large frying pan with a drizzle of oil and a pinch of salt. Cook over a medium heat for 5–10 minutes until soft.
- 4.** Next, add the smoked paprika to the pan, stir, then add the black beans and cook for 10 minutes, until they've softened.
- 5.** Squeeze the juice of half the lime into the pan.
- 6.** While the potatoes and beans are cooking, blend all the ingredients for the dressing in a blender with a pinch of salt and pepper and leave to one side.
- 7.** Chop the cherry tomatoes – I tend to slice them in half and then cut each half into three – then add them to the pan. Cook for another 2 minutes before taking the pan off the heat.
- 8.** Add the avocado, if using, and coriander to the pan and stir everything together.
- 9.** Cut the remaining lime half into two wedges. Divide the mixture between two bowls, top with the dressing and serve each with a wedge of lime.

**TIP** *You may also find that if you double the quantities for the dressing it blends more easily in a large blender. If you're finding it's a little thick as it blends, add a splash of water to loosen it. Store in the fridge for up to 3 days.*

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# NO-WASTE CAULIFLOWER BOWL

 NUT FREE

The best thing about this bowl is that there is no waste at all as we use the whole cauliflower: stalk, leaves and florets. It may sound weird but the leaves go so lovely and crunchy, while the stalks blend beautifully into the smooth butter bean mash along with the roasted garlic, mustard, rosemary, thyme and lemon juice.

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SERVES 2 LARGE PORTIONS OR 4 SMALLER ONES

1 large cauliflower, with leaves  
1 teaspoon ground turmeric  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
olive oil  
1 x 400g tin of butter beans, drained and rinsed  
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard  
1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar  
1 teaspoon dried rosemary  
1 teaspoon dried thyme  
juice of ½ lemon  
1 tablespoon almond or oat milk  
2 garlic cloves, roasted (see [here](#))  
handful of toasted pine nuts (see [here](#))  
handful of fresh parsley, roughly chopped  
salt and pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 230°C fan.

- 2.** Put the cauliflower on to a board, chop the leaves and stem away from the florets and set aside. Cut the cauliflower head into bite-sized florets and place in a baking tray with the turmeric, cumin, a drizzle of olive oil and a pinch of salt and pepper. Mix everything together well, making sure the cauliflower florets are coated in all of the spice.
- 3.** Slice the stalks into bite-sized pieces. Place the stalks and leaves on a separate baking tray, keeping them apart, and drizzle with olive oil and a pinch of salt.
- 4.** Place both trays in the oven and roast for 10 minutes.
- 5.** After 10 minutes, remove the tray with the leaves and stalks. Leave the other tray in the oven and continue to roast for a further 10–15 minutes, until the florets are lightly charred.
- 6.** Make the mash. Put the butter beans into a food processor, along with the roasted cauliflower stalks, mustard, vinegar, rosemary and thyme, lemon juice, almond milk, garlic and a pinch of salt. Pulse the mixture until smooth.
- 7.** Divide the mash between bowls and top with the roasted cauliflower florets and leaves.
- 8.** Top with a sprinkling of toasted pine nuts and parsley before serving.



# GREEN QUINOA RISOTTO

● NUT FREE ● LUNCH BOX

This is a brilliant dish for upping your greens. It's made with sautéed asparagus and courgettes, which are stirred into quinoa with a creamy lemon and pea purée before being topped with a handful of rocket. It's a really adaptable dish too; keep the quinoa and peas as they are and swap the other veggies for things you have in the fridge like broccoli, kale and spinach.

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## SERVES 4

1 onion, finely chopped

1 garlic clove, finely chopped

olive oil

175g quinoa

1 vegetable stock cube

400ml boiling water

about 15 asparagus spears (or swap for 15 stems of Tenderstem broccoli)

1 courgette, halved lengthways and cut into half moons

150g frozen peas

juice of 1 lemon

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

3 tablespoons almond or oat milk

1 teaspoon nutritional yeast

handful of rocket

salt and pepper

**1.** Put the onion and garlic into a saucepan over a medium heat with a drizzle of olive oil, a pinch of salt and pepper and gently heat for about 5 minutes, until softened. The smaller you've cut the onion the quicker it'll cook, and the better it will mix into the quinoa.

**2.** Once the onion is soft, stir the quinoa into the mixture. Dissolve the stock cube in the boiling water then pour into the pan. Let the liquid come to the boil, then turn the heat down to a simmer and cook for 10–12 minutes, until the quinoa is light and fluffy.

**3.** While the quinoa cooks, chop off the woody ends of the asparagus and slice the stems into rounds. Place in a frying pan with the courgette half-moons and a drizzle of olive oil and a pinch of salt and gently sauté on a medium heat, until soft.

**4.** Now make the pea purée. Put the frozen peas into a bowl and cover with boiling water. Leave them for a couple of minutes, then drain and add to a blender with the lemon juice, 3 tablespoons of olive oil, the mustard, almond milk, nutritional yeast, and some salt and pepper. Blend until smooth.

**5.** Add the pea purée, courgette and asparagus to the pan with the quinoa and stir everything together.

**6.** Add a handful of rocket and lots of pepper on the top of each serving.

**TIP** *To save on time and washing up, you can also cook the asparagus and courgette in the quinoa, but I think it has more flavour when you sauté it. If you don't have quinoa, you can also use pearl barley, which is delicious. Simply replace the quinoa with 200g pearl barley and cook as above but for 45–50 minutes or until soft.*

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# SPICY FAJITA BOWLS

The cashew, coriander and lime dip is just a dream here. So thick, green, creamy and good with everything. It contrasts brilliantly with the spicy pepper and bean mix and gives the rice loads of flavour too. It's a perfect weeknight supper, and you can always omit the spice if you're cooking family dinner for little ones.

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## SERVES 4

4 portions of brown rice (around 80g per person)  
1 large red onion, finely diced  
3 garlic cloves, crushed  
1 red chilli, deseeded and thinly sliced  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
1 teaspoon smoked paprika  
pinch of chilli powder (add more if you like things hot)  
1½ tablespoons maple syrup  
4 mixed peppers, deseeded and thinly sliced  
1 × 400g tin of black beans, drained and rinsed  
olive oil  
salt and pepper

## FOR THE CASHEW AND CORIANDER DIP

80g cashews  
25g coriander, plus an extra handful to serve  
juice of 2 limes  
100ml almond or oat milk  
1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar  
pinch of chilli flakes (optional)  
salt

## TO SERVE



2 ripe avocados, peeled, stoned and thinly sliced

- 1.** Cook the rice first. Simply place a large saucepan over a medium heat and cook the rice as per the instructions on the packet. I always add a good pinch of salt to the water so that the rice absorbs it as it cooks.
- 2.** Put the onion, garlic and chilli into a large frying pan with a drizzle of olive oil and a sprinkling of salt. Place over a medium heat and cook for 5–10 minutes, until soft.
- 3.** Once the onion and garlic are soft, stir the spices through and let them cook for 1 minute or so then add the maple syrup followed by the peppers. Cook the peppers for about 5 minutes before adding the black beans and cooking for a further 5 minutes.
- 4.** While the fajita mixture cooks, place all the ingredients for the cashew and coriander dip into a food processor or blender, adding the chilli flakes if you like it spicy. Blend until smooth.
- 5.** To serve, spoon the rice into each bowl and top with the fajita mixture. Add a big spoonful of the dip and half a sliced avocado. Sprinkle with salt, pepper and top with the coriander.



# SUPER VEGGIE FRIED RICE

 NUT FREE

This and the Creamy kale & mushroom salad (see [here](#)) are the two recipes Matt and I make the most at home; I've been making them almost every week for the last year. I always make extra rice when I'm cooking one of our stews or curries so that I can throw this together the next day. I love it with lots of sriracha.

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## SERVES 4

4 tablespoons sesame oil  
1 red onion, finely chopped  
3 spring onions, finely chopped  
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped  
2 teaspoons ground turmeric  
400g firm tofu, cut into 1cm cubes  
200g frozen peas  
2 red peppers, cut into 1cm cubes  
2 large handfuls of spinach (about 100g)  
2 tablespoons tamari  
500g cooked rice (we use brown basmati rice; cook 175g if you don't have leftovers)  
salt and pepper  
sriracha or hot sauce, to serve

1. Place a large frying pan over a medium heat and add the sesame oil. Once warm, add the red and spring onions, garlic, turmeric and lots of salt and pepper. Cook for a couple of minutes before adding the tofu. Mix well, ensuring the tofu gets coated in the turmeric.
2. Add the peas, peppers, spinach, tamari and rice and cook for another couple of minutes before serving, making sure the rice is piping hot and heated through thoroughly (see TIP below).

**TIP** *If you are reheating rice, make sure you only reheat it once and that it is piping hot before serving. For more information on reheating rice see [here](#).*

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# CHUNKY ITALIAN SOUP

● NUT FREE ● FREEZES WELL ● LUNCH BOX

This is a simple, comforting bowl of goodness. It's not a fancy recipe but a classic that has quickly become a staple in our house, as it just hits the spot every time. I love it served with big chunks of warm sourdough, even better when the bread is homemade too!

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## SERVES 4

olive oil

1 onion, finely diced

2 garlic cloves, finely diced

3 small carrots, quartered lengthways and finely diced

2 celery stalks, quartered lengthways and finely diced

1 tablespoon dried mixed herbs

1 tablespoon dried oregano

2 courgettes, chopped into bite-sized chunks

4 large vine tomatoes, chopped into bite-sized chunks

2 tablespoons tomato purée

1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar

1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar

1 vegetable stock cube

1 x 400g tin of plum tomatoes

500ml boiling water

handful of basil, roughly chopped

salt and pepper

**1.** Place a large saucepan over a medium heat and add a drizzle of olive oil. Once warm, add the onion, garlic, carrots and celery and a good pinch of salt. Stir everything together and cook for 5–10 minutes until soft.

- 2.** Stir in the dried herbs and cook for 2 minutes, before adding the courgettes, vine tomatoes, tomato purée, balsamic and apple cider vinegar. Cook for a further 2 minutes.
- 3.** Once the mixture begins to bubble, add the veggie stock cube, tinned tomatoes and water and stir in.
- 4.** Cover the pan, bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and leave to simmer for 10 minutes.
- 5.** Once the vegetables are cooked, stir through the basil before serving.





# SPICED SWEET POTATO & COCONUT LAKSA

● NUT FREE ● FREEZES WELL ● LUNCH BOX

If you need a pick-me-up then this is your recipe. It's like a hug in a bowl: creamy, filling and full of all my favourite ingredients – noodles, sweet potatoes, ginger, turmeric and coconut milk. It's just the dream meal on a cold day.

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## SERVES 2

2 small sweet potatoes  
2 tablespoons coconut oil  
3 garlic cloves, crushed  
small piece of ginger (about 2cm), peeled and finely chopped  
1 red chilli, deseeded and diced  
pinch of dried chilli flakes  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
1 teaspoon smoked paprika  
1 teaspoon ground turmeric  
1 teaspoon coconut sugar  
1 x 400ml tin of coconut milk  
200ml boiling water  
juice of 1 lime (if it's not juicy, use 2), plus extra to serve  
2 tablespoons tomato purée  
1 tablespoon tamari  
100–120g dried noodles (we use buckwheat noodles)  
2 handfuls of bean sprouts  
salt  
handful of coriander, chopped, to serve

- 1.** Chop the sweet potatoes into small cubes, no bigger than 2cm – you want to keep them small so that they get tender in the 15 minutes you'll simmer the soup.
- 2.** Melt the coconut oil in a large saucepan over a low heat and add the garlic, ginger, fresh and dried chilli, cumin, smoked paprika, turmeric, coconut sugar and a pinch of salt. Gently cook the mixture until the garlic softens, which should take about 2 minutes, then add the sweet potato.
- 3.** Stir the sweet potatoes into the oil and spices, let them cook for a minute or so, then pour in the coconut milk, the boiling water, lime juice, tomato purée and tamari.
- 4.** Let the soup simmer for about 15 minutes, until the potatoes are cooked through but not breaking apart.
- 5.** While the soup is simmering, cook the noodles. Place a large pan of salted water over a medium heat and bring to the boil. Once boiling, cook the noodles following the instructions on the packet. Drain well and run them under cold water so they don't go mushy, then set aside.
- 6.** When the soup is ready, stir the noodles and half the bean sprouts into the pan. Then serve the soup in two bowls, adding an extra squeeze of lime juice, the other half of the bean sprouts and the chopped coriander to each bowl.



# MISO NOODLES WITH SESAME TOFU

 NUT FREE

I love a bowl of these noodles for a mid-week supper. They make a lovely change to my usual pasta, stews and curries, a little lighter but so full of flavour from the ginger, miso, sesame and lime. A boring note on this recipe; it won't work with silken tofu so definitely make sure you're using firm tofu, or else it'll all fall apart!

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SERVES 2

## FOR THE BROTH

2 garlic cloves, crushed  
1 thumb-sized piece of ginger, peeled and grated  
2 tablespoons brown miso paste  
1 teaspoon sesame oil  
3 tablespoons tamari  
juice of 1 lime  
500ml boiling water

## FOR THE TOFU

200g firm tofu  
1 tablespoon sesame oil, plus extra for frying  
1 tablespoon tamari  
1 tablespoon sesame seeds, toasted (see [here](#))  
1 tablespoon black sesame seeds

## FOR THE RAMEN

2 bok choy

2 portions of noodles (we like brown rice noodles; about 80g per person)  
2 spring onions, finely sliced  
handful of coriander, chopped  
1 red chilli, finely sliced

**1.** Start by making the broth. Place the garlic and ginger in a saucepan along with the miso, sesame oil, tamari and lime juice. Fry over a low heat for 2 minutes, stirring occasionally, then pour in the boiling water. Leave to simmer while you cook the tofu.

**2.** Cut the tofu into 1cm-thick slices and gently pat each slice dry with kitchen paper, so that all the excess moisture has been removed. Mix the sesame oil and tamari together in a bowl, then add the tofu and carefully turn the pieces over until each slice is coated.

**3.** Place a large frying pan over a medium heat and add a drizzle of sesame oil. Once hot, add the tofu and fry for 5 minutes on each side, until crispy and golden. At this point, sprinkle the sesame seeds over the tofu and fry for another few minutes. Set to one side.

**4.** Add the bok choy to the simmering broth (it looks best when kept whole but I find it's easier to eat when cut into quarters). After 1 minute, add the noodles and cook, following the instructions on the packet.

**5.** Divide the noodles and broth between two bowls and top with the tofu and a sprinkle of spring onions, coriander and chilli. Serve immediately.





# SELF-ACCEPTANCE, BODY IMAGE AND THE CALORIE QUESTION

In this chapter I want to delve a little deeper into the idea of positive change, tackling the question raised in our introduction – that if the changes we’re making to the way we live are done to better our mental and physical health (which is how we see the concept of wellness), rather than to change the way we look, then how do we find that all-important self-acceptance, in ourselves generally but more specifically in relation to our body image?

Researching the topics of self-esteem and body image led me to some crazy stats. Our life online seems to exacerbate the issue, with a survey by Digital Awareness UK showing that 52% of school-age students think that social media makes them feel less confident about their appearance and how interesting their life is, while almost half of 18–24-year-olds said their social media feeds made them feel less attractive. One podcast guest also shared an insight into a stat from a study of female students published by the Psychology of Women Quarterly, in which 93% of the women said they engaged in toxic self-talk. Up to 70% of the population as a whole suffer from imposter syndrome – the belief that we are not worthy of success and instead convince ourselves that our success is simply luck and being in the right place at the right



time, and as a result are terrified our shortcomings will be exposed. In a sense it's a constant fear of not being enough to truly succeed.

This same sense of unworthiness definitely seems to feed through to body image, and dieting is rife as a result. One Kantar study from April 2019 showed that 45% of women in the UK agree with the statement, 'most of the time I'm trying to lose weight'; with 30% of men subscribing to it – which to me are really disheartening statistics. Finding acceptance of ourselves and moving away from the notion that certain bodies have more value than others can be really difficult though, especially with such easy access to everyone else's lives online and the culture of constant comparison that exists as a result – on which, I do think it's critical to remember that what we see online is a highlights reel. It's a 'best of', rather than the minute-by-minute insight into someone's life that it can appear to be, you rarely – if ever – see the whole picture.

When it comes to moving past that comparison cycle and finding a more positive image of ourselves so that we can reclaim a happier, more consistent relationship with cooking, eating, exercising and nourishing ourselves, I think we need to start by finding a better connection to ourselves. I had a really interesting conversation about this with Pandora Paloma, a nutritionist and life coach who focuses on intuitive living with a particular passion for encouraging us to take up the idea of intuitive eating in order to move past any negative body image cycles or negative food patterns.

The concept of intuitive eating was created in 1995 by two nutritionists who were writing diet plans and came to see the

inevitable: that crash diets rarely work in the long term. So they decided to 'focus on nurturing your body, rather than on the biology of starvation', the idea being that if you eat well, listen to your body and never get into a negative cycle of restricting and then bingeing you can achieve more sustainable weight loss – if that's something you want to do. You honour hunger, respect fullness, let go of guilt and truly enjoy what you're eating, because it's exactly what you're craving at that moment. For example, some days it's cold, you're tired, hungry and feeling like you need a big hug for dinner. In that instance a big bowl of Satay sweet potato curry (see [here](#)) followed by some crumble with Almond butter ice cream (see [here](#)) and maybe some chocolate in front of the TV is exactly what you need, and making a lighter salad isn't going to leave you feeling satisfied by any means – because satisfaction isn't just physical fullness, but I think happens on a mental and emotional level too.

On other days you might have loads of energy and not be especially hungry, or maybe you haven't been able to get much of your five-a-day in for a few days – on either occasion you could then be really craving something lighter and fresher with lots of veggies and want something more akin to our Lemon courgetti with spinach pesto or our Crunchy Mexican salad (see [here](#) and [here](#)). Neither the salad nor the curry should be seen as better or worse, it's not a question of good or bad, virtuous or indulgent, but just about listening to what will make you feel good at that moment on that day. Life isn't binary or static, every day is different – our emotional state fluctuates, our hunger levels go up and down, the amount of movement we get in a day changes and so on, therefore it

makes sense to tune into how that impacts on what we cook and eat.

Pregnancy and early motherhood were the best teachers for truly internalising this concept for me and I've found that my ability to truly listen to my body has grown tenfold in the last two years or so. In the first trimester I basically only wanted to eat chips, potatoes, crisps, bread, artichokes and lemon – a plate of chips with two lemons squeezed over them become my new go-to. It was a little strange, possibly even a little gross to some, and it certainly prompted a few raised eyebrows in restaurants, but they really hit the spot at the time, whereas my usual go-tos of broccoli and peas made me especially nauseous. As my morning sickness passed I suddenly craved greens and smoothies and was veggie-mad for the next month or so – it seemed like this was my body trying to balance things out. It was a great lesson in letting go, listening to my body and doing what felt right, even if that meant a very strange order at dinner!

Becoming a mother to a little girl has also been brilliant at helping redefine the way that I see the female body. I see my body as much more than just a vessel – appearance feels so much less important than it ever did before, and setting a healthy attitude for my daughter when it comes to body image and creating good habits around meal times has become all the more important. Being a mother has also reinforced another element of the conversation I had with Pandora and something else that I'd really like to instil in Skye – the idea of body neutrality, which means that instead of working towards loving every part of ourselves, we simply work towards finding an acceptance of our physical self.

This works on the premise that while loving every part of ourselves is a beautiful concept, it still means focusing on our physical body and aesthetics a lot and instead we should be aiming to move past that and just let it be. It's the question of what you want to be known for. Do you want to be known for being the person with abs and shiny hair, or someone that is really kind, clever, hard-working, diligent; someone who always shows up for their friends? That's not to say we can't enjoy going to the gym and eating a healthy meal and want to feel good in our body, it just means not getting too hung up on it and seeing ourselves and our attributes as part of a much bigger picture. I mean, why do we love our friends? Is it because of their long legs, or because they make us laugh and support us lovingly and consistently? We don't tend to put those around us in the same limiting boxes that we sometimes create for ourselves and when you put this in such frank terms, the idea of defining ourselves in this way feels a little mad too.

I appreciate that it's really easy to talk about and celebrate these concepts. I'm sure we all agree that being more accepting of ourselves can only be a good thing, but the question is – how do we do it? How do we make what we eat a delicious, satisfying part of our life rather than something negative or all-consuming and how do we feel comfortable in our own skin?

Diet culture is challenging. I'm sure there will be people who say that perhaps this book is a diet to the extent to which it's all vegan, which I really appreciate. Yes, we share recipes for a vegan diet, and yes, the focus is on natural, whole foods, and that's because we are passionate about helping everyone eat

more veggies because we know it's important, but it never has been and never will be about aesthetics for us. Vegan or not, it's about creating a way of cooking, eating and living that feels genuinely enjoyable and therefore sustainable for the long term. Something that you enjoy and that makes you feel good physically and mentally every day.

***How do we make what we eat a delicious, satisfying part of our life rather than something negative or all-consuming and how do we feel comfortable in our own skin?***

***It's about creating a way of cooking, eating and living that feels genuinely enjoyable and therefore sustainable for the long term. Something that you enjoy and makes you feel good physically and mentally every day.***

When it comes to our recipes and philosophy there is one question that we get all the time, and that's whether we'll add a calorie count or a macro breakdown to our recipes. Calorie counting isn't a concept that I've ever subscribed to – it's hard to believe that doing some serious mental maths before tucking in makes the meal a more positive or delicious

experience. I've always wanted to focus on flavour, texture and whether I'm getting lots of fresh, colourful ingredients into my body over anything else. However, I caveat this and what we're about to talk about with the complete understanding that if there is a medical need to refer to calories then that is utterly different, but when there is no medical reason we really believe that it's just not the way forward both for our mental well-being and for our health. That said, I wanted to explore the calorie question on a more scientific basis and get to the root of whether a calorie count was a good measure of a meal and something that I shouldn't shun in the way that I always had.

The first question was: what is a calorie? A calorie isn't actually a thing, it's simply a unit of energy. It essentially measures the amount of heat needed to raise the temperature of 1 gram of water by 1 degree Celsius. Pretty unsexy really! We talked to Rhiannon Lambert, a brilliant nutritionist friend of ours, to find out a little bit more about whether calorie counting held much merit for most of us. Rhiannon explained that when we talk about calories, we often reference a 'calorie balance', i.e. how much we need to take in versus how much we give out. However, that poses a variety of issues, as it's far too simplistic.

Our bodies are complex biochemical systems, where a calorie isn't just a calorie. When looking at how things are absorbed by the body, we need to ask: are all calories created equal? Is an avocado equal to a chocolate bar? The short answer is no and that's why calorie counting can be an inaccurate and unhelpful way of looking at what you're eating.

Rhiannon talks about the make-up of food, each having its own unique thermic effect (known as TEF), referring to the number of calories needed by your body to actually digest, absorb and process the nutrients within. I love how she says we're all as unique as our personalities, which inevitably means we will use calories differently. Comparing an avocado which has more fibre, fat and a plethora of other nutrients to a basic chocolate bar which has a lot of sugar and different kinds of fat is just illogical. Nutritional science is not straightforward and the food we eat has to undergo a complex process in the body, which takes time and involves a lot more interactions than a simple mouth-to-stomach pathway.

Instead of looking at calories, Rhiannon suggests we should be focusing on nutrients – how many colourful pieces of fruit and veg, beans, pulses, nuts and seeds we are eating rather than numbers. Now that's definitely not to say we shouldn't enjoy the chocolate – it's part of a balanced, intuitive way of living – but it's a great example of why we shouldn't make our decisions based on a number on a packet, because the numbers don't tell you all you need to know.

To delve a little deeper into this topic, Matt and I spoke to Tim Spector, Professor of genetic epidemiology at King's College London, about calories to get to the bottom of all the questions about them. His book *The Diet Myth* is absolutely fascinating and well worth a read. He has spent decades studying identical twins to understand what factors impact their health and through that the health of us all. Identical twins have the same DNA but different gut microbes and

therein often lies the answer to why they go on to develop different diseases.

The recent breakthroughs in the science of our microbes have shown us that the gut impacts our health and well-being on a scale way beyond what we imagined. The interesting part of this in reference to what we're discussing in this chapter, is the fact that we all have a totally unique set of microbes and since our microbes determine how we react to what we eat, we've come to understand that how we respond to the same meal will differ hugely.

Even if we live and eat the same thing as each other, even if we live in the same place, even if we're an identical twin, we'll still react differently. How we react to a meal is determined by our microbes and therefore is incredibly complex. Tim has debunked the myths, showing that reducing food to just carbohydrates, fat, protein and calories is 'ridiculously simple', and the much-used concepts of weight loss being calories in versus calories out or simply exercising more just aren't valid anymore. This in turn highlights why one person can eat one thing and lose weight, while someone else will eat the same meal and gain weight. Our guts are different and how we react to calories is very different, so focusing on a calorie count won't necessarily help us in any way and simply highlights why there will never be a one-size-fits-all and why we all need to do what feels right to us as individuals.

The only bit of blanket advice Tim shared was to look after our gut microbes and that means aiming to include 30 different plant-based foods in our diet each week, as this greatly assists the microbe diversity in our gut, which was the exact same



advice that Dr Megan Rossi gave us about improving our gut health.

Ultimately it all goes back to the age-old, ever so slightly boring concept of balance: of trying not to see anything in isolation when it comes to creating a healthy mind and a healthy body. You need to make the recipes and ideas of anything – the ones in this book included – work for you and your lifestyle, and when implementing something new or making a change, ask yourself, 'is this something I can imagine myself still doing in five years' time, am I truly enjoying it and is it really making me feel good?' Short-term diets and quick fixes never seem to work, so look for the long term, alongside practices that create a deeper acceptance of yourself and if you do want to make a change for one reason or another make sure it's done in a kind, loving, slow and gentle way.

# SPINACH & CHICKPEA CURRY

● NUT FREE ● FREEZES WELL ● LUNCH BOX

This is the perfect warming dinner and something we make a lot at home. We normally double the quantities and freeze half the batch, then we have some with brown rice and yoghurt one night, and spoon it into a baked sweet potato later in the week. The mix of chilli, ginger, mustard seeds, curry powder, cumin and ground coriander give it such depth, and the yoghurt and coconut milk make it nice and creamy.

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SERVES 4, WITH RICE

1 tablespoon coconut oil  
1 onion, finely chopped  
4 garlic cloves, finely chopped  
2 celery stalks, finely chopped  
250g spinach  
1 x 400g tin of coconut milk  
a 2.5cm piece of ginger, peeled and finely chopped  
1 teaspoon mustard seeds  
1 teaspoon ground coriander  
1 tablespoon medium curry powder  
1 tablespoon ground cumin  
24 cherry tomatoes, sliced  
2 x 400g tin of chickpeas, drained and rinsed  
½ lemon  
2 tablespoons plain yoghurt (we use a pure coconut yoghurt)  
pinch of chilli flakes (optional)  
salt and pepper

**1.** Put the coconut oil into a large saucepan with the onion, garlic and celery, and some salt and pepper, and let them cook on a medium heat for 5–10

minutes, until the celery and onion have softened.

**2.** In a separate pan, wilt 100g of spinach with a splash of boiling water. Once wilted, add half the coconut milk and use a hand blender to blitz the spinach, so that it's smooth.

**3.** Once the celery and onion have softened, add the ginger, mustard seeds, coriander, curry powder and cumin. Let the spices toast for a minute or so before adding the puréed spinach, cherry tomatoes, chickpeas and the rest of the coconut milk, plus a big sprinkling of salt and lots of pepper.

**4.** Turn the heat up so that it starts bubbling, then turn down to a simmer. Simmer for 15–20 minutes, adding the rest of the spinach for the final few minutes. Once the spinach has wilted, add a squeeze of lemon and the yoghurt plus a sprinkling of chilli flakes, if you're using them and serve.

**TIP** *If you're going to be freezing this one, make sure you set aside what you want to freeze before you add the yoghurt.*

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# CURRIED BUTTERNUT SQUASH

● NUT FREE ● FREEZES WELL ● LUNCH BOX

The lovely thing about this dish is that the flavour builds with each mouthful as you make your way through the bowl. Roasting the squash with the turmeric, cayenne, curry powder, coriander and cinnamon gives it so much spice, while the miso adds lots of depth with a subtle hint of tomato running throughout. Simple, warming and a crowd-pleaser every time. Add a little spinach if you want some green with it or sprinkle some fresh coriander on the top.

---

SERVES 4, WITH RICE

2 medium butternut squash, cut into bite-sized chunks

3 teaspoons medium curry powder

1 teaspoon cayenne pepper

2 teaspoons ground turmeric

1 teaspoon ground coriander

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

olive oil

1 tablespoon coconut oil

1 red onion, finely chopped

3 garlic cloves, finely chopped

1 red chilli, finely chopped

1 teaspoon brown rice miso paste

1 teaspoon coconut sugar (optional)

1 x 400g tin of coconut milk

2 tablespoons tomato purée

juice of 1 lime

salt and pepper

**1.** Heat the oven to 200°C fan.

**2.** Place the squash in a baking tray. Sprinkle over 2 teaspoons of the curry powder, the cayenne pepper, 1 teaspoon of the turmeric, the ground coriander and cinnamon. Pour a generous drizzle of olive oil over the top and sprinkle with salt. Stir the squash really well, ensuring all the pieces are totally covered in the oil and spice mix. Roast in the oven for 30–40 minutes, until golden and tender.

**3.** While the squash is cooking, melt the coconut oil in a large saucepan over a medium heat, then stir in the onion and garlic. Fry for 5–10 minutes, or until soft.

**4.** Next, add the chilli, miso, remaining curry powder and turmeric, the coconut sugar (if using). Stir everything together then let that fry for a minute or so before adding the coconut milk and tomato purée. Bring to the boil, then turn the heat down to a simmer to reduce the sauce while the squash finishes roasting – about 10–15 minutes.

**5.** Stir the squash into the pan and cook everything together for a further 15 minutes, until the sauce is thick and the squash is lovely and soft. Stir in the lime juice just before serving.



# EASY RED LENTIL DHAL

● NUT FREE ● FREEZES WELL ● LUNCH BOX

You can't beat a good dhal. I love the depth of spice, the warming, comforting sense of each bite and how good the leftovers taste the next day! This is a really easy recipe that always hits the spot. I like adding the coconut milk to make it extra creamy and the spinach to get my greens in, but otherwise it uses all the classic ingredients. I serve it very simply with brown rice and yoghurt.

---

## SERVES 4

250g split red lentils  
2 tablespoons coconut oil  
2 garlic cloves, finely diced  
1 onion, finely diced  
1 green chilli, deseeded and finely chopped  
1 teaspoon ground coriander  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
2 tablespoons medium curry powder  
1 teaspoon ground turmeric  
1 x 400g tin of coconut milk  
1 teaspoon coconut sugar  
2 large handfuls of baby spinach (about 100g)  
juice of ½ lemon  
salt and pepper

**1.** Put the lentils into a large saucepan, cover with boiling water and place over a medium heat. Bring to a simmer and cook for 5 minutes – you want them to have softened and lost their bite. Drain and set aside. Be careful not to overcook or they can become mushy.



**2.** Place a large frying pan over a medium heat. Once hot, add the coconut oil, onion, garlic, chilli and a pinch of salt. Sauté the onion mixture until soft, stirring frequently, then add the spices, stirring them through the onion mix for 1 minute or so.

**3.** Turn the heat down and pour in the coconut milk and coconut sugar, then bring to the boil. Let this cook for another few minutes, stirring well to combine all the flavours.

**4.** Stir the drained, cooked lentils into the frying pan and let them cook in the sauce for a further 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

**5.** Add the spinach and stir until it has wilted, then add the lemon juice and serve.



# SATAY SWEET POTATO CURRY

● FREEZES WELL ● LUNCH BOX

This is one of the best comfort food recipes we've ever made. Thick, creamy, rich, nutty and just so warming, it's my go-to after a long day, when I want a pick-me-up. I love it served with roast cauliflower and brown rice, and the leftovers make an amazing packed lunch the next day.

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## SERVES 4

2 large sweet potatoes, cut into bite-sized chunks  
3 tablespoons melted coconut oil  
1 teaspoon chilli powder  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
1 teaspoon medium curry powder  
1 red onion, diced  
2 garlic cloves, diced  
1 x 400g tin of coconut milk  
1 teaspoon coconut sugar  
juice of 1 lime  
5 heaped tablespoons smooth peanut butter  
1 x 400g tin of chickpeas, drained and rinsed  
1 teaspoon tamari  
2 handfuls of spinach (about 100g)  
large handful of peanuts, toasted (see [here](#)) and roughly chopped  
handful of coriander (about 20g), roughly chopped  
salt

1. Preheat the oven to 220°C fan.
2. Place the sweet potato on a baking tray and mix with a sprinkling of salt, 2 tablespoons of the coconut oil, the chilli powder, cumin and curry powder.

Roast for 20 minutes, until soft.

**3.** Place a large, heavy-based saucepan over a medium heat and add the remaining tablespoon of coconut oil and a sprinkling of salt. Add the onion and garlic and cook for 5–10 minutes, until soft, before adding the coconut milk and coconut sugar. Bring to the boil, then simmer for about 10 minutes.

**4.** Next, add the lime juice, peanut butter, chickpeas and tamari and simmer for another 5 minutes. Add the roasted sweet potatoes with about 100ml of boiling water (as the sauce will be quite thick at this point) and cook for 5 minutes more, stirring every couple of minutes.

**5.** Finally, stir through the spinach and leave to wilt before serving. Serve in bowls, sprinkling the toasted peanuts and coriander over the top of each serving.

**TIP** *If the sauce looks as though it is splitting, just add a splash of almond or oat milk to make it creamy and smooth again.*

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# JACKFRUIT CURRY

● NUT FREE ● FREEZES WELL

Jackfruit seems to be having a moment. It's become so popular in vegan cooking and I completely see why – it has a unique texture. I buy canned jackfruit from Biona; it's not the easiest ingredient to get hold of, but it's delicious and quite unlike anything else. The curry works really well with the coconut rice recipe we've suggested here, but it's also great just with plain white or brown rice.

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## SERVES 4, WITH RICE

1 tablespoon coconut oil  
1 red onion, diced  
3 garlic cloves, diced  
1 tablespoon medium curry powder  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
1 teaspoon chilli powder  
½ teaspoon ground turmeric  
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
2 × 400g tins of jackfruit, drained and rinsed  
2 × 400g tins of coconut milk  
juice of 1 lime  
1 tablespoon maple syrup  
salt and pepper

## FOR THE COCONUT RICE (OPTIONAL)

4 portions of brown rice (about 200g)  
1 × 400g tin of coconut milk  
1 tablespoon unsweetened desiccated coconut

- 1.** If you are making the coconut rice, place it in a large saucepan with the coconut milk, 300ml of cold water and a pinch of salt. Bring to the boil, before reducing the temperature and leaving to simmer for 45–50 minutes until soft – you may need to add a dash of water if it becomes too thick. Once cooked, stir through the desiccated coconut.
  
- 2.** Heat the coconut oil in a medium pan over a medium heat. Once warm, stir in the onion and garlic, and cook for 10 minutes until starting to soften. Add the spices, stir through the onion mixture and cook for a further minute.
  
- 3.** Add the jackfruit and mix well, before adding the coconut milk, lime juice and maple syrup.
  
- 4.** Cook for 25–30 minutes, stirring every 5 or 10 minutes, until the jackfruit is really soft.
  
- 5.** Using a wooden spoon, break down any large chunks of jackfruit to shred it. This can be a little challenging with the seeds, but the longer the jackfruit cooks and the softer it becomes, the easier it is to do.
  
- 6.** Mix well to ensure the jackfruit is nicely coated in the sauce. Serve with the coconut rice, if using, or some plain rice if you prefer.





# BEETROOT & CAULIFLOWER CURRY

 FREEZES WELL

I adore the colour of this one; it is so beautiful and vibrant and looks great served with coconut yoghurt and flaked almonds. The sweet creaminess of the coconut milk is brilliant with the roasted beets and cauliflower, while the cumin, cinnamon, ginger and curry powder give each bite such depth.

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SERVES 4, WITH RICE

4 large beetroot (about 700g), peeled and cut into bite-sized chunks  
olive oil  
1 large cauliflower, cut into bite-sized florets  
1 tablespoon coconut oil  
1 onion, diced  
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped  
1 tablespoon medium curry powder  
1 teaspoon chilli powder  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1 teaspoon ground ginger  
1 x 400g tin of coconut milk  
4 tablespoons plain yoghurt (we use a pure coconut yoghurt)  
handful of coriander, roughly chopped (optional)  
handful of flaked almonds, toasted (see [here](#))  
salt and pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C fan.

- 2.** Put the beetroot into a large baking tray, drizzle with olive oil, add a pinch of salt and pepper, then place in the oven for 25 minutes.
- 3.** After 25 minutes, turn the temperature up to 220°C fan, then place the cauliflower in a separate baking tray, drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Roast for 10–15 minutes until the cauliflower is lightly charred. Once cooked, remove both trays.
- 4.** While the beetroot and cauliflower cook, place a large saucepan over a medium heat and add the coconut oil. Once melted, add the onion and garlic, stir in and cook for 10 minutes until soft and translucent.
- 5.** Add the spices and cook for 2 minutes, before pouring in the coconut milk and the cooked beetroot. Cover and leave to simmer for 10 minutes.
- 6.** Place the ingredients in a food processor and blitz to form a smooth sauce. Pour the beetroot mixture back into the pan and add the cauliflower, leaving to cook for a couple of minutes before serving. The sauce is meant to be nice and thick, but you can double the coconut milk if you prefer it to be runnier.
- 7.** Divide the curry among four bowls and top with dollops of yoghurt, a sprinkle of coriander and some flaked almonds.

**TIP** *This isn't a saucy curry, which we love, but if you'd like more sauce in the curry you can add an extra can of coconut milk.*

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# MUSHROOM STROGANOFF

 FREEZES WELL

This dish is one of my family's absolute favourites. It's so rich and creamy – the perfect comfort food on a cold evening. At home we serve it with sautéed greens and brown rice, to which I add a teaspoon of miso at the end, so that it mirrors some of the stroganoff flavour.

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SERVES 4, WITH RICE

15g dried mushrooms (we like porcini mushrooms), roughly chopped

olive oil

1 onion, finely diced

2 garlic cloves, diced

500g mixed mushrooms (we like a mixture of oyster and button mushrooms)

1 tablespoon brown rice miso paste

2 tablespoons almond butter

1 × 400g tin of coconut milk

20g chives, finely chopped

salt

**1.** Place the dried mushrooms in a bowl and cover with about 150ml of boiling water – you want the mushrooms to be submerged. Leave to soak for about 20 minutes.

**2.** While they soak, place a large saucepan over a medium heat and add a drizzle of olive oil. Once warm, add the onion and garlic and a pinch of salt and cook for 5–10 minutes, until soft.

**3.** As they cook, thinly slice the fresh mushrooms. Once the onions have softened and are starting to brown, add the fresh mushrooms to the pan and let them cook together for 10 minutes, until the mushrooms have softened.

**4.** At this point, add the miso and almond butter, stir them through before adding the coconut milk, dried mushrooms and the water that the dried mushrooms had been soaking in. Give everything a good stir and bring to the boil before reducing the heat and leaving to simmer for 20 minutes.

**5.** Once you are ready to serve, stir through the chives, reserving a small amount for the top. You may want to add a dash of hot water if the stew is too thick. Serve in bowls scattered with some of the reserved chives.



# MISO AUBERGINE STEW

 FREEZES WELL

This is a really rich, earthy dish, perfect when you want a warming, comforting meal. It's not the most beautiful recipe, but it tastes incredible. I love the mix of lime juice, miso, almond butter, spring onions and coconut milk.

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## SERVES 4

2 aubergines, cut into bite-sized pieces  
olive oil  
250g button mushrooms, halved  
1 onion, diced  
2 garlic cloves, diced  
2 tablespoons brown rice miso paste  
2 tablespoons tamari  
2 tablespoons almond butter  
2 x 400g tins of coconut milk  
juice of 1 lime  
2 spring onions, finely sliced  
handful of coriander, roughly chopped  
salt and pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C fan.
2. Place the aubergines on a baking tray and drizzle with a little olive oil and add a pinch of salt. Roast for 40 minutes until soft, adding the mushrooms halfway through.
3. Place a large saucepan over a medium heat and add a drizzle of olive oil. Once warm, add the onions and garlic and a pinch of salt and pepper. Stir

everything together and cook for 5–10 minutes until softened.

**4.** Add the miso, tamari and almond butter and cook for a further 2 minutes, before adding the coconut milk and lime juice. Give it all a good stir.

**5.** Cover the pan, bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and leave to simmer for 30 minutes.

**6.** After 30 minutes, add the roasted aubergines and mushrooms and mix well.

**7.** Spoon into four bowls and sprinkle over the spring onions and coriander before serving.





# MUSHROOM & WALNUT RAGU

● FREEZES WELL ● LUNCH BOX

I made this for some girlfriends who have been taste-testing our recipes since day one, and they said it was their favourite dish ever!

It's hearty, warming, really rich and just a dream dinner. The leftovers work brilliantly too; I'll often make a double portion and have the second serving with jacket potatoes later in the week or take it to work with some quinoa or salad for an on-the-go option.

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SERVES 4, WITH A LITTLE LEFT OVER

20g dried porcini mushrooms  
250ml boiling water  
100g walnuts  
1 onion, finely diced  
2 garlic cloves, finely diced  
2 celery stalks, finely diced  
olive oil  
400g chestnut or button mushrooms, thinly sliced  
1 red pepper, deseeded and diced  
1 teaspoon dried thyme  
1 teaspoon dried oregano  
1 teaspoon dried rosemary  
1 x 400g tin of chopped tomatoes  
1 tablespoon tomato purée  
2 tablespoons tamari  
1-2 tablespoons nutritional yeast  
4 portions of pasta (about 80g per person)  
salt and pepper  
handful of chopped parsley, to serve

- 1.** Start by soaking the dried mushrooms. Put them into a bowl with the boiling water and leave for 20 minutes. Once soaked, drain well (but keep the liquid), then cut the mushrooms into small pieces.
- 2.** While the mushrooms are soaking, chop the walnuts into tiny pieces – they need to look like large breadcrumbs. Place them in a large, deep frying pan over a medium heat and toast for about 5 minutes, until golden, stirring every now and again. Once toasted, remove from the heat and spoon into a bowl. Place the frying pan back on the heat.
- 3.** Add the onion, garlic and celery to the frying pan, along with a drizzle of olive oil and a pinch of salt. Cook for 5–10 minutes, until soft.
- 4.** Add the fresh mushrooms and red pepper, with the thyme, oregano and rosemary, and cook for about 5 minutes, until soft.
- 5.** Stir in the chopped tomatoes, tomato purée, tamari and dried mushrooms with their water. Leave to simmer for 10–15 minutes – you want the ragu to be thick and have lost the excess liquid. Stir in the walnuts and nutritional yeast and leave them to cook in the sauce for a final 5 minutes.
- 6.** While the ragu is simmering, cook your pasta in a pan of boiling water, following the instructions on the packet. Drain well then stir into the ragu once both are ready. Serve with a sprinkling of chopped parsley.



# AUBERGINE & LENTIL BOLOGNESE

● NUT FREE ● FREEZES WELL

This is one of my staple weeknight dinners. It's so easy to double or triple the recipe so that you have lots of leftovers for the freezer or a meal later in the week. It's a versatile recipe too, I stir it through spaghetti, serve it with roasted veggies and brown rice or pile it into a jacket potato.

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## SERVES 4

1 large aubergine  
olive oil  
1 onion, finely diced  
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped  
1 teaspoon paprika  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
125g dried green lentils  
400ml boiling water  
1 vegetable stock cube  
1 x 400g tin of chopped tomatoes  
2 tablespoons tomato purée  
salt and pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C fan.
2. Cut the aubergine into very small cubes, no larger than about 1cm, and place on a baking tray. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and cook for about 20 minutes, until soft.

**3.** Place a large saucepan over a medium heat with a drizzle of olive oil and a sprinkling of salt. Add the onion and garlic and cook for 5–10 minutes, until soft. Once soft, stir in the paprika and cumin and cook for another minute or so before adding the lentils, the boiling water and stock cube, plus lots of salt and pepper. Bring the pan to the boil, then turn down to a simmer and cook for 15 minutes, until most of the water has been absorbed and the lentils are softening. Next, add the chopped tomatoes and the tomato purée.

**4.** Cook for a further 30 minutes, until the lentils are soft, adding the aubergines once they're ready, and a splash more water if your lentils are still too al dente or the sauce feels a little dry. The longer the sauce sits the better it tastes, I think, so there's no need to get stressed about timings.

**TIP** *We find that lentils can really differ in cooking time so we've suggested 45 minutes to give a rough guide, but you may need to alter this depending on how long it takes for them to soften. If you're cooking them a little longer you might need a splash more water.*

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# CREAMY LENTILS, MUSHROOMS & MUSTARD

 NUT FREE

I've been making this recipe for the last few years. It uses all the ingredients I tend to keep in my fridge, so it's a perfect throw-together dinner. I really like it served with some thick slices of toasted sourdough – the crusty texture of the bread contrasts with the creamy mushrooms and soft lentils perfectly.

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## SERVES 4

olive oil

1 onion, finely diced

3 garlic cloves, finely diced

2 carrots, finely diced

2 celery stalks, finely diced

200g cherry tomatoes, quartered

2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar

200g dried green lentils

1 vegetable stock cube

600ml boiling water

1 tablespoon dried thyme

6 large Portobello mushrooms, sliced

250g chestnut mushrooms, halved or quartered, depending on size

3 tablespoons Dijon mustard

5 heaped tablespoons plain yoghurt (we use a pure coconut yoghurt)

2 large handfuls of spinach (about 100g)

salt and pepper

## TO SERVE



large handful of parsley, chopped  
crusty sourdough bread or toast (optional)

- 1.** Place a large saucepan over a medium heat and add a drizzle of olive oil. Once warm, add the onion, garlic, carrots, celery and a good sprinkling of salt. Stir and cook for 5–10 minutes, until they have softened.
- 2.** Add the cherry tomatoes to the pan, along with the apple cider vinegar then stir the lentils into the pan and let them cook for 1 minute or so. Dissolve the stock cube in the boiling water then pour into the pan and stir everything together.
- 3.** Let the lentils cook over a low heat for about 25–35 minutes, until they're soft and ready to eat. Keep an eye on them in case they dry out and top up with water if necessary.
- 4.** Place a large frying pan over a medium–high heat and add a good drizzle of olive oil, the thyme and a pinch of salt. Add the mushrooms and cook for 5–10 minutes, until tender. Once they're cooked, stir in 2 tablespoons of the mustard and 2 tablespoons of the yoghurt.
- 5.** Add the spinach to the pan of lentils, stir and leave it to wilt, then stir in the remaining yoghurt and mustard.
- 6.** To serve, spoon the lentils into each serving bowl, top with the mushrooms and a sprinkling of parsley and lots of pepper. I like to add a crusty piece of sourdough toast on the side.

**TIP** *We find that lentils can really differ in cooking time so we've suggested 45 minutes to give a rough guide, but you may need to alter this depending on how long it takes for them to soften.*

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# CAMILLA'S RISOTTO

● NUT FREE ● LUNCH BOX

This has been a family favourite for years; my mum has been making it for us for as long as I can remember. She cooked for me a lot in the weeks after Skye was born and I had hundreds of requests for the recipe after sharing it on Instagram, so here it is. It's a great way of using leftover veggies too, as it works with pretty much anything, green beans and asparagus are our other favourites to add in.

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SERVES 4-6

olive oil

1 onion, finely diced

2 garlic cloves, finely diced

3 vegetable stock cubes

1.5 litres boiling water

400g risotto rice

250g Tenderstem broccoli, chopped into small pieces

2 courgettes, halved and chopped into half-moon shapes

300g frozen peas

2 large handfuls of spinach (about 100g)

2 heaped tablespoons nutritional yeast

juice of 1½ lemons

splash of almond or oat milk

salt and pepper

**1.** Place a large saucepan over a medium heat and add a large drizzle of olive oil. Once warm, add the onion, garlic and a big pinch of salt and pepper. Stir it all together and let it cook for 5-10 minutes, until soft.

**2.** While that cooks, dissolve the stock cubes in boiling water in a jug and place to one side.

- 3.** Once the onion is soft, stir the risotto rice through, coating it with the olive oil and continuing to stir for a minute or two.
- 4.** Slowly add the stock, stirring the rice every couple of minutes, ensuring there's always enough liquid in the pan. Continue adding the stock a little at a time, until all of the stock is used up.
- 5.** While the rice cooks, blanch the chopped broccoli. Place it in a bowl and cover with boiling water. Leave for 2–3 minutes, then drain.
- 6.** Next, place a saucepan over a medium heat and add a drizzle of olive oil. Once warm, add the drained broccoli and the courgettes, with lots of salt and pepper. Let them cook for about 5 minutes, stirring, until they're cooked through, but still have a slight bite to them.
- 7.** Stir the peas through the veggies and let them cook for another 2 minutes. Continue to stir the rice every now and again as you cook the veggies.
- 8.** Once the veggies are cooked, stir them and the spinach through the rice, along with the nutritional yeast, lemon juice and a dash of almond milk to make it really creamy. Continue to cook until the rice feels soft, about 5–10 minutes. Spoon into bowls and serve.

**TIP** *If you're reheating the leftovers of this recipe, mix through a splash of plant-based milk when warming it up to loosen the mixture and make it extra creamy. For more information on reheating rice see [here](#).*

**TIP** *My sister loves adding a little pesto to the risotto when she makes it. Just stir 2–3 heaped tablespoons through the rice right before serving.*

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# TOMATO RISOTTO

 NUT FREE

Tomato risotto was one of my mum's go-to recipes when we were growing up: we all loved it and just the name makes me feel happy now. I find vegan risottos can tend to be a bit bland because when you take out the butter and cheese the dish can lack flavour and texture, so

I make mine with coconut milk, nutritional yeast and miso. I know this is unconventional and slightly blasphemous to some, for which I apologise, but I promise this is delicious, fuss-free comfort food that I think you'll love too.

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## SERVES 4

12 sun-dried tomatoes in oil (or semi-blushed tomatoes), finely chopped, plus 3 tablespoons of oil from the jar

1 onion, finely chopped

2 garlic cloves, finely chopped

2 celery stalks, finely chopped

2 large tomatoes

2 teaspoons dried rosemary

250g risotto rice

1 teaspoon brown rice miso paste

200ml boiling water

1 x 400g tin of coconut milk

3 tablespoons tomato purée

about 30 cherry tomatoes, sliced

olive oil

1 tablespoon nutritional yeast

handful of basil

salt and pepper

**1.** Place a large saucepan over a medium heat and add the oil from the sun-dried tomatoes. Once warm, add the onion, garlic and celery. Cook for 5–10 minutes until soft.

**2.** Meanwhile, blanch the large tomatoes by covering them with boiling water and letting them sit for 1 minute, then remove their skins and roughly chop the flesh.

**3.** Add the rosemary to the onions, stir it through, then add the rice. Stir the rice through the onion for 30 seconds or so before adding the miso, 100ml of boiling water, a generous sprinkling of salt and the chopped tomatoes. Bring to the boil then turn down to a simmer.

**4.** Preheat the oven to 180°C fan.

**5.** Add the sun-dried tomatoes and tomato purée to the rice and mix well. Add another 100ml of boiling water and start to add the coconut milk, stirring in about a quarter of a tin of milk and a splash of water at a time. Let the risotto cook for 20–25 minutes, stirring regularly: add a little more water as you go if it looks like there's not enough liquid to cook the rice.

**6.** About 15 minutes before the risotto finishes cooking, put the sliced cherry tomatoes into a roasting tin with a drizzle of olive oil and some salt and place in the oven. Let them cook until they're blistering – this should take around 5–10 minutes.

**7.** Stir the cherry tomatoes and their oil into the risotto, and add the basil, nutritional yeast and lots of pepper, plus a little more salt if required. Spoon into bowls and serve.

**TIP** *If you want to add more veggies, slice a courgette and add it to the tray of roasting tomatoes and/or stir through a big handful of spinach at the end so that it wilts.*

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# PEA & BUTTER BEAN FRITTERS

● NUT FREE ● FREEZES WELL ● LUNCH BOX

This is one of my mum's favourite recipes. We made the fritters together a few times when I was recipe testing just after Skye was born and ate them with the super creamy dip from the Crunchy Mexican salad (see [here](#)), some sliced avocado and a handful of rocket – so delicious!

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MAKES ABOUT 15 FRITTERS (ENOUGH TO SERVE 4)

1 onion, finely diced  
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped  
olive oil  
300g frozen peas  
10 tablespoons gram flour  
1 x 400g tin of butter beans, drained and rinsed  
juice of ½ lemon  
large handful of chives, chopped  
salt and pepper

- 1.** Place a large frying pan (you can use the same pan to cook the fritters later on) on a medium heat and add a drizzle of olive oil and a pinch of salt. Add the onion and garlic and cook for 5–10 minutes, until soft.
- 2.** While they cook, blanch the peas. Simply place them in a bowl and cover them with boiling water. Let them sit for about 4 minutes, until soft, before draining and rinsing under cold water to prevent any further cooking.
- 3.** Place the cooked onion and garlic in a food processor (not a blender) with the gram flour, butter beans, half the peas, lemon juice and a big sprinkling of

salt and pepper. Pulse until the mixture comes together but isn't totally smooth.

**4.** Add the chives and the rest of the peas to the processor and pulse once or twice to mix them through but keeping a chunky texture.

**5.** Place the mix in a bowl and leave it to sit in the fridge for about 15 minutes to firm up.

**6.** To cook the fritters, heat a drizzle of olive oil in the frying pan over a medium heat. Once warm, spoon a heaped tablespoon of the mixture into the pan and flatten a little using a spatula. Cook for 3–4 minutes on each side, until cooked through and ever so slightly crispy on the top – we normally cook three or four at a time.

**TIP** *These fritters freeze especially well. Simply place the cooked patties in the freezer in an airtight container with baking parchment in between them. To reheat, place them on a baking tray in a preheated oven set to 180°C fan for 15 minutes.*

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# SWEET POTATO, RED LENTIL & CHICKPEA FRITTERS

● NUT FREE ● FREEZES WELL ● LUNCH BOX

These are great for batch cooking as they're so versatile. Perfect for packed lunches, ideal with roasted veggies or with a simple salad. They're high in plant-protein, easy to make and even easier to eat!

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MAKES ABOUT 12 FRITTERS (ENOUGH TO SERVE 4)

300g sweet potatoes (about 2 medium potatoes), peeled and chopped into bite-sized chunks around 3cm

olive oil

1 red onion, finely diced

½ teaspoon chilli powder

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

200ml boiling water

100g split red lentils

2 garlic cloves, roasted

1 x 400g tin of chickpeas, drained and rinsed

salt and pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C fan.
2. Place the sweet potato chunks in a large baking tray and drizzle with olive oil, salt and pepper. Toss the sweet potato to coat it in the oil and seasoning. Roast for 25 minutes until soft. Once cooked, remove from the oven and leave to one side. Lower the oven temperature to 180°C fan.
3. Place a large frying pan over a medium heat and add a drizzle of olive oil and a pinch of salt. Add the onion and cook for 5 minutes. Add the spices, stir

in, and cook for 2 more minutes. Once cooked, remove from the heat and leave to one side.

**4.** While the onion cooks, prepare the lentils. Put the lentils into a medium saucepan pan and pour in 200ml boiling water. Place over a medium heat and cook for 10–15 minutes until soft and all of the water has been absorbed. Once cooked, remove from the heat and leave to cool.

**5.** Place half of the cooked onion and the garlic in a food processor (not a blender) with the lentils and a pinch of salt. Pulse until the mixture comes together – it should be a coarse mixture rather than completely smooth.

**6.** Spoon the mixture into a bowl and add the sweet potato. Using a fork mash the mixture lightly so it all comes together, but you still have some chunks of sweet potato.

**7.** Add the chickpeas and the rest of the onion and stir everything together.

**8.** Take a large spoonful of the mixture and shape into a patty shape using your hands (sometimes this is easier to do if you place the mixture in the fridge for 30 minutes first). Place on a baking tray lined with baking parchment. Repeat this process until all the mixture is used up.

**9.** Cook the fritters in the oven for 30–35 minutes, until golden and cooked through.

**TIP** *These fritters freeze especially well. Simply place the uncooked patties in the freezer in an airtight container with baking parchment in between them. Once ready to cook, remove from the freezer and continue from step 9.*

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# FINDING CALM

In today's world it often feels as though the busier you are the more successful you must be. We often see an ability to function on limited sleep as a sign of strength and pride ourselves on pushing everything to the max – burning the candle at each end and never taking time just to breathe and reset. When someone asks 'how are you?', 'Really busy' is so often the answer for us all and many of us would describe our current state as stressed a lot of the time. Sadly, stress can have a big impact on our bodies and minds if we let it overwhelm us, so the question is, how can we control it and still get on with our lives? The answer has to lie within us, it can't be sitting waiting for calm, a holiday or a time when life becomes less complex as we just never know what's around the corner. Stopping the 'when I achieve X' or 'when I finish Y' mentality feels like step one, and step two is finding tools to carve out a little headspace on a regular basis.

That's why I love meditation. It can be as little as five or 10 minutes – even just a few breaths – but it helps to create that sense of balance and calm in the mind so effectively. Gelong Thubten, the Buddhist monk whom we've worked with to create the meditation practices on our app, wrote the most brilliant book called *A Monk's Guide to Happiness*, and there were a few lines that really resonated with me in particular and inspired me to carve out the time for the practice. His philosophy puts forward the premise that too many of us are looking for happiness and a sense of calm and balance in



places we won't find it – we try to find external sources for happiness, when actually happiness lies within us; in finding a way to transform the way that we react to our thoughts.

Every day we have between 60,000–80,000 thoughts, and we all know that many of these can be negative or stress-enhancing. Thubten believes that if we can get a better handle on these thoughts then we can consistently choose happiness rather than falling into habits of worry, stress and anxiety. He says: 'We think we can only be happy when our goals are completed, which means that life is always about the future rather than the present. Thoughts and emotions create a storm inside us, and we easily become their slaves. Moment to moment, we might find ourselves in an argument with reality, constantly wishing things were different. Happiness involves mastering these thoughts and emotions and embracing things just as they are; it means we relax and stop trying to manipulate our circumstances. If we can learn how to rest deeply in the present, even when facing difficulties, and we train our minds not to judge, we can discover within ourselves a tremendous source of happiness and satisfaction.'

***For those of us who simply feel burnt out, overwhelmed or anxious about the hectic nature of our lives, working on controlling our minds and thought patterns can make such a difference to***

## *our stress levels, which in turn impacts on our overall well-being*

Inspired by Thubten, every morning we sit in the quiet, close our eyes and breathe to try and achieve this. We focus on how it feels for our feet to touch the ground, our back to sit against the chair and the air to come in and out of our body. Each time the mind wanders, you just bring it back to the breath, just as you do in a yoga practice. It's simple and uncomplicated, but so effective. Whenever I'm overwhelmed this is what I come back to, slow steady breaths. Sometimes I just inhale for four counts, hold for four, exhale for four. Try it a couple of times; it takes just a minute or two and you can do it at your desk or on a train. I find it helps to re-centre and rebalance my mind, counteracting some of the inevitable stress in my life in a totally plausible, accessible way. You can even do it on the loo or in the shower if things are that busy; I did that a lot when Skye was tiny and I felt overwhelmed.

From speaking to neuroscientist Dr Mithu Storoni for the podcast, we learned how our brain records things as we perceive them, not necessarily as they actually happen. So, if you launch a colossal stress reaction every time someone nudges you on the train, or you read an annoying news headline, or discover you've run out of (almond) milk, your brain will record your day as having been inordinately stressful when in reality it was quite ordinary. Over time, an overactive emotional brain has trouble bouncing back. Of course, I appreciate that it isn't always this simple, mental health is an incredibly complex topic and the external events that cause chronic stress are almost always beyond our control, but for

those of us who simply feel burnt out, overwhelmed or anxious about the busyness and hectic nature of our lives, working on controlling our minds and thought patterns can make such a difference to our stress levels, which in turn impacts on our overall well-being. The more we flex this 'muscle' and make controlling our thoughts a part of our day-to-day the better we become at controlling the way we feel, a little like going to the gym for the brain.

Even though we often dismiss and sweep stress under the rug, as with so much of what we've talked about, controlling it really matters for our mental as well as our physical health. And it seems that we are increasingly understanding the extent to which it impacts on us. For our podcast, we interviewed Dr Rangan Chatterjee, a brilliant doctor focused on lifestyle medicine, who shared the mind-blowing stat that 70–90% of all GP consultations today are related to stress in some way, as stress is linked to a vast array of conditions from fatigue to anxiety, gut problems, IBS, type-2 diabetes and lack of libido. Dr Megan Rossi also spoke a lot about how stress can impact the gut. When she's looking to support clients with all manner of gut issues stress tops the solution list – she covers it really well in her book *Eat Yourself Healthy* and on our podcast too. The same seems to be true of sleep, a simple tool with the most phenomenal benefits. Sleep can help us so much when we're overwhelmed because it stops us losing perspective or over-reacting to things, but again in our culture of celebrating busyness and a need to fit it all in we can be quick to dismiss it so that we don't feel we're missing out or experience a sense of inadequacy for not doing as much as the next person.

Matt was the person that first made me realise the importance of sleep; I got him into healthy eating but he's been key to other areas of my well-being. Before we were together, I'd normally stay up pretty late watching Netflix and getting lost in a social media vortex, somehow ending up on my friend's cousin's cat's Instagram page at 1am, which didn't do a huge amount for my well-being. Either I'd get stuck in a comparison cycle, feeling like I wasn't good enough as I compared myself to a stranger online, my sleepiness stopping me from remembering that social media is simply a highlights reel, a place of inspiration and creativity and that comparison is always the thief of joy; or I'd just be exhausted and not much wiser having watched reruns of Friends all night.

Sleep just wasn't a huge priority for me, but it was for Matt. The start of our relationship was a little mad – we actually moved in together a week after our first date and had started working together, bought a dog and got engaged within a few months of that. It was a huge learning curve in terms of trusting my instincts, but also in adjusting my sleep patterns. Matt needs his eight hours and really prioritises them; he likes to go to sleep by 10pm every night and after a little resistance from me we agreed his way was probably better and, wow, what a difference it has made! Thanks to him, waking up at 6am without an alarm – but with loads of energy – became possible, which has made early parenthood a lot easier as I like going to sleep when Skye does.

Again, my own experience with sleep sparked an interest into whether this was just us getting old before our time, or whether science could explain why we felt so much better physically and emotionally when we got those eight golden

hours of sleep and let our heads hit the pillow a long way before midnight. We were lucky enough to talk to an expert about this, the neuroscientist Matthew Walker, who wrote the bestselling book *Why We Sleep*. Having studied sleep for decades, Matthew argues that sleep is not the indulgent luxury that we sometimes view it as, but an absolute necessity for maintaining our health. He has found links between sleep deprivation and cancer, diabetes, strokes and Alzheimer's, as well as how it impairs the immune system, disrupts blood sugar levels and harms the brain. The amount we sleep has decreased by 15–20% over the last 100 years, and we're now getting an average of 6 hours and 59 minutes per night in the UK while more than a third of Americans sleep less than 7 hours. Of course, as with everything we've talked about so far, I appreciate that life gets in the way: we don't always have the luxury of choosing to get a good night's sleep, whether that's because of work, children or anything else, but again it's just interesting to take on board some of the ideas behind the importance of getting good sleep, and explore whether prioritising sleep over another episode on Netflix, writing another couple of emails or doing a little Instagram stalking could help you get closer to your eight hours' sleep a night and subsequently give you a little more energy each day – I know it has done for Matt and me.

By no means do Matt and I have health and happiness mastered – that's a work in progress and always will be – and we're certainly a million miles from perfect, but we have been lucky to learn a lot from the various experts we've met during our time at Deliciously Ella. Ultimately, I think it boils down to the idea that it's the little things that together make a big difference to our health and happiness. Being 'healthy' isn't

about only eating fancy superfoods, expensive spa days or niche concepts: it's about cooking a lentil dhal or making simple veggie toast for breakfast, sleeping for an extra hour, finding a few minutes to sit and breathe quietly to manage stress levels, getting outside in the fresh air for a walk, connecting to those around us and just being a little more aware of how we feel and of what we put back into the world. It's realising that we don't have to do it all. We can't spin every plate at any one time and it's okay to say no – to slow down, be more internal and give up on any attempt at the elusive concept of perfection. It's santosha – finding a way to be happy where we are today, using accessible, doable, often free, concepts to get us there. There is no right way to do it; there's no quick fix. What works for me might not work for you, but exploring a few of these concepts and learning a little more about them will, I hope, be helpful in some way.

***Sleep is a simple tool with the most phenomenal benefits. It is something that can help us so much when we're overwhelmed because it stops us losing perspective or overreacting.***

# NUT BUTTER CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

## 🟡 LUNCH BOX

These are no-fuss, no-equipment, short-on-time vegan cookies. They are easy, incredibly delicious, a little crispy on the outside, soft in the middle and full of big chocolate chunks. These were one of my favourite recipes to test and I can't wait for you to try them.

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### MAKES ABOUT 10 COOKIES

5 tablespoons coconut oil, melted

100g coconut sugar (or demerara sugar)

150g plain flour (we use a gluten-free flour)

1 teaspoon baking powder

50–100g dark chocolate (we like 70% cocoa solids), chopped

5 tablespoons almond or oat milk

2 tablespoons almond butter or any other nut butter (we also love cashew or peanut butter)

pinch of salt

- 1.** Preheat the oven to 170°C fan. Line a large baking tray with baking parchment.
- 2.** Place the coconut oil in a bowl and mix in the sugar, flour, baking powder and dark chocolate. Add the almond milk, almond butter and salt, and mix well until the mixture comes together.
- 3.** The mix may look crumbly, but it should stick together when pressed in your hands. Use a tablespoon of mixture for each cookie, pressing the mix firmly together and shaping it into a ball.

**4.** Place the cookies on to the lined tray and bake for 12 minutes. They need quite a lot of space between them as they might spread as they bake. When they come out of the oven, they'll still be a little soft, which is exactly what you want. Leave them to cool on the tray and they'll finish setting. Store in an airtight container for up to a week.

**TIP** *It's a pretty delicate mix so I wouldn't swap or substitute anything other than the milk for oat milk and the nut butter for sunflower seed butter, so that you can make them nut free.*

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# OATMEAL RAISIN COOKIES



These are an old favourite in our house; I've been making them for the last few years and we still absolutely love them. You can't beat a classic and these hit the spot every time.

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## MAKES 12 COOKIES

150g jumbo oats

50g oat flour (if you don't have this, you can blend oats in a food processor until they make a flour)

70g ground almonds

1 teaspoon baking powder

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon (optional)

7 tablespoons maple syrup

4 tablespoons coconut oil, melted

80g raisins

salt

- 1.** Preheat the oven to 180°C fan. Line a baking tray with baking parchment.
- 2.** Place the oats in a large bowl and add the oat flour, ground almonds, baking powder, cinnamon (if using) and a pinch of salt. Mix well to remove any lumps.
- 3.** Add the maple syrup and melted coconut oil and stir everything together until well combined.
- 4.** Finally, add the raisins and mix through.

**5.** Scoop the mixture into balls using an ice-cream scoop or large spoon then press them a little using wet hands so that they flatten on the bottom but are domed. Place on your lined baking tray. The mixture will be crumbly but don't worry, it will set once it's baked.

**6.** Bake for 10–15 minutes until golden. Leave to cool either on the tray or a wire rack, before serving. Store in an airtight container for up to a week.

**TIP** *These cookies are much easier to shape when your hands are cold or a little wet.*

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# TAHINI COOKIES

## ● LUNCH BOX

These six-ingredient cookies are so simple but such winners. They have the best texture; soft and ever-so-slightly gooey with a little crunch around the edge. Make sure you're using a smooth, creamy, delicious tahini though – the hard, slightly bitter varieties won't work sadly. We like the brand Belazu, but there are lots of other great ones.

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### MAKES 6

50g ground almonds  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
3 tablespoons spelt flour  
65g creamy tahini  
5 tablespoons maple syrup  
salt

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C fan. Line a baking tray with baking parchment.
2. Place the ground almonds in a bowl and add the baking powder, spelt flour and a pinch of salt. Whisk together to remove any lumps.
3. Add the tahini and maple syrup and mix until a smooth batter forms.
4. Place in the fridge to chill for 20 minutes.
5. After 20 minutes, remove the cookie dough from the fridge. Scoop heaped tablespoons of the mixture out of the bowl and use your hands to roll into balls.

**6.** Place the balls on the lined baking tray and squish down a little to flatten and form a round cookie shape.

**7.** Bake for 10–12 minutes until cooked, but still a little soft. As these cookies cool down, they will continue to harden. Leave to cool either on the tray or a wire rack, before serving. Store in an airtight container for up to a week.



# PEANUT BUTTER COOKIE DOUGH BALLS

## ● LUNCH BOX

These are probably my favourite sweet in the book. I don't know why, but adding the chickpea water – strange as it sounds – give these a real cookie-dough-like texture and flavour. It's definitely a 'trust us on this' kind of recipe, but I so hope you try it. It's also the dream 10-minute snack: there's almost no washing up, nothing to prep and nothing to bake – perfect for busy weeks! I make a batch to keep in the fridge so that I always have something on hand for a mid-afternoon pick-me-up.

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MAKES ABOUT 30 BALLS OR 12 BARS

150g dark chocolate (we like 70% cocoa solids)

14 pitted Medjool dates (pitted weight, 200g)

300g jumbo oats

2 tablespoons coconut oil

8 heaped tablespoons creamy peanut butter

125ml chickpea water (see [here](#))

pinch of salt

- 1.** Place the dark chocolate in a food processor and pulse a couple of times until it breaks into chunks, then place these to one side.
- 2.** Place the dates in the processor and blend until they break down and start to form a paste.
- 3.** Add the oats, coconut oil, peanut butter, chickpea water and salt to the processor. Blend until the mixture comes together and is sticky.



- 4.** Add the chocolate chips and pulse a couple of times to stir them through, ensuring not to over-mix as you want nice chunks of chocolate.
- 5.** Place the mix in the fridge and leave to firm up for 15 minutes before rolling into roughly 2.5cm balls; I make each ball about 40g.
- 6.** Store in the fridge in an airtight container for up to a week.



# COCONUT & BLUEBERRY MUFFINS

● NUT FREE ● LUNCH BOX

These are the perfect weekend bake: they're soft, fruity, sweet and so delicious. It literally takes five minutes to prepare the mixture, you don't need any equipment and they make the house smell amazing. Make a big batch on a Sunday and use the leftovers as an on-the-go breakfast during the week.

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MAKES 12

400g spelt flour (or gluten-free self-raising flour)

2 teaspoons baking powder

1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda

50g desiccated coconut

pinch of salt

300ml coconut milk (from a carton)

200ml maple syrup

juice of 1 lime

1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar

50g coconut oil, melted

200g fresh blueberries

## TO FINISH (OPTIONAL)

coconut flakes

grated lime zest

**1.** Preheat the oven to 180°C fan. Line a 12-hole muffin tray with muffin cases.

- 2.** Place the flour, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda, desiccated coconut and salt in a large bowl and stir to remove any lumps.
- 3.** Next, add the coconut milk, maple syrup, lime juice, apple cider vinegar and coconut oil, then stir it all together. Finally, stir in the blueberries.
- 4.** Spoon the mixture into the cupcake cakes using about a heaped tablespoon of mix for each muffin.
- 5.** You can top the muffins with coconut flakes and lime zest before baking if you like.
- 6.** Bake for 30 minutes until golden, cooked through and risen.



# FRUITY COCONUT & DARK CHOCOLATE FLAPJACKS

● NUT FREE ● LUNCH BOX

I love having a tray of something sweet to snack on throughout the week and these fruity flapjacks are perfect. I'll make them on the weekend for friends and then have a little stash to see me through the week when I need an afternoon pick-me-up. They're just dried fruit mixed with oats, coconut and chunks of dark chocolate topped with a layer of dark chocolate.

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## MAKES 16 FLAPJACKS

200g dried apricots (we use the unsulphured ones)  
4 tablespoons coconut oil, melted  
2 tablespoons maple syrup  
50g desiccated coconut  
200g jumbo oats  
200g sultanas or raisins  
150g dark chocolate (we like 70% cocoa solids)

- 1.** Preheat the oven to 180°C fan. Line a 25 × 19cm baking tray with baking parchment.
- 2.** Start by soaking the apricots; place in a bowl and cover with boiling water. After 10 minutes, drain the apricots and put them into a food processor with the melted coconut oil and maple syrup.
- 3.** Pulse until the mixture forms a smooth paste, then add the desiccated coconut, oats and sultanas/raisins. Gently pulse again – you want the dried

fruit to retain some of its shape but bind into a sticky mix. Finally, add half of the dark chocolate and pulse, so that it breaks into smaller chunks.

**4.** Spread the flapjack mixture evenly into the lined baking tray and bake for 20–25 minutes, until golden. Remove the tray from the oven and leave the flapjack to cool in the tin – this will help it retain its shape.

**5.** Place the remaining chocolate in a small saucepan over a very low heat and melt until smooth. Be careful not to burn the chocolate.

**6.** Once the flapjack is cool, remove it from the tray and pour over the melted chocolate, spreading it evenly across the top. Leave the chocolate to set at room temperature for about 30 minutes, before cutting into equal squares.

**7.** Store in an airtight container for up to 5 days.







# CRUNCHY ESPRESSO PROTEIN BITES

## 🟡 LUNCH BOX

These feel like the adult version of rice crispy treats: gooey, chewy, crunchy, sweet and a little addictive. The mix of espresso and cacao gives a really rich flavour, while the toasted almonds, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds and buckwheat create an amazing crunch. There's about 130–140g of plant-protein in a batch of these, so about 11g per bite.

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### MAKES 12 SQUARES

200g unroasted buckwheat groats

150g almonds

16 Medjool dates, pitted (about 300g)

80g raisins

4 tablespoons cacao powder

3 tablespoons almond butter

2 tablespoons coconut oil

2–3 shots of espresso, depending on how strong you want them (or you can leave it out)

100g hulled hemp seeds (if you don't have these you can add an extra 100g sunflower seeds instead)

75g sunflower seeds

75g pumpkin seeds

50g porridge oats (not jumbo)

pinch of salt

**1.** Preheat the oven to 180°C fan. Line a 25 × 19cm baking tray with baking parchment.

- 2.** Place the buckwheat and almonds on to two separate baking trays. They need to be separated as we keep the buckwheat whole and blend the almonds.
- 3.** Roast for about 10 minutes, then put the trays to one side to cool and turn the oven off.
- 4.** Meanwhile, soak the dates and raisins in boiling water for 2 minutes to soften them. Drain and put them into a food processor, with the cacao powder, almond butter, coconut oil, espresso and salt. Blend until smooth and creamy.
- 5.** Add the toasted almonds, hemp seeds, sunflower seeds and pumpkin seeds and blend again. You want them to be chopped into small pieces but retain some of their texture.
- 6.** Transfer to a mixing bowl and stir in the toasted buckwheat and oats, then place the mix in the lined baking tray, pressing it down with a spatula until it's smooth and even.
- 7.** To make the setting process quicker, pop the tray in the freezer for 1 hour then cut into squares.



# LEMON DRIZZLE SLICES

● NUT FREE ● FREEZES WELL ● LUNCH BOX

You can't beat the taste of lemon drizzle cake and these slices are the perfect balance of sweet and tangy with lovely hints of coconut throughout. They are a great weekend bake, ideal for sharing with friends over coffee and if there are any leftovers they will be perfect in your lunchbox for work.

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## MAKES 1 LOAF

250g spelt flour (or plain flour; we use a gluten-free flour)  
grated zest of 2 lemons, plus the zest of 1 more to decorate (optional)  
50g desiccated coconut, plus a handful extra to decorate (optional)  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda  
6 tablespoons coconut oil, melted  
150ml maple syrup  
150ml coconut milk, from a carton (or use almond or oat milk)

## FOR THE DRIZZLE

4 tablespoons maple syrup  
juice of 1 lemon

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C fan. Line a 23 x 13 x 7cm loaf tin with baking parchment.
2. Place the flour, lemon zest, desiccated coconut, baking powder and bicarbonate of soda into a large bowl and whisk together to remove any lumps.

**3.** Pour in the melted coconut oil, maple syrup, coconut milk and mix well until a smooth batter forms.

**4.** Spoon into the lined tin and bake for 45–50 minutes, until golden and a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean.

**5.** Meanwhile, whisk the maple syrup and lemon juice for the drizzle together in a bowl.

**6.** Once the cake is ready, remove it from the oven and use a fork to poke a few holes in the top. Pour the drizzle over the top while the cake is still warm, then scatter over the lemon zest and desiccated coconut to decorate, if using, and leave to cool in the tin.

**7.** Once cool, cut into slices.



# CHOCOLATE CHIP BANANA BREAD

● NUT FREE ● FREEZES WELL ● LUNCH BOX

This was a pregnancy addiction for me – I ate pretty much the whole loaf the first time I tried it. It's soft, squishy, sweet and delicious, with chunks of dark chocolate. You just can't beat it – so simple, speedy and easy. I love spreading almond butter over it too for an extra sense of indulgence.

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## MAKES 1 LOAF

3 large ripe bananas, peeled (about 300g, peeled weight),  
230g spelt flour (or plain flour; we use a gluten-free flour)  
200g coconut sugar  
1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
4 tablespoons almond or oat milk  
3 tablespoons coconut oil, melted  
100g dark chocolate, roughly chopped (we like 70% cocoa solids)

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C fan. Line a 23 × 13 × 7cm loaf tin with baking parchment.
2. Place the bananas in a large bowl and mash using a fork until smooth.
3. Place the flour, coconut sugar, bicarbonate of soda, baking powder and cinnamon in a separate bowl and whisk together to remove any lumps.
4. Pour in the almond or oat milk and coconut oil and mix well.



- 5.** Add the mashed bananas and chocolate and give everything a good final mix before pouring into the loaf tin.
- 6.** Bake for 45–50 minutes until cooked through but still a little soft.
- 7.** Leave to cool in the tin before slicing.



# MANGO FRUIT ROLL-UPS

 NUT FREE  LUNCH BOX

Three-ingredient deliciousness! These are so much easier to make than you'd expect them to be and they're such a great snack to have on hand, perfect for little ones, too, and a big win in our house, especially when you need something sweet to go into your lunchbox.

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MAKES 10 FRUIT ROLL-UPS

150g dried mango

2 tablespoons maple syrup

juice of ½ lemon

- 1.** Preheat the oven to 75°C fan. Line a baking sheet with baking parchment.
- 2.** Put the dried mango into a bowl and cover with boiling water. Leave to soak for 10 minutes.
- 3.** Once soft, drain the mango and place in a food processor. Pulse until a smooth paste has formed.
- 4.** Add the maple syrup and lemon juice and pulse again. Add two or three tablespoons of boiling water to help break the mixture down to make a smooth paste without any lumps. Add more boiling water if you need to.
- 5.** Spoon the mixture over the lined baking tray and spread out evenly, ensuring the mixture is level and is as thin as possible.
- 6.** Leave in the oven for 5 hours, or until the mixture no longer feels wet or too sticky to handle.

**7.** Remove from the oven and allow to cool completely before cutting into about 10 strips – a pizza cutter is great for this – then rolling them up.

**8.** Store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to a week.





# CHOCOLATE BANANA MUFFINS

🍌 NUT FREE 🍌 LUNCH BOX

I absolutely love a banana muffin, they've been a favourite throughout my life and paired with chunks of melted dark chocolate and roasted walnuts they are just perfect: soft, fluffy, sweet and so easy to make. If you don't want twelve muffins, just halve the mix and make six, which will see you through a week's worth of afternoon snacks!

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MAKES 12

3 large overripe bananas (about 350g, peeled weight)

150ml almond or oat milk

3 tablespoons coconut oil, melted

4 tablespoons cacao powder

200g spelt flour

100g coconut (or brown) sugar

1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda

½ teaspoon baking powder

pinch of salt

80g dark chocolate (we like 70% cocoa solids)

about 12 walnuts (or pecans), roughly chopped or broken (if you want to make these nut free leave these out)

1. Preheat the oven to fan 180°C fan and line a 12-hole muffin tray with cases.
2. Chop the dark chocolate into chunks, roughly the size of a chocolate chip.
3. Mash the bananas in a large bowl using a fork, until smooth and creamy.

**4.** Add the almond milk, coconut oil, cacao powder, spelt flour, coconut sugar, bicarbonate of soda, baking powder and salt, then stir until a smooth batter forms.

**5.** Stir the dark chocolate into the mixture. I always keep a small handful of it back so that I can put it on top of the muffins, as it makes them look even more chocolatey and delicious.

**6.** Spoon 2 tablespoons of mixture into each muffin case, scatter over some walnuts, if using, and add a little piece of chocolate to the top.

**7.** Bake for 25 minutes, then leave the muffins to cool for 10–15 minutes before serving.

**TIP** *To make these nut free, swap the almond milk for oat milk and just leave out the walnuts.*

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# FRUITY BREAKFAST BAKE

This is a go-to in our house; it's such a hit with the whole family. The raspberries give it a nice little tang, while the peanut butter adds a sweet nuttiness and the maple creates the perfect level of sweetness. It's a lovely option for a weekend brunch, served with a little coconut yoghurt on the side.

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## SERVES 2

100g jumbo oats (see TIP below)  
50g almonds, whole or flaked  
large handful of raspberries  
1 red apple, grated  
2 tablespoons peanut butter  
2 tablespoons maple syrup  
5 tablespoons almond or oat milk

## FOR THE COMPOTE

150g raspberries  
1 tablespoon maple syrup  
1 teaspoon chia seeds

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C fan.
2. Place the oats in a large bowl and add just enough boiling water to cover. Set aside to soak for 10 minutes.
3. While the oats are soaking, make the compote. Place the raspberries and maple syrup in a small pan. Cook over a medium heat for 10 minutes until everything has become soft, mashing lightly with a fork.

**4.** Once cooked, remove from the heat and stir through the chia seeds. Leave to one side.

**5.** Roughly chop the almonds (if using whole) and halve any of the larger raspberries for the bake.

**6.** Once the oats have soaked up the water and softened, stir through the almonds, raspberries, apple, peanut butter, maple syrup and almond milk.

**7.** Spoon the mixture into an ovenproof baking dish – about 26 × 16cm – and bake for 20 minutes or until golden.

**8.** Serve warm, with the raspberry compote spooned over the top.

**TIP** *Be sure to use jumbo oats in this recipe; porridge oats are too fine and will turn to mush.*

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# CRÊPES WITH CHOCOLATE SPREAD

Matt is obsessed with these, so we have them pretty much every weekend for Sunday-morning breakfast. They're unbelievable with our chocolate spread and toasted hazelnuts, but equally delicious with maple syrup and sliced banana, creamy spoonfuls of nut butter or the Baked apples [here](#).

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MAKES 4 LARGE CRÊPES; THE SPREAD MAKES A 400G JAR

160g spelt flour (or plain gluten-free flour)  
4 tablespoons coconut sugar  
300ml almond or oat milk  
1 tablespoon coconut oil, melted, plus more for frying

## FOR THE CHOCOLATE SPREAD

150g hazelnuts, roasted (see [here](#) and TIP below)  
10 Medjool dates, pitted  
3 tablespoons cacao powder  
120ml almond milk  
1 tablespoon coconut oil  
salt

1. To make the chocolate spread, place the hazelnuts in a food processor and pulse for 5–10 minutes or until a smooth paste forms.
2. Add the dates, cacao powder, almond milk, coconut oil and a pinch of salt and pulse again until smooth. You can add more almond milk, depending on the consistency you like best. Spoon into a jar and store in the fridge for up to 2 weeks.

**3.** For the crêpes, place the flour and coconut sugar in a large bowl and whisk together to remove any lumps.

**4.** Pour in the almond milk and melted coconut oil and whisk together until a smooth batter forms.

**5.** Place a medium frying pan over a medium heat and add a teaspoon of coconut oil.

**6.** Once melted, pour in some of the crêpe batter, spread around the frying pan in a thin layer, and cook for 2–3 minutes on one side, then flip over and cook for a further 2–3 minutes on the other side, until cooked through. Repeat this process until all of the batter has been used up. Spread each crêpe with some chocolate spread and roll them up or fold into triangles.

**TIP** *These are delicious topped with roasted hazelnuts – just roast extra when you make the chocolate spread, then chop them and scatter them over the finished crêpes.*

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# SPICED SWEET POTATO & BLACK BEAN HASH

 NUT FREE

This is a perfect weekend brunch. It's hearty, warming and full of flavour. Sweet potatoes and black beans are one of my favourite combinations; you just can't beat it, especially when they're mixed with sautéed red onion, lots of spice, lime juice and harissa.

---

## SERVES 4

2 medium sweet potatoes, chopped into 1–2cm cubes  
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
olive oil  
1 red onion, finely diced  
2 garlic cloves, finely diced  
1 teaspoon smoked paprika  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
1 × 400g tin of black beans, drained and rinsed  
2 red peppers, deseeded and diced  
large handful of greens, such as spinach, kale or cavolo nero, roughly chopped  
1 heaped tablespoon harissa paste  
juice of 1 lime  
sea salt and pepper

## TO SERVE

4 slices of bread (we like rye or sourdough)  
2 ripe avocados, peeled, stoned and sliced  
plain yoghurt (we use a pure coconut yoghurt)

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C fan.

- 2.** Put the sweet potatoes into a baking tray. Sprinkle over the cinnamon, a pinch of salt and add a drizzle of olive oil, then bake for about 15 minutes, until starting to soften.
- 3.** Place a large frying pan over a medium heat and add a drizzle of olive oil. Add the onion and garlic and cook for 5–10 minutes, until soft.
- 4.** Once the onion is soft, add the smoked paprika and cumin, and cook for another minute or so to toast the spices. Stir in the sweet potatoes, black beans and red pepper.
- 5.** Leave to cook for 10–15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the sweet potatoes are soft and ready to eat.
- 6.** Add the greens to the pan, and let them cook for a couple of minutes, until they wilt.
- 7.** Stir in the harissa and lime juice, then toast the bread.
- 8.** Pile the sweet potato hash on to the toast. Top with avocado, yoghurt and a sprinkling of salt and pepper.





# SEEDED SPELT & SUNFLOWER SEED BREAD

● NUT FREE ● FREEZES WELL ● LUNCH BOX

This is such an easy bread to make and a great one to have in the kitchen for speedy snacks and throw-together meals. I love it just as it is with a pinch of salt and lots of olive oil and balsamic vinegar or topped with our smashed avo, creamy mushrooms, garlicky butter beans or balsamic tomatoes (see [here](#)).

---

MAKES 1 LOAF

350g spelt flour

60g porridge oats, plus more for topping

1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda

2 tablespoons coconut sugar

100g sunflower seeds

225ml warm water

salt

1. Preheat the oven to 220°C fan. Line a 23 x 13 x 7cm loaf tin with baking parchment.
2. Place the flour, oats, bicarbonate of soda, coconut sugar, sunflower seeds and a large pinch of salt into a bowl and mix well to remove any lumps.
3. Add the warm water and mix well using your hands until the mixture comes together to form a dough.
4. On a lightly floured surface, knead the dough for 5 minutes until it forms a soft ball.

**5.** Once the dough feels firm and bounces back slightly when you push it with a finger, roll it into a long rectangle and place in the lined tin.

**6.** Top with a sprinkling of oats.

**7.** Using a knife, score the top of the loaf to create one long line down the middle.

**8.** Bake for 40–45 minutes, until the top begins to brown and you can pull a knife out of the middle without any mix sticking to it. Leave to cool completely on a wire rack before slicing.



# SUN-DRIED TOMATO FOCACCIA

🍷 NUT FREE 🍷 LUNCH BOX

This recipe might sound difficult, but it couldn't be easier and it's always such a hit. I love serving it in among a table of colourful salads like our Edamame & avocado salad (see [here](#)), my favourite Giant couscous & almond salad (see [here](#)), our Pulled aubergine dip (see [here](#)), roasted veggies and a bowl of greens.

---

MAKES 1 LOAF

olive oil

300ml warm water

1 × 7g sachet dried yeast

500g strong bread flour

150g sun-dried tomatoes in oil, chopped, plus 3 tablespoons of oil from the jar  
the leaves from a few rosemary sprigs

flaked sea salt

1. Line a 30 × 23cm baking tray with baking parchment or drizzle it with a little olive oil.
2. Measure the warm water in a jug and add the yeast. Stir well until dissolved, then leave for 10 minutes.
3. Sift the flour into a large mixing bowl and slowly pour in the water and yeast mix, stirring it in as you go. Add the 3 tablespoons of oil from the jar of tomatoes.
4. Use your hands to mix everything together to form a dough.

**5.** Once the dough has formed, remove it from the bowl and place it on a lightly floured surface. Knead the dough for 5–10 minutes, until smooth and it bounces back when pressed.

**6.** Place the dough on to the prepared baking tray and cover with a tea towel. Leave in a warm place to prove for at least 1 hour until doubled in size.

**7.** Take the dough, knock it back on a clean worksurface by punching it a few times – this breaks up the tiny air bubbles that have formed in the dough, and forces them to reform in the shape you want – then spread the dough out evenly on the lined baking tray. Use your fingers to lightly poke lots of shallow holes into the top of the dough.

**8.** Sprinkle the chopped sun-dried tomatoes and rosemary over the dough. Drizzle with some more olive oil and a good pinch of sea salt, then bake for 20–30 minutes, until golden.



# GIANT COUSCOUS & ALMOND SALAD

 LUNCH BOX

This is a great dish when you've got lots of friends and family to feed, and the leftovers make for the most delicious packed lunch the next day. The dates give it a little sweetness that works brilliantly with the red onion, almonds, parsley, tomatoes and tahini. To make this gluten free, just swap the giant couscous for quinoa or buckwheat.

---

## SERVES 6

400g giant couscous

1 red onion, finely chopped

100g almonds, toasted (see [here](#)), roughly chopped

25g parsley, roughly chopped

200g sun-dried or semi-dried tomatoes in oil, drained of any oil, roughly chopped

10 Medjool dates, pitted and roughly chopped

salt and pepper

## FOR THE DRESSING

4 tablespoons olive oil (or use the oil from the tomatoes)

3 tablespoons tahini

2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar

1. Cook the couscous following the instructions on the packet. Leave to one side.
2. Put the red onion, almonds, parsley, tomatoes and dates into a large bowl with the couscous. Mix everything together well.



**3.** Whisk the dressing ingredients together in a small bowl, and pour over the couscous salad.

**4.** Add a large pinch of salt and pepper and mix everything together well before serving.



# STUFFED AUBERGINES

 NUT FREE

These are a brilliant option for bigger family meals. They look gorgeous and have tons of flavour and texture. We love them with our Tomato & walnut salad (see [here](#)), as the two textures are brilliant together and make the perfect pair.

---

SERVES 6

4 large aubergines

olive oil

100g quinoa

250ml boiling water

150g sun-dried tomatoes in oil, roughly chopped, plus 2 tablespoons of oil from the jar

1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar

3 tablespoons pine nuts

1 tablespoon harissa paste (optional; see [here](#) for how to make your own)

large handful of parsley, about 15g, roughly chopped

salt and pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 220°C fan.
2. Cut the aubergines in half and place on to a baking tray. Score the flesh with a knife (being careful not to cut all the way through), drizzle with olive oil and salt, and roast for 35–40 minutes, until soft. Once soft, remove from the oven and leave to cool.
3. Turn the oven down to 180°C fan.
4. While the aubergines are in the oven, cook the quinoa. Place a medium saucepan over a medium heat and add the quinoa and boiling water. Bring to

a simmer and cook for 12–15 minutes until the water has been absorbed. Once cooked, remove from the heat and leave to one side until cool.

**5.** Using a large spoon, scrape the flesh out of the aubergines and on to a board. Roughly chop into pieces then put into a large bowl.

**6.** Add the tomatoes, balsamic vinegar, pine nuts, harissa and quinoa. Season with a large pinch of salt and pepper.

**7.** Using a tablespoon, scoop equal amounts of the mixture back into each aubergine skin. Place them back on the baking tray and bake in the oven for 20 minutes.

**8.** Sprinkle the parsley on top before serving.



# TOMATO & WALNUT SALAD

We made this to go with our stuffed aubergines and the two are brilliant together, but it's also lovely as an addition to a big salad spread with our focaccia, lots of dips and spreads and colourful grain bowls.

---

## SERVES 4

800g mixed yellow and red vine and cherry tomatoes, roughly chopped

1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar

180g walnuts, roasted (see [here](#))

100ml olive oil

2 garlic cloves, roasted (see [here](#))

50g basil

1 tablespoon maple syrup (optional)

juice of ½ lemon

salt and pepper

1. Place the tomatoes in a large bowl. Add the apple cider vinegar and a large pinch of salt, mix well and leave to one side.
2. Put 150g of the walnuts into a blender, along with the olive oil, garlic, basil, maple syrup, lemon juice and a large pinch of salt and pepper. Pulse until the mixture comes together to form a pesto.
3. Once ready to serve, spoon the tomatoes on to a serving plate and drizzle over the pesto.
4. Roughly chop the remaining walnuts and scatter over the top.



# SPICY FALAFEL

● NUT FREE ● FREEZES WELL

This is Matt's favourite recipe in the book – he's obsessed! The falafel are so crunchy and best served piping hot with our Pulled aubergine dip (see [here](#)) and Giant couscous & almond salad (see [here](#)) or with lots of hummus in a wrap with roasted veggies and a little harissa.

---

SERVES 4, MAKES ABOUT 12–16 SMALL FALAFELS

225g dry chickpeas (this recipe will not work with canned chickpeas)

½ red onion, roughly chopped

25g parsley, roughly chopped

2 garlic cloves, roasted (see [here](#)) and roughly chopped

1 tablespoon gram flour (chickpea flour)

1 tablespoon ground cumin

1 teaspoon chilli powder

½ teaspoon cayenne pepper (or more depending on how spicy you like your falafels)

juice of ½ lemon

sunflower oil, for frying

salt and pepper

- 1.** The night before you want to make these, place the chickpeas in a large bowl and cover with water. Leave to soak overnight.
- 2.** The next day, drain the chickpeas and rinse well.
- 3.** Place the chickpeas in a food processor, along with the onion, half of the parsley, the garlic, gram flour, cumin, chilli powder, cayenne pepper, lemon juice and a generous pinch of salt and pepper – don't hold back with these as chickpeas soak up flavour.



**4.** Pulse until the mixture comes together to form a thick paste. Once a paste has formed, transfer to a bowl and stir through the remaining parsley.

**5.** Put the bowl in the fridge for 1 hour so that the mixture firms up.

**6.** Once firm, use a large spoon or ice-cream scoop to scoop out balls of the mixture. Use your hands to mould them into balls. Put on to a plate once shaped.

**7.** Once you're ready to cook, line a plate with kitchen paper. Pour some sunflower oil into a large, heavy-based pan set over a medium heat – you want to have about at least 2cm of oil at the bottom of the pan. Before you start frying the balls, check the oil is hot enough by dropping a small piece of bread or even a tiny bit of the falafel mixture into it – it should start to bubble a little.

**8.** When the oil is hot, add the balls – about 4–5 at a time, depending on the size of your pan – and cook for 2–3 minutes on one side, before turning and cooking on the other side for another 2–3 minutes, until all of the falafel is golden.

**9.** Once cooked, place on the lined plate. Leave for 5–10 minutes to cool a little before serving. Continue this process until all of the mixture is used up.

**TIP** *We know soaking the chickpeas removes the element of ease in this recipe, but we really think it's worth doing.*

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# PULLED AUBERGINE DIP

## 🟡 LUNCH BOX

For anyone that loves aubergine, this is for you. The mix of sun-blushed tomatoes, roasted garlic, tahini, almond butter, pine nuts and parsley makes this so delicious. The maple syrup gives it a hint of sweetness but if you'd prefer it savoury just leave this out. The dip tastes amazing with just about anything and I always make double quantities so that I can use the leftovers later in the week.

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### SERVES 6

4 aubergines  
2 tablespoons tahini  
juice of 1 lemon  
2 tablespoons smooth almond butter  
2 tablespoons maple syrup (optional)  
250g sun-blushed tomatoes in oil, chopped into 1cm pieces  
3 garlic cloves, roasted (see [here](#)) and roughly chopped  
handful of parsley, roughly chopped  
large handful of pine nuts, toasted (see [here](#))  
olive oil  
salt

1. Heat the grill to its highest setting.
2. Use a fork to prick the aubergines all over. Place on a baking tray. Grill for 20 minutes, turning the aubergines now and then until the outside is charred and black and the inside is soft. Set aside to cool.
3. Put the tahini into a large bowl, add the lemon juice, almond butter, maple syrup (if using) and a pinch of salt. Whisk until smooth. Mix the

tomatoes and garlic together in a separate bowl.

**4.** Once the aubergines have cooled, cut them in half, then use a fork to pull the cooked flesh from the skins. Discard the skins.

**5.** Place the aubergine flesh in the bowl of tahini dressing and add half of the tomato mixture. Toss everything together well.

**6.** Place the aubergine mixture on a serving plate and top with the rest of the tomato mixture.

**7.** Sprinkle the parsley on top, along with some pine nuts and a drizzle of olive oil before serving.

**TIP** *If you don't have almond butter, you can double the amount of tahini instead.*

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# BEETROOT BURGERS

● NUT FREE ● FREEZES WELL ● LUNCH BOX

This was one of the most popular recipes in our office. We did a little lunchtime burger bar to test them and everyone absolutely devoured them. They're delicious in a bun with lettuce, avocado and our homemade ketchup with a side of Sweet potato chips (see [here](#)), or served as a patty with a salad for an easy lunch option – make a double batch and freeze the other half so that you always have something easy to reach for (see our **TIP** below).

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MAKES 8 SMALL BURGERS, TO SERVE 4 AS A SALAD MEAL, 8 WITH A BUN AND CHIPS

125g quinoa  
300ml boiling water  
250g beetroot, peeled and quartered  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
olive oil  
salt and pepper  
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped  
1 red onion, roughly chopped  
1 teaspoon paprika  
1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar  
1 tablespoon tahini  
1 heaped tablespoon plain flour (we use gluten-free flour)

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C fan.
2. Place a large saucepan over a medium heat and add the quinoa and boiling water. Bring to a simmer and cook for 12–15 minutes until all the water has been absorbed. Once cooked, remove from the heat and leave to one side until cool.

**3.** In a bowl, mix together the beetroot, cumin, a drizzle of olive oil and a pinch of salt. Spoon the mixture on to a baking tray and roast for 30 minutes or until the beetroot is soft.

**4.** Place a pan over a medium heat and add a drizzle of olive oil. Once warm, add the garlic and onion, stir and cook for 5–10 minutes until soft. Once cooked, remove and leave to cool.

**5.** Once cool, place the cooked beetroot in a food processor with the cooked quinoa, onion mixture, paprika, apple cider vinegar, tahini and flour, season and pulse until smooth.

**6.** Scoop out small handfuls of the mixture and, using your hands, form into 4 large burgers or 8 small patties.

**7.** If you have the time, place the burgers or patties on a plate and refrigerate for 1 hour. Or you could make these up to a day before and leave in the fridge.

**8.** Place a large frying pan with a drizzle of olive oil over a medium heat and cook the burgers for 3–4 minutes on each side, until firm and cooked through.

**TIP** *To cook the burgers from frozen, just place them straight into an oven preheated to 180°C fan and cook for around 30–35 minutes, until piping hot all the way through.*

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# SWEET POTATO CHIPS

 NUT FREE

Using the gram flour makes these chips nice and crispy, while the nutritional yeast and sweet paprika create a delicious flavour. Easy and such a crowd-pleaser, they're a winner every time; perfect dunked into our homemade ketchup too.

---

SERVES 6

800g sweet potatoes (about 3 large sweet potatoes)

1 tablespoon gram flour

1 tablespoon nutritional yeast

1 teaspoon sweet smoked paprika

4 tablespoons olive oil

salt and pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 220°C fan.
2. Peel and cut the sweet potatoes into long thin chips (about 1cm wide), then place in a large bowl and add the flour, nutritional yeast, paprika, olive oil and a large pinch of salt and pepper.
3. Mix well, before placing on to a baking tray, making sure they are in a single layer.
4. Roast for 30–35 minutes, until cooked through and lightly charred on the outside.

# HOMEMADE KETCHUP

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MAKES 1 LARGE BOWL

6 sun-dried (or sun-blushed) tomatoes in oil, plus 1 tablespoon of oil from the jar

1 x 400g tin of chopped or plum tomatoes

2 garlic cloves, roasted (see [here](#))

5 Medjool dates, pitted

4 tablespoons tomato purée

1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar

1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar

½ teaspoon chilli flakes (optional, if you like a little spice)

salt and pepper

**1.** Place all of the ingredients in a food processor. Season with a little salt and pepper and pulse until a smooth paste forms. Spoon into an airtight container and store in the fridge for up to 2 weeks.



# CAULIFLOWER CHEESE

 NUT FREE

This was another of the most popular recipes that we taste-tested in the office – it was devoured in seconds! The sauce is so incredibly creamy, with a gentle tanginess from the mustard and apple cider vinegar that goes brilliantly with the roasted garlic, sage and flaked almonds. It's delicious just as it is, but you can always add extra veggies too – I sometimes add sliced mushrooms and chopped broccoli with the cauliflower.

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## SERVES 6

1 large cauliflower, chopped into bite-sized florets  
5 sage leaves, roughly chopped  
2 garlic cloves, sliced  
4 tablespoons tapioca flour  
1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar  
4–6 tablespoons nutritional yeast  
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard  
300–400ml almond or oat milk  
a large handful of flaked almonds (about 40g, or use sunflower seeds for a nut-free version)  
salt and pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 230°C fan.
2. Put the cauliflower, sage and garlic into a 27 × 20cm baking dish and add a drizzle of olive oil and a pinch of salt. Roast for 20–25 minutes until lightly charred. We like our cauliflower with a bit of bite but if you like it softer, it might need longer.

- 3.** Place the tapioca flour, vinegar, nutritional yeast, mustard and almond milk in a saucepan over a medium heat with a pinch of salt – depending on the brand of nutritional yeast you might need a bit less as some can be quite salty. Bring to the boil and cook, whisking continuously to ensure the mixture stays smooth and doesn't form any lumps. You might need some more milk.
- 4.** Once boiling, reduce the heat and leave to simmer for a few minutes before removing from the heat. If the mixture feels lumpy, put it into a blender and pulse to make it smooth.
- 5.** Give it another good whisk before pouring over the cauliflower and mixing everything together well.
- 6.** Sprinkle with the flaked almonds before placing back in the oven to cook for 10 minutes, until the top is golden brown.
- 7.** Remove from the oven and serve immediately.



# SPANISH-STYLE RICE

 NUT FREE

This is definitely in my top ten recipes from the book – it's just so easy to wolf down! It's a great dish for serving at a dinner party as it looks brilliant with the artichokes spread over the top of a piping hot pan of red rice, herbs and veggies. The red pepper paste is what makes this dish so special, and we really hope you love it as much as we do.

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## SERVES 4

2 aubergines (or 1 large aubergine), cut into bite-sized chunks

olive oil

1 onion, finely diced

1 red pepper, deseeded and chopped into bite-sized chunks

1 green pepper, deseeded and chopped into bite-sized chunks

2 teaspoons smoked paprika

1 vegetable stock cube

750ml boiling water

1 pack asparagus tips, about 10, woody ends trimmed, or use 100g green beans, stalks trimmed

250g paella rice

1 teaspoon ground turmeric (or a few strands of saffron)

100g chargrilled artichoke hearts in oil, drained

handful of parsley, chopped

1 lemon, halved

salt and pepper

## FOR THE RED PEPPER PASTE

1 large vine tomato

1 red pepper, deseeded and roughly chopped

1 garlic clove

1 tablespoon olive oil

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C fan.
2. Place the aubergine on a baking tray, drizzle with olive oil and season with a pinch of salt. Roast for 25 minutes until soft. Once cooked, remove from the oven and leave to one side.
3. Place a large, wide saucepan over a medium heat and add a drizzle of olive oil. Once warm, add the onion, red and green peppers, smoked paprika and a pinch of salt. Mix well to ensure all of the vegetables are covered in the oil and paprika. Cook for 5–10 minutes until the vegetables are soft.
4. While the vegetables cook, make the red pepper paste by placing all of the ingredients in a blender, adding a pinch of salt and pepper to season, and pulsing until a paste forms.
5. Add the red pepper paste to the pan with the peppers and mix well before leaving to simmer for 5 minutes. Dissolve the stock cube in the boiling water.
6. After 5 minutes, add the asparagus (or green beans) to the pan, along with the stock, rice, roasted aubergine and turmeric (or saffron) and mix well.
7. Bring to a boil before lowering the heat to low and leaving to simmer for 15–20 minutes until the stock is absorbed and the rice just becomes visible. Do not stir the dish.
8. Scatter the artichokes on top of the rice and leave the pan to bubble for 5 more minutes before serving. If you turn the heat up at this point and leave it for another 2–3 minutes you'll get a slight crisp on the bottom of the rice, which is delicious.
9. Once you're ready to serve, sprinkle the parsley on top. Squeeze some lemon juice over the top before serving.



**TIP** *This dish is delicious served with our Garlic mayo aioli (see [here](#)) or Pulled aubergine dip (see [here](#)).*

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# MUSHROOM, WALNUT & SPINACH WELLINGTONS

This is up there with my favourite recipes in the book and it's always such a hit with anyone we make it for. It's filling, hearty and almost meaty thanks to the lovely mix of mushrooms that give it such great texture. Perfect for a big Sunday lunch, Thanksgiving, Christmas or any time you fancy a roast. I serve the wellingtons with lots of roast veggies and our horseradish sauce, which is smooth, has a nice bite to it and can be a little fiery, especially if you up the horseradish.

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## SERVES 4

2 × 280g sheets of puff pastry (we use gluten-free, vegan puff pastry)  
4 Portobello mushrooms  
olive oil  
1 large red onion, finely diced  
2 garlic cloves, finely diced  
250g chestnut or button mushrooms  
1 teaspoon dried rosemary  
1 teaspoon dried thyme  
80g walnuts, chopped  
2 tablespoons brown rice miso paste  
100g spinach, roughly chopped  
splash of almond or oat milk  
salt and pepper

## FOR THE FRESH HORSERADISH SAUCE

150g cashews  
2 garlic cloves, roasted (see [here](#))  
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard  
1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar

150ml almond milk

50g fresh horseradish, grated (you can add more if you like it stronger)

salt and pepper

- 1.** Preheat the oven to 180°C fan.
- 2.** Remove the stalks from the Portobello mushrooms and put them to one side, then place the whole caps, cup-side down, on to a baking tray. Drizzle the mushrooms with olive oil, add a pinch of salt and pepper and roast for 10 minutes.
- 3.** Place a large saucepan over a medium heat and add a drizzle of olive oil. Once warm, add the onion, garlic and a pinch of salt. Stir together and cook for 5–10 minutes until soft.
- 4.** Finely chop the chestnut mushrooms and the Portobello stalks – you want pieces no larger than 1cm.
- 5.** Add the mushrooms to the pan with the onion and cook for a further 10 minutes, until soft and all the water from them has evaporated. Add the rosemary, thyme, walnuts and miso and stir through. Cook for 5 minutes before finally stirring through the spinach to wilt. Spoon into a bowl and leave the mixture to cool completely. You can prepare this the day before.
- 6.** Roll out one of the sheets of puff pastry, including the paper, on to a baking tray (the paper will line the tray) and cut into 4 squares, approximately 15 × 15cm (or see TIP below). Separate the pieces. Spoon equal amounts of the mushroom mixture on to each piece of pastry, before topping each one with a whole Portobello mushroom – leave about 1cm at the sides of each to reveal the pastry. Brush the edges of the pastry with a little almond milk.
- 7.** Roll out the other sheet of puff pastry on a board and cut into 4 squares as before; they should be the same size as the first pieces. Place one over the top of each wellington, gently squashing down the filling if needed, and press around the edges of the pastry, using one finger and thumb to create a crimp effect and seal the wellingtons. You can then trim the corners of the squares to form neat circles around the mushrooms.

**8.** Cut thin slits into the top of each wellington and brush with almond milk to create a light glaze. Cook in the oven for 30–40 minutes, until golden brown. Meanwhile, make the horseradish sauce.

**9.** Place the cashews in a large bowl and cover with boiling water. Leave to soak for at least 15 minutes, or longer if you have time.

**10.** Drain the cashews and place in a high-speed blender (we use a NutriBullet), along with the rest of the ingredients and a pinch of salt. You can add more or less horseradish depending on how strong you like it.

**11.** Serve the wellingtons with the horseradish sauce and any other veggies you like.

**TIP** *You can also make this as one big wellington if you find it easier. Follow the same process, but layer the mushrooms in a line down the middle of one sheet of pastry. Top with the other sheet and seal the edges. Cut slits in the top as before.*

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# SPINACH & POTATO DAUPHINOIS

So warming, creamy, comforting and delicious, our dauphinois is always such a crowd-pleaser and a great recipe for anyone missing something traditionally cheesy. We love it served as a main with lots of roasted greens, but it's also delicious as a side, especially when you're doing a Sunday roast – serve it with our mushroom wellingtons if you want a real Sunday feast.

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**SERVES 6**

200g spinach  
700g baking potatoes, peeled  
olive oil

## FOR THE CREAMY SAUCE

200g cashews  
2 garlic cloves, roasted (see [here](#))  
1 vegetable stock cube  
1 heaped teaspoon Dijon mustard  
6 tablespoons nutritional yeast (this sounds like a lot, but tastes delicious), plus extra for the top  
250ml almond milk  
salt and pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C fan.
2. Place the cashews in a large bowl and cover with boiling water. Leave to soak for 15 minutes.
3. Place the spinach in a colander and pour some boiling water over it to wilt.



**4.** Using a mandoline or cutting carefully with a sharp knife, thinly slice the potatoes. Place in a pan over a medium heat, cover with water, bring to the boil and simmer for 10 minutes until tender, then drain carefully.

**5.** Drain the cashews and place in a blender, with the remaining sauce ingredients. Pulse to make a smooth, creamy consistency.

**6.** Place a thin layer of potatoes across the bottom of a 27 × 20cm baking dish, followed by a handful of spinach. Spoon some of the creamy sauce to cover and continue adding layers until all your ingredients have been used up. Be sure to leave enough potatoes for the final top layer.

**7.** Once you have finished all of the layers, sprinkle with more nutritional yeast and a drizzle of olive oil.

**8.** Cover the baking dish with foil and bake for 40 minutes. Remove the foil, turn the oven up to 200°C fan, and bake for a final 10 minutes or until golden brown and the potatoes are cooked through.

**TIP** *If your blender is older or not as powerful, you can soak your cashews overnight to ensure they'll blend smoothly into the sauce – just make sure to drain them before using.*

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# VEGGIE LASAGNE

 FREEZES WELL

If you're after a filling, comforting meal then this is your recipe. It looks so delicious with the crispy, herby top, so it's brilliant for serving to friends and family for a cosy supper. I like making a big green salad or roasting a tray of greens with it as a side.

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SERVES 6

about 10 lasagne sheets

large handful of chopped parsley

## FOR THE LENTIL RAGU

olive oil

1 onion, finely diced

2 garlic cloves, finely chopped

1 teaspoon paprika

1 teaspoon ground cumin

2 tablespoons tomato purée

2 x 400g tins of chopped tomatoes

250ml water

1 teaspoon coconut sugar

1 teaspoon dried oregano

250g dried green lentils

salt and pepper

## FOR THE WHITE SAUCE

600ml almond or oat milk

5 tablespoons nutritional yeast

3 tablespoons tapioca flour

½ tablespoon Dijon mustard

- 1.** Start by making the ragu. Place a pan over a medium heat, add a drizzle of olive oil, the onion and garlic and a pinch of salt. Stir together and cook for 5–10 minutes until soft.
- 2.** Add the paprika and cumin and cook for a few more minutes then add the tomato purée, tinned tomatoes, water, coconut sugar, oregano, salt, pepper and lentils. Cook for 30–35 minutes or until the lentils are really soft.
- 3.** While the lentils are cooking, make the white sauce. Place all of the ingredients into a medium pan over a medium heat and bring to the boil. Whisk continuously.
- 4.** Once the sauce begins to bubble, reduce the heat and leave to simmer for a few minutes until it's thickened and smooth, then remove from the heat.
- 5.** Preheat the oven to 180°C fan. Lightly oil a 26 × 19cm deep baking tray or a similar-sized baking dish.
- 6.** Spoon half of the lentil ragu on to the bottom of the baking tray or baking dish and smooth evenly over the base.
- 7.** Place 3–4 lasagne sheets on top of the bolognese, before covering with about a half of the white sauce. Smooth over using a spoon.
- 8.** Repeat the process: spoon the other half of the lentil ragu on top and spread it around evenly. Place 3–4 sheets of lasagne on top then cover with the rest of the white sauce.
- 9.** Bake in the oven for 40 minutes until golden and bubbling. Sprinkle the parsley on top, along with a good grinding of pepper before serving.

**TIP** *We find that lentils can really differ in cooking time so we've suggested 35 minutes as a rough guide, but you may even need to double this timing depending on how long it takes for them to turn really soft.*





# APPLE, ALMOND & BLACKBERRY CRUMBLE

 FREEZES WELL

When Skye was just a few weeks old we went to stay with my mum in the countryside and took Skye blackberry picking to make this crumble for supper. It was absolute heaven, she loved the walk, and we loved the crumble. It's an easy family recipe and the almonds add a delicious touch to a classic dish.

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MAKES 1 LARGE CRUMBLE (ENOUGH TO FEED 6)

## FOR THE FILLING

700g Bramley apples (about 6 large ones), peeled and cut into large chunks (about 3 x 3cm)

2 heaped tablespoons coconut oil

2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

4 tablespoons coconut sugar

150g frozen or fresh blackberries

## FOR THE TOPPING

140g jumbo oats

150g ground almonds

6 tablespoons maple syrup

2 tablespoons coconut oil, melted

1 heaped teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 heaped tablespoon almond butter

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C fan.

**2.** First make the filling by placing all the ingredients apart from the blackberries in a large saucepan over a medium heat for 5–10 minutes until the apples begin to soften. Remove from the heat and stir through the blackberries.

**3.** While that cooks, mix all the topping ingredients in a large bowl.

**4.** Once the fruit is cooked, put the crumble together. Simply spoon the fruit into the bottom of a baking dish (about 26 × 18cm) and place the crumble topping on top. Bake for 30 minutes until the top is golden and delicious.





# SIMPLE ICE CREAMS

 FREEZES WELL

These ice creams are seriously addictive; I'm obsessed and really can't wait for you to try them. They're so creamy, so easy and just so delicious. The almond butter version is my favourite, but the other two have been huge hits in the office and with friends and family.



# ALMOND BUTTER ICE CREAM

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MAKES 1 TUB (SERVES 6–8)

330ml almond or oat milk

10 large Medjool dates, pitted

230g smooth almond butter

sea salt flakes

- 1.** Place all of the ingredients in a food processor and pulse until really smooth; this could take between 5 and 10 minutes, depending on the power of your food processor.
- 2.** Pour the mixture into a freezerproof container, cover and place in the freezer to firm up overnight.
- 3.** Once ready to serve, remove from the freezer and leave to soften for 5–10 minutes before scooping.

# PEANUT BUTTER & RASPBERRY ICE CREAM

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MAKES 1 TUB (SERVES 6–8)

100g raspberries

330ml almond or oat milk

10 large Medjool dates, pitted

230g smooth peanut butter

1. Roughly chop the raspberries into half or quarter pieces.
2. Place the almond milk, dates and peanut butter in a food processor and pulse until smooth.
3. Once combined, add the raspberries and pulse to mix through.
4. Pour the mixture into a freezerproof container, cover and place in the freezer to firm up overnight.
5. Once ready to serve, remove from the freezer and leave to soften for 5–10 minutes before scooping.

# CHOCOLATE ICE CREAM

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MAKES 1 TUB (SERVES 6–8)

100g dark chocolate (we like 70% cocoa solids)

330ml almond or oat milk

10 large Medjool dates, pitted

230g smooth almond butter, or any other nut butter

3–4 tablespoons cacao powder, depending on how chocolatey you like it

1. Roughly chop the dark chocolate into small pieces.
2. Place the almond milk, dates, almond butter and cacao powder in a food processor and pulse until smooth.
3. Once combined, add the chocolate chips and pulse to mix through.
4. Pour the mixture into a freezerproof container, cover and place in the freezer to firm up overnight.
5. Once ready to serve, remove from the freezer and leave to soften for 5–10 minutes before scooping.

**TIP** *Pieces of chopped chocolate brownie also taste delicious mixed through this ice cream, in place of the dark chocolate pieces – use around 100g.*

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# CHOCOLATE FONDANTS

 NUT FREE

These were another office favourite – you can't beat a gooey, oozing layer of melted chocolate! They're so much easier than you'd expect them to be and just so addictive. They're my go-to for dinner parties at the moment, just double the recipe if there are more than four of you.

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## MAKES 4 FONDANTS

5 tablespoons coconut oil, melted, plus extra for brushing  
125g self-raising flour (we use a gluten-free flour)  
3 tablespoons cacao powder  
100g coconut sugar  
salt  
150ml almond or oat milk  
4 squares of dark chocolate (about 50g; we like 70% cocoa solids)

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C fan.
2. Brush four 8cm ramekins with melted coconut oil and set aside.
3. Put the flour, cacao powder, coconut sugar and a pinch of salt into a large bowl. Whisk to remove any lumps, then add the coconut oil and almond milk and mix again until smooth.
4. Divide the mixture evenly between the ramekins. Place 1 square of chocolate on top of each ramekin and push down using your finger until they reach the middle. Smooth the mixture over the top to cover the chocolate.

**5.** Place the ramekins on a baking tray and bake in the oven for 15 minutes until risen and the top is set but the fondants wobble if gently shaken – you want the centre to be gooey.

**6.** Remove from the oven and while they're still hot, place a plate on top of each ramekin, turn them over and gently flip them out on to the plate. Serve immediately.



# SALTED ESPRESSO CHOCOLATE TART

 FREEZES WELL

This recipe needs a little time to set but it's so simple and such a hit with any coffee lover. It's thick, rich, indulgent and super-chocolatey with a lovely hint of espresso and a gentle saltiness; perfect for long dinners with friends.

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## SERVES 8

200g cashews

8 tablespoons coconut oil, melted

18 Medjool dates, pitted

220ml almond or oat milk

75g cacao powder

2–4 tablespoons instant espresso powder, depending how strong you want the flavour of coffee to be (or instant coffee)

1 tablespoon boiling water

sea salt flakes, plus extra to serve

## FOR THE BASE

15 Medjool dates, pitted

200g pecans or almonds

3 tablespoons cacao powder

1 tablespoon maple syrup

**1.** Line a 23cm deep, loose-bottomed cake tin with baking parchment or brush with a little melted coconut oil.

- 2.** Place the cashews in a bowl and cover with boiling water. Leave to soak for at least 1 hour, or as long as you can.
- 3.** Once the cashews are soaking, make the base. Place all of the base ingredients in a food processor and pulse until they come together to form a thick mixture.
- 4.** Spoon into the tin and spread out in an even layer over the base, using the back of a wet spoon to really press it down and smooth the surface. Place in the fridge to firm up while you get on with the filling.
- 5.** Stir the espresso powder and 1 tablespoon boiling water together in a bowl.
- 6.** Drain the cashews and place in a food processor with the melted coconut oil, dates, almond milk, cacao powder, espresso liquid and a pinch of sea salt flakes. Pulse until everything comes together to form a very smooth batter – this could take 5–10 minutes.
- 7.** Remove the base from the fridge and spoon the filling over the top of it, smoothing the surface using a spoon or a palette knife. Place the tart back in the fridge to set for at least 3 hours.
- 8.** When you're ready to serve, run a hot palette knife around the edge of the tart before removing it from the tin. Place on a serving plate and sprinkle with a large pinch of sea salt flakes.



# CHOCOLATE & RASPBERRY CAKE

This is the book's show-stopper and it has been our celebration cake at Deliciously Ella this year, the one we've made for birthdays and exciting moments and markers, so it's really special to all of us. It's a double-layered chocolate sponge with a cashew cacao icing. I like piling lots of fresh raspberries on the top when I serve it.

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SERVES 12

## FOR THE CAKE

500g spelt flour (or plain gluten-free flour)  
400g coconut sugar  
200g ground almonds  
4 tablespoons cacao powder  
1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
600ml almond or oat milk  
100g coconut oil, melted  
200g raspberries

## FOR THE ICING

250g cashew nuts  
4 tablespoons cacao powder  
10 tablespoons maple syrup  
up to 6 tablespoons almond or oat milk (optional, depending on how much you need)  
salt

**1.** Preheat the oven to 180°C fan. Line two 23cm cake tins with baking parchment.

**2.** Start by soaking the cashews for the icing. Place them in a bowl and cover with boiling water. Leave to soak for at least 1 hour.

**3.** Next, make the cake. Put the flour into a large bowl and add the coconut sugar, ground almonds, cacao powder, bicarbonate of soda and baking powder. Whisk the ingredients together to remove any lumps.

**4.** Pour the almond milk and melted coconut oil into the bowl and mix well until a smooth batter forms.

**5.** Finally, fold through the raspberries. Divide the mixture equally between the two cake tins and level the top of each.

**6.** Bake for 40 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. If it doesn't, put back into the oven for 5 more minutes until cooked through. Once cooked, remove from the oven and leave to cool in the tin for about 10 minutes then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

**7.** While the cakes bake, make the icing. Drain the cashews and place them in a blender, along with the cacao powder, maple syrup and a pinch of salt. Pulse until a smooth icing forms. If the mixture becomes too thick to blend, add the almond milk, one tablespoon at a time, until the mixture has a smooth, thick consistency.

**8.** Once the cakes are cool, place one of them on a serving plate, spoon half of the icing on to the base of the cake and spread it out evenly. Place the other cake on top.

**9.** Spoon the rest of the icing on top and spread it out evenly. Cut into slices to serve. You can store the cake in an airtight container but it will only keep for up to 2 days.

**TIP** *A layer of raspberry jam or compote in the middle is also delicious.*

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# READING LIST AND RESOURCES

## BOOKS

A Monk's Guide to Happiness: Meditation in the 21st century,  
Gelong Thubten

Eat Yourself Healthy: An easy-to-digest guide to health and  
happiness from the inside out, Dr Megan Rossi

Exercise-based Interventions for Mental Illness: Physical Activity  
as Part of Clinical Treatment Brendon Stubbs & Simon  
Rosenbaum

How Not to Die: Discover the Foods Scientifically Proven to  
Prevent and Reverse Disease, Michael Greger

Intuitive Living: A 6-week Guide to Self-love, Intuitive Eating and  
Reclaiming Your Mind-body Connection, Pandora Paloma

Re-Nourish: A Simple Way to Eat Well, Rhiannon Lambert

The Diet Myth: The Real Science Behind What We Eat, Tim Spector

The Kindness Method: Changing Habits for Good, Shahroo Izadi

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, Sri Swami Satchidananda

Why We Sleep, Matthew Walker

## WEBSITES AND PODCASTS

[deliciouslyella.com](http://deliciouslyella.com)

The Deliciously Ella Podcast (Acast, iTunes)

[alicemackintosh.com](http://alicemackintosh.com)

[drchatterjee.com](http://drchatterjee.com)  
[gelongthubten.com](http://gelongthubten.com)  
[josephpoore.com](http://josephpoore.com)  
[mithustoroni.com](http://mithustoroni.com)  
[olioex.com](http://olioex.com)  
[rhitrition.com](http://rhitrition.com)  
[rootedliving.com](http://rootedliving.com)  
[sleepdiplomat.com](http://sleepdiplomat.com)  
[theguthealthdoctor.com](http://theguthealthdoctor.com)  
[tim-spector.co.uk](http://tim-spector.co.uk)

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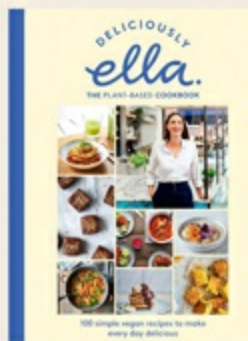
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If you enjoyed cooking from and reading this book, you might be interested in the other Deliciously Ella titles:



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