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Why Nick Knowles switched
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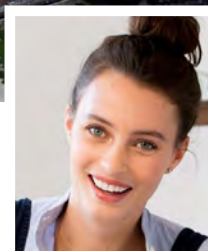
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Enjoy Dutch nutritionist
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Welcome

March is a funny old month. While there's the promise of spring as sunny daffodils start bursting forth, the weather can still feel distinctly wintry and the seasonal produce does too. This month we've revisited professional gardener Ross Geach at the Padstow Kitchen Garden (page 19), who says the 'hungry gap' is definitely real and it hits hard in March. But Rachel Demuth proves that a classic winter veg – the humble cauliflower – can taste light and fresh in the right recipes (page 22).

With seasonal produce thin on the ground, now is the time to make your storecupboard staples work harder, as Kathryn Bruton explores the versatility of chickpeas, from south Indian sundal to a tasty filling for puff pastry parcels (page 38). And if you're looking for other ideas for storecupboard ingredients, pizza is always a firm favourite, and in this issue's kitchen tutorial (page 44) Italian chef Gennaro Contaldo reveals just how easy it is to make your own customisable pizza at home.

This month we catch up with Nick Knowles (page 30), best known as the presenter of the BBC's *DIY SOS*. As a self-described 'big unit', he's perhaps an unlikely convert to plant-based eating, but he's passionate about his new 'flexitarian' lifestyle and hopes to inspire others to follow his example with his flavour-packed recipes that even those with man-sized appetites can enjoy!

Lindsey Harrad, Editor

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EDITOR'S PICK



Rawsome vintage

Jon Bennett discovers a better quality tipple among the world of natural wines.

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Sweet & savoury

Pancake traditions from around the world, from Italy to Finland.

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Family favourites

New crowd-pleasing dishes from the Leon kitchen that happen to be free-from too.

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APPEARING THIS ISSUE...

© ANDREW BURTON



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NICK KNOWLES

'I think it's important that more people realise that the veggie and vegan world is not just for women, or hemp-wearing people with tiny appetites!'

© CHRIS TERRY



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DIANA HENRY

'You don't need many skills to feed yourself, your friends and family well. If you can shove a tray of red peppers into the oven, or cook pasta until *al dente*, you can make great food'

© CLARE WINFIELD



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ELLA MILLS

'If you're trying to get an unconvinced friend to try a healthier meal, then always cook something that looks and feels familiar to them. Choose a classic dish with a healthy spin'

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If people want to use fish derivatives to make wine then in my view they need to tell people

ISABELLE LEGERON
WHAT'S IN YOUR WINE?
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Cookie cacti

This ceramic container features a hand-printed cactus pattern with a wooden lid for a look that's both vintage and totally on-trend.
£16 from www.creative-tops.com



Some like it hot

Introduce a subtle hint of exotic botanicals with this retro-inspired Ben de Lisi print on oven gloves.
£15 from www.debenhams.com



A little oasis

Terrariums have been a thing for a while now. We love this elegant brass cube that only needs gravel and a few small succulents to make a big impact.
£19.95 from www.miafleur.com



Prickly customer

If you're not green-fingered, get the look with a stylish ceramic cactus ornament instead – no watering required!
£30 from www.houseoffraser.co.uk



Sitting pretty

Combine a comfy cushion with prickly plants in a bright modern print for a real style statement on your sofa.
£19 from www.mandco.co.uk



Ranch chic

An eye-catching focal point, this prickly pot is perfect for displaying big bold blooms and foliage.
£12 from George Home at Asda

COOL CACTI

With the exotic botanicals trend still going strong, it's time to snap up a prickly print or two, with our pick of cacti and succulent-themed home accessories.



Desert blooms

Why not grow your own prickly beauties? These Jane Packer cacti and succulents in white geo pots add sculptural beauty to your kitchen windowsill.
£8 from Sainsbury's Home



It's taco time!

These matching lunch accessories are just the thing for quesadillas and guacamole on the go...
Lunchbox £4.95 and water bottle £8.95, both from www.dotcomgiftshop.com



Good to glow

Bring a bit of mood lighting to your space, or kid's room, with a fun lamp inspired by Mexico's famous Nopal Cactus.
£75 from www.lovefrankie.com

newshoots

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Farming with benefits

NEW STUDY REVEALS ORGANIC FOOD IS BETTER FOR HEALTH

A new study conducted by scientists working for the European Parliament looking at organic food and farming has revealed that eating organic food has a variety of benefits for human health, ranging from better early development to reduced risk of disease and more potentially beneficial nutrients. The study, 'Human Health Implications of Organic Food and Organic Agriculture', was carried out by the European Parliament's independent research service and draws together existing scientific research into the differences between organic and non-organic food and farming.

Peter Melchett, Soil Association policy director, says: 'This report is great news for organic farmers and everyone who eats organic food. Organic food sales have been growing strongly for three years, and a key reason that people buy organic food is that they feel it is better for them and their family – that is why more than half the baby food sold in the UK is organic. This new, independent, scientific review confirms people are right.'

To date, there have been very few studies exploring the benefits of organic food and farming on human health. While the authors agree that more research, in particular more long-term studies, are

required to fully understand the evidence, the report states that early studies have found a number of benefits from organic food, including higher omega-3 fatty acids in milk, thanks to higher grass, clover and forage content of animals' diet, and reduced exposure to pesticides through food, which can reduce the risk of negative effects to children's cognitive development.

Peter Melchett added: 'Organic food is generally more expensive than non-organic, for example, because organic standards require not just free-range but smaller flock sizes, lower stocking densities (the amount of space allowed for each bird, pig or cow), cows and sheep eating mainly grass-based diets and no GM animal feed. Organic farmers do not use manufactured fertiliser, leading generally to lower yields. In return, consumers get far lower use of antibiotics, dairy products with higher concentrations of total omega-3 fatty acids, and grains, pulses, fruit and veg with more desirable antioxidants and less potentially harmful cadmium, nitrogen and pesticide residues. And organic farming is good for the health of wildlife and the planet, with 50 per cent more wildlife and lower greenhouse gas emissions.'



© ALEJANDRO TAMAGNO

PERSISTENCE PAYS OFF WITH WEANING

Research conducted by organic baby food brand Piccolo has discovered that weaning – the process of transitioning babies from milk onto solid food – is ranked as one of the most stressful parts of parenting (29%), coming after teething (55%) and childbirth (39%). Plagued with self-doubt, nearly half of the parents surveyed (48%) thought the struggles of weaning meant they were doing something wrong.

The survey also found that the stress of mealtimes means that half of parents often give up on trying to feed their baby healthy meals and resort to something unhealthy instead.

Alice Fotheringham (pictured above), an experienced infant nutrition specialist who heads up the charitable work Piccolo does with food education, says: 'Weaning can certainly be stressful for parents, however, they shouldn't beat themselves up. It's important to remember that like adults, babies are individuals, with unique preferences and dislikes. We also shape our babies' enjoyment of foods through repeated exposure. Certain foods, such as vegetables, which tend to have less sweet flavours, may take a few more times to be accepted. It can take up to 12 times to introduce a new flavour to your baby, so do not be put off reintroducing a food even if it has been rejected that third or fourth time.'



● Visit www.mylittlepiccolo.com for tasty recipe ideas to tempt little ones to try new foods and flavours.

Growing together

Be inspired to do something amazing for your community and start a veg-growing revolution.

Groups of like-minded people are transforming neglected plots of land into green, flourishing spaces and in *The Community Gardening Handbook* Ben Raskin, head of horticulture at the Soil Association, shares his expertise in collective self-sufficiency, encouraging more people to grow food together. This practical guide tells you everything you need to get started, from planning advice to proven ideas for involving the whole neighbourhood and a directory of the top vegetables, flowers, fruit, and herbs to plant up.

● *The Community Gardening Handbook* by Ben Raskin (Leaping Hare Press, £9.99) is out now.



The hare necessities

We're going mad for seasonal accessories with stylish hare prints. Add a touch of spring to your kitchen decor with these baby-blue oven gloves (£10 from M&Co) or the delicate tones of British designer Sophie Allport's tea, coffee and sugar storage tins (£8 each from www.sophieallport.co.uk).



WEAR YOUR NOSE WITH PRIDE

Red Nose Day comes along every two years, and on 24 March thousands of people will be doing two wonderful things – having a laugh and helping others. You can organise your own event, make a donation or buy Red Nose Day merchandise, all of which helps fund a range of projects supporting people living tough lives in the UK and Africa. Renowned fashion and portrait photographer Rankin has partnered with HomeSense to create a limited edition apron featuring a selection of animal portraits, including Rankin's own dog, Doris, and at least £5 from the sale of each apron will go to Comic Relief. The Hairy Bikers, Fay Ripley, the Hemsley sisters, Ella Mills and Tim Lovejoy are just a few of the celebs who have modelled the apron in support of RDN2017.

● Buy the apron online for £12.99 at www.rednoseday.com or at HomeSense from 13 February – find your nearest store at www.homesense.com.

March Five ways to get inspired...



All things Brighton beautiful

The lovely and veggie-friendly seaside resort of Brighton is the place to be in March, when the annual Brighton VegFest comes to town (11-12 March). Taking place at the Brighton Centre, visitors can browse and buy vegan food and drink, beauty goodies, fashion and homewares, and attend a lively and informative programme of talks and workshops. Whether you're already committed to a meat-free lifestyle or are simply vegan-curious, VegFest is always a great day out – or why not make a weekend of it.

● Tickets can be ordered at www.brighton.vegfest.co.uk.



NUTTER'S TOP NOSH

The Allotment, Matt Nutter's vegan restaurant in Stockport's cobbled old town, is shaking up the food industry and helping top-end vegan cuisine get the reputation it deserves thanks to his philosophy of combining elegant French cooking with exciting global ingredients. Everything on the menu is free of gluten, dairy and egg, and his trademark seven-course tasting menu, which changes monthly, offers intriguing dishes such as Taste of the Sea, featuring salt-cured beetroot, pickled cucumber, artichoke and dill cream, and oyster mushrooms with a grilled rice cake, nori and samphire. Join them on 16 March for Cauliflower Hot Wings Night, serving five different types of this popular dish. And not a falafel in sight...

● Book your table now at www.theallotment.info.



RAWSOME DELIGHTS

Galia Orme first discovered raw chocolate eight years ago and was amazed at how simple it was to make at home. 'After sourcing the ingredients and spending several months making my own recipes, I also realised I was losing weight, had more energy and felt happier,' says Galia. 'I couldn't believe raw chocolate-making wasn't a common home-baking activity so I set up Choc Chick. I wanted to promote the benefits and goodness of minimally processed cacao and enable anyone who loves chocolate to make chocolates that are free from dairy, gluten, refined sugar, additives and guilt.'

Her first product, the Choc Chick starter kit, contained all the organic raw cacao ingredients, a natural sweetener and a recipe booklet for raw chocolates, truffles and hot chocolate drinks. With no previous food industry experience, Galia says launching her new brand proved to be a steep learning curve, but she was thrilled when John Lewis agreed to stock her products in 2010. 'It was huge as this was our first major retailer. This led to us being stocked in Whole Foods Market, then in Holland & Barrett.'



For Galia, running an ethical business has always been hugely important, and she has enjoyed meeting the farmers and their families who grow the cacao in Ecuador. 'We source the finest Nacional Arriba Fino de Aroma bean, a single origin cocoa bean that has grown in Ecuador for centuries, and have complete traceability and know the provenance of all our cacao ingredients, which we pay for directly and fairly.'

It seems almost too good to be true to discover that chocolate could actually be good for us, but Galia says that cacao has always been a superfood and was prized by the Aztec and Mayan cultures. 'There's been a lot of research into the benefits of chocolate, particularly high cocoa content chocolate (over 70%). This has found that cacao can improve heart health, blood flow and even cognitive function. Chocolate with a high cocoa content and

made with minimally processed cacao is one of the highest natural sources of antioxidant flavanols. It has three times more antioxidants than green tea, is rich in magnesium and iron and has been known to increase serotonin levels – to elevate mood – and reduce appetite. It's only when sugar, dairy and hydrogenated fats are added that the benefits of chocolate are reduced.'

Fans of Choc Chick already include the Hemsley sisters and Body Coach Joe Wicks, while Jamie Oliver recommended Choc Chick cacao powder in a raw chocolate cake recipe. And new products are on the cards too, with Blissful Blends launched last year, combining raw cacao powder with natural spices, while this year Galia will be promoting the benefits of the new cacao butter bean range for everyday cooking.

● Find out more about the full range of Choc Chick products at www.chocchick.com.

TASTE TEST...

Chocolate spreads

WITH CERTAIN WELL-KNOWN BRANDS OF CHOCOLATE SPREAD OFF THE MENU IN MANY HOMES THANKS TO UNETHICALLY PRODUCED PALM OIL, WHY NOT TRY A DELICIOUS ALTERNATIVE.



1 Sweet Freedom Choc Pot

A super-smooth spread with no palm oil and sweetened with Sweet Freedom's award-winning fruit syrup, this spread is vegan and free from gluten, nuts and GMOs too.

● £3.69 for 250g from Asda.



2 Wyldsson's Hazelnut and Cocoa Spread

Wyldsson's new natural, vegan spread is free of palm oil and made with organic Peruvian cocoa and roasted hazelnuts, with dates and cashews to add a subtle sweetness.

● £5.99 for 360g from www.wyldsson.com.

3 Jim Jams Hazelnut Chocolate Spread

Perfect for kids, this 2015 Great Taste Award winning spread is sweetened with malitol so it has 83% less sugar than standard spreads, is made with sustainable palm oil and is gluten-free.

● From £2.59 for 350g from Tesco and Holland & Barrett.

In our trolley

THE VEG LIVING TEAM'S FAVOURITE PRODUCTS...

THE LATEST SCOOP

There's nothing like a dollop of the cold stuff on your apple crumble, and Alpro's new plant-based vegan ice cream is a delicious alternative to the traditional dairy varieties, with 30 per cent less sugar and fat on average than standard ice cream. Made from non-GM soya and available in Vanilla, Hazelnut Chocolate, and Coconut varieties, Alpro ice cream is delicious on its own or served with other desserts.

● £3.50 for 500ml from Tesco.



COOKIE REVOLUTION

Veggie-friendly Oreos are our favourite mid-morning snack with a cuppa. Now you can enjoy new Oreo Thins, a thinner and crispier version of the original cookie. Oreo Thins come in both vanilla and chocolate crème varieties in a handy pocket-sized pack – perfect for lunchboxes too.

● Available in all major supermarkets at £1.08 for 96g pack (both flavours) and 61p for 48g pack (vanilla).



Ex-seedingly good

Nut butter is one of the most versatile ingredients in the pantry, so we love Meridian's new twist – peanut butter with added crunch in the form of pumpkin, sunflower and black sesame seeds. Vegan-friendly and made without palm oil or additives, not only does this nut butter taste delicious, the seeds add more nutrients to every spoonful. Try it stirred into porridge, to make dressings, in baking, or simply slather on toast.

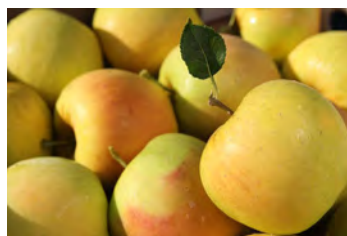
● £2.49 from www.meridianfoods.co.uk.



TASTE OF THAILAND

Heck has added Thai Bites to its popular new vegan range of Super Green Balls, which are packed with tasty ingredients including Thai pesto, sweet potato, sticky rice and chia seeds – plus a little chilli kick. Add them to a stir-fry with bok choy, try with an Asian-inspired salad, or simply enjoy on their own as a tasty snack.

● £3 per pack, exclusively from Waitrose.



HELLO YELLOW

If you haven't spotted them yet, keep an eye out for the last of the crop of Opal apples, a brand new variety with a distinctive yellow colour. A cousin of Golden Delicious, Opal apples are in season in the winter months and have a firm but juicy texture and a unique flavour. With a lovely balance of sweetness and acidity, they are ideal for pairing with cheeses or nut butter, as well as baking in puddings or just snacking. Grown in the UK, there are 130,000 Opal apple trees currently established in Norfolk, Hampshire, Hereford, Essex and Kent.

● Look out for Opal apples at Waitrose, Morrisons, Tesco, Co-op, Asda and Aldi until the end of March.



SAY IT WITH FLOWERS

These floral-print kitchen accessories make perfect gifts for much-loved mums on Mother's Day.



A set of pretty cake plates is perfect for sweet-toothed mums who love a slice of something nice.

● £35 from Laura Ashley.



Make her tea break more special with an elegant Glasshouse design teapot by Dee Hardwicke.

● £32 from National Trust shops.



Perfect for bakers or those who like stylish storage, these Matthew Williamson tins make a gorgeous gift.

● £24 for a set from Debenhams.

TWO-WHEELED GETAWAY

If you're planning a holiday this year, why not consider combining a luxurious cycling break with delicious vegetarian meals. Ben Matoren and Frans van der Veen are keen cyclists and started organising cycling trips as a hobby. But now they've turned it into a business, providing flexible cycling experiences



combined with good quality vegetarian cooking for their guests, from their base in Friesland in the northern Netherlands. Visit www.cycle-adventures.com for details.

Tea and harmony



Over a million cups of Pukka Herbs tea are drunk every day, and now Sebastian Pole, co-founder and master herbarist of this much-loved organic and ethical company, has produced a beautiful book to guide you through the process of making herbal teas at home. *Cleanse, Nurture, Restore with Herbal Tea* (Frances Lincoln, £20) brings together 70 herbal tea recipes using dried and fresh herbs and other natural ingredients to create teas for health, wellbeing and flavour. Choose from recipes such as 'Forgive me for I have sinned', perfect for the morning after an indulgent night, or 'Let there be joy', a mood-enhancing tea made with instant-happiness herbs.



Time for a Cuppa week on 1-8 March aims to raise awareness and money for dementia sufferers and their families. Support the cause by holding a fundraising tea party; find out more at www.dementiauk.org.



Poppy appeal

Brighten up your kitchen with a splash of colourful retro design from the Mid-century Poppy homeware range. Everything from a biscuit barrel to lunchboxes and water bottles are now available in this cheerful print from The Poppy Shop, the online store of the Royal British Legion, so all profits from the site go directly to the charity. We love this tin for keeping all your favourite recipes safely in one place, £9.99 from www.poppysshop.org.uk.

HOW TO STAY VEGGIE

If going vegetarian was one of your New Year resolutions for 2017, the best way to stick to it is to make sure you're really enjoying the food on your plate. The Vegetarian Society has produced a new downloadable free guide to help you make simple switches to your favourite dishes that are both good for you and good for your wallet.

Announcing the new 28-page guide, Lynne Elliot, chief executive of the Vegetarian Society, says: 'Becoming veggie can be a cost-effective way to stay healthy, and you may find switching to vegetarian versions of your favourite meals saves you money. We'll give you the confidence to browse the supermarket aisles so you'll feel good about what's in your basket. Our guide also contains helpful hints on staying healthy with a simple guide to essential veggie nutrition. You'll feel nourished inside and out.'

● Download 'Going Veggie: What to Eat' at www.vegsoc.org/newyear.



GO VEGAN IN LIVERPOOL

The Live a Better Life vegan fair comes to St George's Hall in Liverpool on 25 March, featuring 120 stalls promoting everything from delicious vegan food and drink to natural beauty – plus plenty of free samples. There will also be a vegan bar, cookery demos, talks and workshops, to help you find out more about the vegan lifestyle. For details, go to www.labl.org.uk.



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Delicious in March

We're still in the midst of the hunger gap and it's time to love your leafy greens and find the beauty in brassicas. Regardless of whether you follow food trends, with old-school veg such as kale and cauliflower still enjoying cult-like status, you'll be spoilt for choice of creative recipes to reinvent the humblest of winter veg before spring brings fresh new flavours to the table.

We ... kale

Yes, kale is super good for you and celebs and healthy-living bloggers are putting it into everything from smoothies to brownies, but sometimes, despite your best intentions, you really just fancy a packet of crisps. Enter kale crisps, or 'krisps'...

Kale krisps

Wash 200g kale leaves and remove the tough stems, then dry thoroughly – use a clean tea towel or a salad spinner to get them as dry as possible. Toss in a tablespoon of oil and ensure the leaves are thoroughly coated. Scatter with sea salt and a little paprika – although you could try seasonings such as garlic salt, lemon zest or chilli flakes. Spread in a single layer on a lined baking sheet and cook for 30 minutes at 120C/fan 100C/gas ¼, turning the tray around once during cooking to ensure even crisping. Turn the oven off, remove and shake/scrape your krisps loose from the baking parchment, then pop back in the oven to cool for a further 20 minutes or so. This final stage ensures maximum crispness!

TURN TO
PAGE 16 TO
REINVENT YOUR
LUNCH WITH A
KALE 'POWER
BOWL'



STORECUPBOARD STAR CASHEW NUTS

Nuts have always been a tasty and nutritious addition to a meat-free diet, and while many of us will often add a handful to a stir-fry or salad, they have become an increasingly important ingredient in the vegan kitchen, often being used to make dairy-free cheese, milk, butter and 'creamy' sauces.

Cashew cream is a versatile recipe that can be used in place of dairy in a variety of dishes. Try our leek and potato soup enriched with cashew cream (see opposite), and use the basic cashew cream recipe to make a variety of sweet or savoury dips and sauces. Cashew nuts – technically the seed of the cashew apple – are now the most popular nut in both Europe and America, and price decreases mean they are no longer a rarefied treat. If you want to be sure you're buying ethically produced cashews grown on farms where workers are not exploited, then look for Fairtrade varieties from Sainsbury's, Traidcraft and Liberation.

Cashews provide a valuable source of protein and iron, and they are so versatile it's easy to incorporate them in your cooking. Try them in homemade flapjacks and granola, stir cashew butter into porridge or spread on toast or pancakes as an alternative to peanut butter. They also work well in veggie burgers or falafels – see the beetroot falafel recipe on page 18.

'Pick me up' power bowl

There are some days when we all need an extra boost, and this bowl full of ultra-healthy goodies is just the answer. For the best results, keep the dressing separate and pour over just before serving.

Serves 1 | Prep 15 mins | Cook 40 mins

75g spelt berries
50g cooked chickpeas
2 tbsp pumpkin seeds
½ crisp apple
½ avocado
2 tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice
2cm piece of fresh root ginger, peeled
2 tbsp avocado oil
1 tbsp sunflower oil
1 tsp runny honey
handful of baby kale leaves
handful of sprouted seeds
2 tbsp dried cranberries
salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Place the spelt berries in a pan of cold water, bring to the boil and simmer gently for about 40 minutes until the berries are *al dente*. Drain, refresh under cold water and shake dry.

2 Drain the chickpeas, wash in a sieve and shake dry. Toast the pumpkin seeds in a dry frying pan for 2 minutes until they start to brown.

3 Cut the apple into thin batons. Peel, stone and thinly slice the avocado. Add a little lemon juice to the apples

and avocado and toss gently. This will help them to keep their colour.

4 Finely grate the ginger and combine with the avocado oil, sunflower oil, remaining lemon juice and honey. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

5 Arrange the ingredients neatly in a round plastic bowl or container, placing the sliced avocado on top with the cranberries. Chill in the refrigerator until required. Just before serving, drizzle over the dressing.

COOK'S TIP If it's possible, slice the apple and avocado just before serving to keep them extra fresh.

■ **PER SERVING** 1,091 cals, fat 66.3g, sat fat 8.7g, carbs 101.5g, sugars 42.2g, protein 24g, salt 1.1g, fibre 19.2g

Recipe by Louise Pickford, adapted from *Lunch on the Go* (Ryland Peters and Small, £14.99). Photograph by Adrian Lawrence.



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Vegetarian Living readers can buy *Lunch on the Go* for the special price of £10.99, including p&p. To order, call 01256 302699 and quote reference HU3.

Your March larder

FRUIT Bananas, blood oranges, kiwi fruit, lemons, oranges, passion fruit, pineapple, rhubarb

VEGETABLES Cauliflower, kale, leeks, purple sprouting broccoli, salsify, spinach, spring onions, swede, wild nettles

PERFECT
FOR A SHARED
LUNCH

Leek and potato soup

Vichyssoise is a classic soup that's lovely served warm or chilled. Use a firm-fleshed or waxy variety of potato, such as Yukon Gold, Charlotte or Anya to give a good flavour as well as a creamy texture.

Serves 4 | Prep 10 mins | Cook 15 mins

2-3 large white potatoes, scrubbed and finely diced
2-3 tbsp dairy-free margarine
3-4 large leeks, roughly chopped, plus extra finely sliced to garnish
1 large onion, finely chopped
400ml hot cooked vegetable stock (see recipe, below)
pinch of freshly grated nutmeg
100ml raw cashew cream (see recipe, below) or any dairy or vegan cream alternative
sea salt and black pepper
favourite crackers, to serve

1 Cook the potatoes in a saucepan of boiling salted water until tender, then drain.

2 While the potatoes are cooking, heat the margarine in a separate large pan, add the leeks and onion and sauté gently for 3-4 minutes until starting to soften.

3 Add the stock and simmer for 5-10 minutes, until the leeks and onion are tender. Add the cooked potatoes, nutmeg and season to taste with salt and pepper.

4 Remove the pan from the heat and blend to a silky smooth consistency using a stick blender or in a food processor. Stir in the cashew cream just before serving and heat through, if you like. If serving chilled, there is no need to warm the soup.

5 To serve, ladle the soup into bowls then scatter over the finely sliced leeks and crackers as a garnish.

■ PER SERVING 383 cals, fat 17.8g, sat fat 4g, carbs 46.7g, sugars 6.9g, protein 9.4g, salt 1.4g, fibre 9.1g



Cooked vegetable stock

4 small carrots, cut into medium dice
3 sticks celery, cut into medium dice
2 large onions or 2 medium leeks, cut in half
1 bay leaf
1 small bunch of mixed herbs, such as parsley, thyme and rosemary
2 tsp black peppercorns
2 litres water

Place the carrots, celery and onions in a large saucepan with the bay leaf, herbs and peppercorns and pour over the measured water. The water should cover the vegetables completely by 5-8cm; you might need to add more depending on the size of your pan. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook for 40-50 minutes, occasionally skimming away any froth that rises to the surface, until the stock tastes rich and full; take care not to overcook the vegetables or the flavour will become stale and flat. Strain the stock, discarding the solids, and use straight away or store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 1 week, or freeze for 1-2 months.

Raw cashew cream

100g cashew nuts
100ml water
pinch of sea salt

Soak the cashews in water for at least 1 hour until softened, then drain. Place the soaked nuts in a high-speed blender with the water and salt and blend on high until smooth and the consistency of double cream – this may take a while if your blender isn't very powerful. If you require a thinner cream, just add more liquid such as water, coconut water or lemon juice. Use straight away or keep in the fridge in an airtight container for 2-3 days.



Recipe adapted from *Savour: Sensational soups to fulfil and fortify* by Amber Locke (Mitchell Beazley, £14.99). Photography by Amber Locke.

Beetroot falafel

The main reason falafels go wrong is taking a short cut and using tinned chickpeas. This always results in wet, mushy, sad-looking falafels. But if you start with dried chickpeas, you will end up with wonderfully crisp, round, textured falafels. We've added beetroot to these for its bright red colour.

Serves 4

Prep 25 mins + soaking

Cook 1 hr 45 mins

200g dried chickpeas
2 raw beetroots, peeled and finely diced
1 carrot, finely diced
50g cashew nuts
30g home-shelled pistachio nuts
1 tsp olive oil
½ red onion, finely diced
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 free-range egg, lightly beaten with a fork
grated zest of 1 lemon
2 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp smoked paprika
1 tbsp sesame seeds

For the yogurt dip:

3 tbsp plain soya yogurt
grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
1 tsp tahini
1 cucumber, peeled, seeded and finely sliced
pinch of ground cumin
pinch of salt

To serve:

iceberg lettuce, separated into leaves
fresh mint leaves

- 1** Soak the chickpeas in cold water overnight. The next day, drain and place them in a fresh pan of cold water. Bring to the boil and simmer for about 50 minutes until soft. Drain and pat dry with kitchen towel.
- 2** Preheat the oven to 180C/ fan 160C/gas 4. Line a baking tray with greaseproof paper.
- 3** Place the chickpeas, beetroot, carrot, cashew nuts and pistachios



- in a blender and pulse until finely chopped. Transfer to a large mixing bowl. Set aside.
- 4** Heat the olive oil in a non-stick frying pan and cook the onion and garlic until soft. Add them to the bowl along with the rest of the ingredients (except the sesame seeds). Mix together well. Shape the mixture into small balls and roll them in the sesame seeds to coat.
- 5** Place the balls on the baking tray and bake in the oven for

- 50 minutes. Meanwhile, make the dip by mixing together all the ingredients for it.
- 6** Serve the falafels with the dip, lettuce leaves and mint. To eat, place three mint leaves on a lettuce leaf, set a falafel on this, add a dollop of yogurt dip and wrap up.
- PER SERVING 455 cals, fat 21.9g, sat fat 3.5g, carbs 41.1g, sugars 14.7g, protein 24.3g, salt 1g, fibre 14.5g



Recipe adapted from *The Detox Kitchen Bible* by Lily Simpson and Rob Hobson (Bloomsbury, £14.99). Photography by Keiko Oikawa.



GROWING TALES

Ross Geach, Padstow Kitchen Garden

INTERVIEW: LINDSEY HARRAD

It's been a while since we visited enterprising cook-turned-gardener Ross Geach at the Padstow Kitchen Garden, who used to be Rick Stein's head chef. But he's been busy growing even more produce on his plot above the pretty seaside town in Cornwall and contributing a regular column to *The Telegraph*, which has inspired an unexpected love of writing. 'I'm coming to the end of my *Telegraph* articles now and I've really enjoyed it, although I haven't written that much since I left school – in fact, I didn't even write much then!' he laughs. 'I'm now working on a book which I hope to be an A-to-Z of how I grow at Padstow Kitchen Garden, with the addition of recipes from myself and hopefully some of my chef friends.'

But while Ross's writing career has been bearing fruit, out on the plot the veg is less plentiful in March, with the so-called 'hungry gap' providing a challenging period for chefs and anyone who loves to cook with fresh, seasonal produce. 'The hungry gap is the couple of months between the winter crops coming to an end and the spring ones starting,' explains Ross. 'The problem is that many people have lost touch with seasonality. Because it's so simple to get hold of veg from a supermarket, we can easily forget what is really in season.'

Professional gardeners have to stay ahead of food fashions, of course, and he's particularly excited by the kale trend that's still going strong. 'Kale is my favourite veg to grow and there are hundreds of varieties, so they can keep you in greens for 12 months of the year. I have some brand new versions of the kalettes and kale from Tozer Seeds that are so new they don't even have names yet, just codes!'

Most of Padstow Kitchen Garden's customers are restaurant chefs, and Ross says that keeping them all happy is a juggling act, with some chefs keen to experiment, snapping up unusual produce to put on the menu that day, while others have shopping lists for set menus that have been planned months in advance. 'When it comes to trends in vegetables, chefs are generally steering away from micro-veg and flowers and going back to buying veg for flavour instead of just looks.' Of course, whatever happens across the pond usually ends up influencing chefs over here, and at the moment everyone in New York is buzzing about ube (pronounced 'oo-bay'), the purple Filipino yam. So will we see fields of ube growing in Cornwall any time soon? 'Social media plays a big part in trends coming across from the US,' he says. 'Keeping an eye on top chefs and



kitchen gardeners in New York state is very important. The trend goes from there to London to Cornwall.'

But while some chefs are receptive to new products, Ross says it can be a gamble for him. 'Sometimes it's very frustrating as I'll be working hard to push a new product without much luck, so I don't bother growing it anymore. Then the following season Tom Kerridge or Jamie Oliver uses the ingredient on a TV show and I have everyone calling asking for it!'

Ross is taking bookings for his vegetable gardening courses this year, and is planning pop-ups on the kitchen garden with guest chefs during the summer. But as someone who works outdoors all year round, the one thing he's most looking forward to is some warm, spring sunshine. 'I just can't wait to get a tan!' he laughs. 'I just love being outdoors, sowing millions of seeds. Watching them grow is so rewarding.'

● Visit www.padstowkitchengarden.co.uk or follow on Twitter @PadstowkGarden.

Fried tofu sandwiches with roasted Romana pepper relish **V**

Ready-marinated tofu is widely available but you can of course also marinate your own and eat the fried cubes as snacks, too. Making sandwich spreads out of fresh vegetables is a great way to pack a diet full of nutrients while adding flavour and moisture.

Serves 2 | Prep 25 mins | Cook 1 hr

240g marinated tofu
sunflower oil, for frying
1 baguette or 4 slices seeded bread (optional)
sliced pickles or kimchi, to taste
2 handfuls of lettuce or other salad greens
4 tbsp sprouted seeds

For the roasted Romano pepper relish:

1kg Romano peppers
150g olive oil
4 cloves garlic, crushed
1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
sea salt

1 First make the roasted pepper relish. Preheat the oven to 180C/fan 160C/gas 4. Place the peppers in a baking pan lined with baking parchment. Cook in the preheated oven, turning frequently, until the skin becomes black and blistered.

2 Remove the peppers from the oven and place in an airtight container, covered, for long enough to build up the steam, about 15 minutes. Make sure you save the liquid that leaks from the peppers while cooling. Next, peel and deseed the peppers, again saving any liquid. Cut the flesh into small pieces.

3 Heat the oil in a frying pan, add the peppers and garlic and fry for a couple of minutes with a pinch of salt. Add the vinegar, reserved pepper juice and more salt, and sauté over a medium heat for another 20 minutes or until the juice has been absorbed and the mixture has thickened. Set aside to cool.

4 Cut the ready-marinated tofu into four 10cm x 6cm slices, 6mm thick. Fry the cubes in a shallow layer of oil for 1-2 minutes, until golden brown, then drain on sheets of kitchen towel.

5 Cut the bread crossways in the middle, then lengthways to get two sandwiches. Add the cooled red pepper spread on the

bottom slices, then add two slices of fried tofu, sprinkle with pickles, salad leaves and sprouted seeds and top with the remaining slices of bread.

COOK'S TIP Store leftover dip in an airtight container in the refrigerator and use within 2-3 days.

■ PER SERVING 719 cals, fat 51.2g, sat fat 7.1g, carbs 44.8g, sugars 13.1g, protein 20.5g, salt 1.5g, fibre 12.2g

Recipe by Dunja Gulin, adapted from *Lunch on the Go* (Ryland Peters and Small, £14.99). Photography by William Reavell.



A GREAT RECIPE
USING HANDY
STORECUPBOARD
INGREDIENTS



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LUNCH MUNCH

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SOS

SAVE OUR SCRAPS

TIPS FOR STORING YOUR FRESH BREAD AND HOW TO USE LEFTOVER OLD CRUSTS.

- Store bread in a cloth bag, or wrapped well in a clean tea towel, to make it last longer.
- If you don't get through a loaf very quickly consider keeping it in the freezer. Slices thaw easily and are perfect to pop in the toaster.
- Whizz up loaf ends in a food processor to make breadcrumbs, then store in the freezer.
- Slightly stale bread is ideal for French toast and bread pudding, as it will absorb the liquids in your recipe.



Kate Hackworthy uses her loaf to cook creatively with leftover bread and reduce food waste.

Let's talk about bread. It's a staple in most homes, but it's also one of the most wasted foods. A scandalous 24 million slices of bread are wasted every day in the UK. *Every day.* Digest that for a moment (pardon the pun). Sure, a lot of that will be at a commercial level, but we can do more at home in our own kitchens.

Although I try not to waste any, there always seems to be too much hitting the compost bin. I try to convince my kids that crusts are simply darker bits of bread and perfectly edible, yet still they often reject them. As for the ends of a loaf, I seem to be the only one who will eat them. This means my freezer is bulging with bread ends destined for breadcrumbs, but there are lots of other ways to use it up, from bread pudding and croutons to panzanella bread salad and padding out veggie burgers, as well as these brunch toast cups.

As I mentioned last month, I've started 2017 with a commitment to stop buying non-perishables and run my cupboards down until they are bare. They've been heaving recently with bags of this, jars of that. I don't want to leave anything to go out of date, so I'm getting creative in my kitchen in order to use them up with lots of tasty new ideas. Have you been taking part? I hope you'll join me in the challenge! Let me know with the hashtag #useitupchallenge and tweet @VLMagazine and @KateVeggieDesserts to tell me what you make as you use up your tins, bags and jars from the cupboards.

Brunch toast cups with spinach and eggs

These brunch toast cups are a great way to use up slightly stale slices of bread. You need to flatten them with a rolling pin to get them dense enough to hold their shape, so nobody will notice that the slices are slightly stale to begin with. The toast cups are filled with brunch ingredients and make an extra-special meal.

Serves 3 | Prep 15 mins | Cook 25 mins

3 tbsp melted butter
6 slices of bread
large handful of spinach
3 cherry tomatoes, chopped
2 tbsp grated vegetarian Cheddar cheese
6 free-range eggs (ideally small ones)
sea salt and ground black pepper

- 1 Preheat the oven to 190C/fan 170C/gas 5. Brush a deep muffin tray with a little of the melted butter.
- 2 Trim the crusts from each slice of bread (store the crusts in the freezer for breadcrumbs), then use a rolling pin to flatten them. Place the bread rounds into the muffin cups and press to the sides to form cups. Trim any edges that stick out of the top. Brush them with the rest of the melted butter and bake for 5 minutes to lightly toast.
- 3 Meanwhile, wilt the spinach in a pan with a tablespoon of water. Remove, run under cold water to cool and squeeze out any moisture. Chop up finely.

4 Add a teaspoon of the spinach to the bottom of each muffin cup and sprinkle in some chopped tomatoes and cheese. Return the tray to the oven and cook for 2 minutes, to melt the cheese.

5 Crack one of the eggs into a small dish. Carefully scoop the yolk into one of the bread cups and add enough of the egg white to nearly fill it, then season with salt and pepper. Repeat with the other eggs. Save the leftover egg white for another recipe.

6 Bake in the oven for 15 minutes or until the eggs are set. You may need to run a knife around the muffin cups to remove them from the pan. Serve immediately.

■ PER SERVING 487 cals, fat 29.1g, sat fat 14.6g, carbs 35.8g, sugars 3.3g, protein 21g, salt 2.7g, fibre 2.4g

ABOUT KATE

Kate Hackworthy is a food writer and recipe developer who blogs at www.veggiedesserts.co.uk. Her creative vegetable desserts have frequently appeared in *The Guardian* and she was Jamie Oliver's Food Blog of the Month. Follow Kate on Twitter @veggie_desserts, Facebook at VeggieDessertsBlog and Instagram @kateveggiedesserts.





A cauliflower renaissance

ABOUT RACHEL

Chef-proprietor of the award-winning Demuths restaurant in Bath for 25 years, Rachel is now dedicated to running the Demuths Vegetarian Cookery School, which offers a range of themed workshops, guest chef events, cookery holidays in France and Italy, and the Demuths Vegetarian and Vegan Diplomas for professional chefs and keen cooks. As a well-travelled foodie, Rachel loves to combine her passion for global cuisine with the best of locally grown produce.

www.demuths.co.uk



Long regarded as overboiled school dinner fare, tasty and versatile cauliflower is now the most fashionable member of the cabbage family, and with good reason, says chef Rachel Demuth.

Cauliflower has languished as an unpopular vegetable for far too long. Many people will be familiar with the old tradition of overcooking cauliflower, boiling it whole and smothering it in a thick cheese sauce, which is most often how people remember it from their childhood. But things have started to change, as cauliflower overtook kale as the new trending vegetable last year – and I was not surprised, as it is far more versatile in the kitchen. Unlike kale, cauliflower doesn't have such a strong flavour, allowing it to adapt easily to a wide range of recipes, while it also retains its texture and doesn't fall apart, as long as you don't overcook it.

These brassicas come in glorious colours, including purple, orange, green and the

wonderful fractal-like Romanesco, and can be used in so many delicious ways. Try it roasted with sumac and toasted almonds or with garlic, juniper and rosemary. The Spanish like it dunked in a coating of gram flour and paprika then deep-fried; in India they make cauliflower pakora with chilli and turmeric.

For a stronger flavour, try it smoked over cherry wood chips, or as a complete contrast purée creamy cauliflower to make a savoury pannacotta. Cauliflower doesn't have to be *au naturel* white either: add a little sunshine colour with turmeric or saffron. It even makes a delicious gluten-free pizza base, a lighter alternative to potato mash, can be pickled in traditional piccalilli and fermented in kimchi.



CAULIFLOWER
TABBOULEH

Buying and storing

Cauliflower is one of the cabbage family, along with broccoli and sprouts. Although they can be grown all year round, I tend to think of them as a winter and spring vegetable and they are excellent for filling the hungry gap in March and April. Choose ones that have bright green leaves and a white curd, and check the base for the cut, which should not be dried out. Cauliflower can be stored very well in the fridge for up to two weeks. Keep the protective leaves on when storing, but don't put them in a plastic bag as moisture will encourage the curd to decay.

Cooking

Unfortunately, cauliflower has a reputation for stinking the kitchen out when cooking and giving you wind after eating. They contain sulphur compounds that smell unpleasant when cooked, in particular when boiled, so it's best to roast, griddle or steam.

Steaming gives better control of cooking and the cauliflower is less likely to turn soggy; in the spring you can buy baby cauliflower and steam them whole. I like to roast the florets in the oven until they begin to char, or griddle for a robust finish which works very well with cauliflower 'steaks' (see recipe, page 26). Cauliflower is delicious raw made into low-carb 'rice'; I like to make it into a tabbouleh with lots of fresh herbs (see recipe, below). Eating raw also preserves more of the nutrients.

Cauliflower tabbouleh

Sometimes called 'cauliflower rice', this tabbouleh is made with finely blitzed cauliflower rather than bulgur wheat.

Serves 2 | Prep 20 mins

½ small cauliflower, stalks removed
2 tsp lemon juice
1 clove garlic, finely chopped

1 tbsp olive oil
¼ red onion, finely diced
4 tbsp chopped herbs, e.g. mint, parsley and dill
2 tbsp finely chopped pistachios or walnuts
1 tbsp pomegranate seeds
pinch of sea salt and black pepper
pinch of sumac

Put the cauliflower florets into a food processor and blitz to a couscous-like texture. Combine the cauliflower with the rest of the ingredients. Season with salt, pepper and sumac and add more lemon juice to taste.

COOK'S TIP Try this with spring onion instead of red onion, toasted almonds or pine nuts, and purple, yellow or green cauliflower. Soak the chopped red onion in warm water for 30 minutes, if you want to reduce some of the oniony taste.

■ **PER SERVING** 191 cals, fat 14.5g, sat fat 2g, carbs 8.9g, sugars 6.4g, protein 6.3g, salt 1.2g, fibre 5.3g





Roasted Romanesco and cauliflower with halloumi and sumac 🇬🇧

This is a quick, simple supper dish and a great opportunity to use different coloured cauliflower – for this recipe we used purple and yellow varieties and green spiralled Romanesco. But remember this recipe does taste just as good with ordinary white ones!

Serves 4 | Prep 10 mins | Cook 20 mins

1 Romanesco cauliflower, cut into florets
1 small cauliflower, cut into florets
250g vegetarian halloumi, cut into 2cm cubes

For the marinade:

zest and juice of ½ lemon
30ml olive oil
1 clove garlic, chopped
small handful of mint leaves, chopped

To serve:

large pinch of sumac
tahini sauce (see recipe, below)

1 Preheat the oven to 220C/fan 200C/gas 7. Make the marinade: mix the lemon juice and zest with the olive oil, garlic, and half the mint. Mix the cauliflower and halloumi into the marinade.

2 Spoon the mixture into an ovenproof dish and roast for 15–20 minutes, until the cauliflower is tender and the halloumi is beginning to brown.

3 Serve with a sprinkle of sumac, the remaining mint, and the tahini sauce.

COOK'S TIP The cauliflower and halloumi can be prepared and marinated in the morning or even the night before and left in the fridge, then simply popped into the oven – or under a grill for an even quicker supper.

■ **PER SERVING** 464 cals, fat 37.1g, sat fat 13.6g, carbs 9.1g, sugars 6.2g, protein 24.4g, salt 3g, fibre 6.3g

TAHINI SAUCE 🇬🇧

100ml light tahini
3 tbsp lemon juice
sea salt and black pepper

Mix the tahini and lemon juice together by hand into a thick paste. Add water, a little at a time, until you have a smooth, creamy mixture to your desired consistency. Season to taste.

Spiced cauliflower steaks

These griddled cauliflower 'steaks' are spicy with a robust flavour and texture, great for a spring Sunday lunch with aioli, flatbreads and salad.

**Serves 4 | Prep 15 mins + marinating
Cook 20 mins**

**1 medium cauliflower
sea salt**

For the spice mix:

**½ cinnamon stick
1 tsp fennel seeds
1 tsp black peppercorns
1 tbsp coriander seeds
1 tbsp cumin seeds
½ tsp allspice berries
3 cardamom pods, crushed and seeds removed
1 tbsp sumac
½ tsp turmeric
1 tsp ground ginger
¼ tsp ground nutmeg
juice of 1 lemon
1 clove garlic, crushed
100g butter, melted or 6–7 tbsp olive oil**

To serve:

**pitta or flatbread
almond aioli (see recipe, below)
tomato, cucumber and onion salad
lemon wedges
chopped coriander**

1 Trim the outer leaves and stem of the cauliflower and place in a pan fitted with a steamer. Cover and steam for 8–10 minutes, until the cauliflower is only just tender when pierced with a small knife. Remove and allow to cool for 5 minutes.

2 Toast the whole spices in a dry frying pan until they smell aromatic, then place in an electric grinder or mortar and pestle. Grind until fine, then mix with the remaining ground spices in a bowl. Add the lemon juice, garlic, and melted butter or olive oil, and mix to a paste.

3 When the cauliflower is cool enough to handle, turn it on its side and carefully slice 4 'steaks' about 2–3cm thick. (The remaining bits of cauliflower can be broken into florets and tossed with the rest of the marinade, then either sautéed or roasted briefly in a hot oven and served alongside the steaks, or with another meal.) Brush the steaks with the spice paste on both sides, making

sure that they are well covered, and set aside to marinate for a minimum of 30 minutes.

4 Heat a char-grill pan and sprinkle the steaks with a pinch of salt. Grill for a few minutes on each side, taking care when turning, and watching that the spices don't burn. You may want to brush a little extra butter or oil on the steaks as they cook. As soon as they become golden brown with charred lines, remove to a warm plate for serving.

5 To serve, spread a warm flatbread or pitta with aioli, top with chopped tomato, cucumber and onion, a wedge of lemon and a good scattering of chopped coriander.

COOK'S TIP The steaks reheat well so can be prepared and cooked in advance. You could serve with a minty yogurt dressing or tahini instead of the aioli.

■ **PER SERVING** 834 cals, fat 59.6g, sat fat 17.6g, carbs 60.4g, sugars 10.6g, protein 16.4g, salt 3.3g, fibre 7.3g

go vegan

V Make sure you opt for the olive oil rather than the melted butter, when mixing your spice paste.

ALMOND AIOLI

**75ml water
1½ tbsp white wine vinegar
50g breadcrumbs
2 cloves garlic, finely minced
100ml sunflower oil
50g ground almonds
2 tbsp olive oil
1 tsp lemon juice
pinch of sea salt
pinch of black pepper**

Pour the water and vinegar onto the breadcrumbs and leave for a few minutes to soak up the liquid. Crush the garlic in a pestle and mortar, adding a little salt and sunflower oil to make a smooth paste. Add the soaked bread and drizzle in the remaining sunflower oil, until you have used it all. Add a little water, if needed, to reach a hummus consistency. Stir in the ground almonds and olive oil, adding lemon, salt and pepper to taste.





GROWING UP

PLANT

No space to garden? Gardening editor Alice Whitehead proves that even in a small, urban garden the sky really is the limit when it comes to growing your own food.

When it comes to growing your own, not everyone is lucky enough to have a sprawling vegetable plot, and if you're a city dweller with little more than a couple of pots, kitchen garden produce can seem a little out of reach. The solution? It's time to take your gardening to a whole new level. Forget conventional beds and borders – walls, fences, climbing frames and shed roofs can all be transformed into growing spaces.

'Urban greening is the solution to future city living,' says Armando Raish, managing director of Treebox (www.treebox.co.uk), the UK's leading living wall designer and supplier. 'Living walls can improve air quality and food production, increase energy efficiency (keeping the heat out in summer but retaining it in winter), create habitats for wildlife, and reduce noise and storm run-off.'

Reach for the sky

But while the idea of turning your house wall into a jungle facade might seem a little ambitious, there are plenty of small-scale, cost-effective ways you can green up the perimeters of your own garden.

Hanging baskets and window boxes are an obvious place to start, but cane wigwams and obelisks also offer space for cucumbers, squash and climbing beans to clamber above ground level. Even if you only have a balcony, a trellis set against the railings, an outside

wall or even fixed as temporary shutters over the windows can provide vertical growing space. If you'd like more homegrown fruit, consider growing espalier apples, plums and pears up walls, or thornless blackberries and other climbing fruit. You can make rudimentary frames from wire and train them anyway you wish.

Or get crafty and create your own vertical planters. Pallets make fabulous mini living walls if you staple-gun landscaping membrane to the back and back-fill the gaps with potting compost (see below). Lay it on the ground to plant between the slats and leave for a few weeks so the roots can weave a tight carpet, then lean it up against a wall. Alternatively, construct your own trellis from timber, with hanging pots attached, or fix half-drainpipes to fences and walls for growing salad crops. Self-watering bottle towers are easily made by slotting recycled drinks bottles inside each other with the caps off (see above).

And who said hedges always have to be made up of conifers and privet? Consider a new hedge as an extension of your kitchen



garden by planting nuts, fruit and berries such as hazel, crab apples, hawthorn or *Rosa rugosa* (for the hips). You will provide a fabulous feast for birds and insects, even if you don't get around to eating them all.

Even flat-roofed sheds and outbuildings can become high-flying horticultural havens. Use timber to create a raised bed, with membrane and pond liner at the base, and fill with a mix of soil and grit. Plant small herbs and sedums or, if your shed roof is a suntrap, experiment with peppers, cherry tomatoes and strawberries. Just be careful how much weight you put on the structure – and consider how much wet soil might weigh, shoring it up from underneath if necessary.

Tending your hanging garden

One of the major considerations when it comes to vertical gardening is irrigation. While climbing plants will get their moisture and food sources from the ground, plants on living walls or shed roofs will need some help. 'Consider installing an irrigation system on a timer to ensure you don't overwater and can keep water levels high during summer but reduced in the colder, winter months,' says Raish. 'Felt systems tend to generate a larger amount of water run-off than trough systems, so this might affect what type of plants you choose too.'

While vertical gardens are often used to harness more natural light, particularly in shady corners, you also need to be more aware of the drying effects of the sun, especially if it radiates off a wall. West-facing walls are particularly prone to this as they get the sun almost all afternoon in the summer and young plants can bake. Ensure plants have plenty of room, and depth, for their roots so they don't dry out, and go for patio or dwarf plants that don't need as much headspace. 'Planting established specimens can lead to a higher success rate and, unlike conventional horizontal gardening, a living wall tends to develop microclimates between plants, which means shade-loving plants,

ABOUT ALICE

Alice Whitehead is a writer who loves to grow, eat and get muddy. For 16 years she has written garden and food features for magazines and newspapers, and more recently split her time between tending two large, city allotment plots and a school garden club. She still hasn't decided whether she prefers the pen or the spade.

www.wonderlandfreelance.co.uk



BEST HIGH-RISE PLANTS

Whether you're planting a hanging basket, edible hedge or living shed roof, these high flyers will get you started.

STRAWBERRIES

With their compact and quick-growing habit, strawberries are great for edible walls as they like a free-draining, sunny site and are not too fussed about soils. Placed up high their luscious fruit are also less likely to be eaten by slugs and snails.

TRY 'Scarlet Beauty' (www.marshalls-seeds.co.uk) which has smaller fruits, or a wild variety such as 'Baron von Solemacher' (www.mr-fothergills.co.uk) which doesn't have runners.

PARSLEY

No kitchen garden should be without this herby stalwart. Grown from seed direct in March, parsley can be slow to germinate, but eventually the plants can provide tasty leaves for up to two years – and it's a great choice for a shady wall.

TRY Intensely flavoured, flat-leaved 'Italian Giant' (www.organiccatalogue.com) has large leaves and remains productive through winter.

SALAD

Cut-and-come-again salad leaves are perfect for containers and edible walls, as they have shallow roots and crop in as little as 10 days. Sow a few times over the summer to get succession harvests.

TRY Salad mix 'Asian Leaves' (www.organiccatalogue.com) contains bok choy, mizuna, mustard purple and golden frills, which are cold tolerant and can be used in stir-fries too.

such as ferns, can grow extremely well on south-facing walls,' adds Raish.

And think about how your finished living wall might look. Christine Wilford from Green Arden Design (www.greenardendesign.com) created a beautiful living wall in a city centre garden with herbs, strawberries and bright foliage to transform a previously dull fence. 'If plants within a living wall are arranged in certain patterns they can be artworks in their own right,' she says. 'They are architectural, yet bring scent, texture and colour throughout the seasons.'

Above all, whether you're embarking on a living wall or a simple bottle tower, vertical gardening can turn dead, ugly spaces or difficult to plant areas into a haven for you – and for wildlife.



Living wall planter

These clever pocket planters are made from recycled bottles and can be used indoors or out. With breathable sides and an integrated watering well, plants stay watered for up to two weeks.

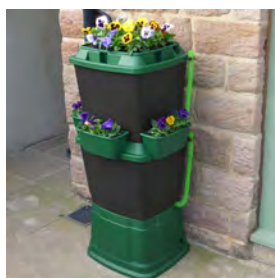
● £47.99 (pack of four) from www.woollypocket.co.uk



Plant shelf

Grow up with this stylish plant shelf that can pack a lot into a small space.

● £95.99 from www.gardenstreet.co.uk



Rainwater terrace

Maximise space with this two-tier water butt and planter in one, which waters your plants with collected rainwater.

● £99.99 from www.gardenstreet.co.uk



Garden tower

Not all garden pots are created equal, and this towering container can grow up to 50 plants in just over one square metre. Add kitchen scraps to the composting column at its centre, and the plants will be naturally fertilised too.

● £288 from www.gardentowerproject.co.uk

SHOP VERTICAL

Copper wall planter

Fabulous for a conservatory, these copper vertical planting frames ensure your plants look pretty as a picture.

● £39.95 from www.notonthehighstreet.com



WWW.TREEBOX.CO.UK

Easiwall panel

If you want to add professional polish to your vertical gardening, use these flatpack Easiwall panels made from 100% recycled material, which can be fixed to fences or used as stand-alone planters.

● From £136 from www.easiwallpro.com

SCALE NEW HEIGHTS

We have three Woolly Pocket living wall planters to give away. To enter, go to www.vegetarianliving.co.uk. Competition closes 9 March 2017. Readers can also get a 5% discount on the Norfolk Leisure Florenity Verdi Plant Shelf and Stand, and Garden Street's rainwater terrace, using code 'VLMAR16' at www.gardenstreet.co.uk; plus a 20% discount on garden towers, using code 'VEGETARIAN' at www.gardentowerproject.co.uk. All offers are valid until 31 March 2017.



NICK KNOWLES'

Lifestyle SOS

Some might consider TV presenter Nick Knowles an unlikely convert to the plant-based lifestyle, but he's written a book hoping to encourage others to give it a try too.

Nick Knowles is a self-confessed 'big unit'. He's six foot two, pushing 17 stone and spends a lot of his working life outdoors on building sites filming his hugely popular TV show, *DIY SOS*. With all the early starts, the long hours of physical labour and the macho banter among the trades on site, it's hard to imagine Nick or any of his colleagues nibbling on a quinoa salad. It's definitely a bacon-buttie type of workplace.

'On *DIY SOS*, when you've got a 7am start on a freezing cold morning, and you're stood around outside until around 10pm at night, when you come home hungry what you don't want to eat is a bowl of salad. You want something wholesome and warming that will put back some of the energy you've expended all day,' Nick laughs in his trademark gravelly tones. 'As a bloke, you want a bowl full of something that feels like real food.'

But one thing Nick has always loved to do is cook, and says he often comes home from a long day and loses himself in the kitchen prep to help him unwind. His ex-wife Jessica – they've recently announced their amicable separation – is vegetarian and he's always risen to the challenge of making her meat-free meals interesting. However, although he was happy to eat a veggie meal with Jessica on occasion, he sometimes found the food 'a bit weedy for a lump like me' and would have to top up with something meaty later in the evening. 'I was always very much in the carnivore camp,' he admits. 'I was the sort of person who'd stop off at the café a few doors up from my house and get a sausage and egg sandwich to start the day, then at lunchtime I'd order the steak at the pub, and in the evening I'd have more meat or fish for dinner.'

The unlikely yogis

Yet this is the same Nick Knowles who has just launched a plant-based cookbook and now enthuses passionately about tabbouleh, lentil Bolognese and making his own almond

milk. So why the change? 'After being the same shape for my entire life, when I turned 50 I suddenly started putting some pounds on,' he says. 'I was aware that I wasn't healthy. I felt stressed, I was on the road a lot for work and not eating properly, and my head was too full to think straight. I needed to get on top of it.'

Nick decided to head off to a yoga retreat in Thailand for a month. But, being a TV presenter, he also decided it would be a great opportunity to make a programme about the experience, so he took Julian and

I was always very much in the carnivore camp. I was the sort of person who'd get a sausage and egg sandwich to start the day, then at lunchtime I'd order steak at the pub, and have more meat or fish for dinner'

Billy from *DIY SOS* and seven other unlikely yogis with him, including people with health issues such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and excess weight. *The Retreat* series aired on BBC2 in September last year, attracting a million viewers every night, and after a 28-day regime that included vegan food, regular exercise, reiki and colonic irrigation, the impact on the participants' health and wellbeing was staggering.

'To be honest, I didn't have any expectation of it working at all,' he says. 'But because of the kind of person I am, instead of just going and doing it, I thought it would be interesting

to take a whole load of people who are the least likely to be vegan you could find on the planet, and go at it with a really sceptical point of view. The people at the retreat were worried that we weren't allowing the regime to be successful, but my view is that if you can make people who are sceptical about it really believe in it, it's a lot more powerful than just taking people who already think it's a good idea.'

Not just for hemp-wearing skinny people

The point was, of course, to show that if a big lad with a hearty appetite could not only survive on a vegan diet, but actually thrive, then anyone can do it. 'I think it's important that more people realise that the veggie and vegan world is not just for women or hemp-wearing skinny people with tiny appetites!' he laughs. 'I've now got my own vegan bistro in Shrewsbury and I often find myself sitting in there watching people come to the window to look at the menu. A few times, if they've not come in, I've gone after them to find out why because I like to get feedback. For some people, eating vegan food does feel radical. If you're a six-foot plus, 18-stone builder and you walk into a place like that, you don't look like everyone else in the room and maybe you feel like you don't fit in. But the funny thing is, even the building site is changing – when I offer to do a tea and coffee round on *DIY SOS*, they're asking me for fruit teas and rooibos!'

Inspired by his life-changing experience at the retreat, and keen to encourage others like him to make a similar change, Nick headed into his kitchen and started cooking. His appealing, accessible recipes now feature in his first cookbook, *Proper Healthy Food*. The book offers hearty fare such as meat-free versions of shepherd's pie and moussaka, as well as tofu pad thai and his vegan twist on nachos, but he really recommends trying his stew and herb dumplings (see recipe on

page 34) and his low sugar sweet and sour fruit crumble. 'A dollop of that with some vegan ice cream, that's about as good as it gets!' Nick laughs. 'I love experimenting with food and I enjoy cooking with spices and ingredients from all over the world, such as curries and Moroccan tagines, but my book only has stuff you can buy easily in the supermarket. I've also included recipes that are simple and fun to do – like my Marmite roast potatoes. The problem is that vegan bloggers can go on about chia seeds and coconut yogurt, but that's never going to catch on with the majority of people.'

'The thing is, I wanted to create a book of tasty, wholesome, hearty food that just happens to be vegan or veggie, in the hope that when people have got the book they

might decide to do meat-free Mondays at first. But then they like it and decide to do meat-free Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. And then they decide to just eat meat at weekends. That's fantastic – it's great for their health.'

After being married to a vegetarian for eight years, Nick understands the challenges and often disappointment of eating out as a veggie or vegan. 'I've always been an epicure; I love to go to nice restaurants. Let's face it though, most chefs are incredibly lazy when it comes to veggie food,' he says. 'You just know when you ask what the vegetarian option is they're going to say "we've got a lovely risotto" or it's some combination of goat's cheese and butternut squash. You do get fed up with it. I get frustrated for my

wife, and then when I became veggie myself I found it even more frustrating.'

More carrot, less steak

He says he's been criticised for championing a vegan and veggie lifestyle when he's not strictly one himself. But he's totally upfront about the fact he's not calling himself vegan or vegetarian, instead adopting a flexitarian, mostly plant-based approach. He believes being too 'all or nothing' about it can stop people from enjoying all the benefits that go with even a part-time veggie diet.

'The thing is, I know that a plant-based lifestyle is proven to be more healthy for you, and I'm eating about 80 per cent vegan, 15 per cent veggie. But I can't promise that if I have a few drinks on a night out and smell fried onions I won't have a cheeseburger on my way home,' he says. 'I've eaten meat only six or seven times in the last year, and I've had an egg sandwich or a cheese toastie on occasion, but I was eating these foods several times every day before. I'm not claiming to be a "proper" vegan, and I'm sorry if it upsets people who want everyone to be only one thing or another, but I think being too militant frightens people off from choosing to eat this way.'

Nick's enthusiasm for helping others take a similar step towards a healthier lifestyle is infectious, and his book is a refreshing alternative to the guilt-inducing clean-eating fad. 'It's really important to me that people feel encouraged but not bullied to make a change, even if they just start with one meal a week. I hope that someone of my size and shape doing a book like this will encourage more people to try it. Let's lead with more carrot and less stick – it might end up being more carrot and less steak that way.'

● *Proper Healthy Food by Nick Knowles (BBC Books, £14.99) is available now.*

NICK'S NO-NONSENSE HEARTY RECIPES

Man-up Caribbean veg curry and fresh roti V *

Go as spicy as you dare and work on your rotis – once you've got them right this is the bomb to serve any of your mates who are unsure about the veggie-vegan thing.

**Serves 6 | Prep 40 mins + resting
Cook 50 mins**

For the roti:

200g self-raising flour, plus extra for dusting
½ tsp fine salt
2 tsp black or brown sesame seeds
1 tbsp vegetable oil, plus extra for frying

PHOTOGRAPHY: ANDREW BURTON





MAN-UP
CARIBBEAN VEG
CURRY AND
FRESH ROTI

For the curry:

3 white potatoes, peeled and cubed
200g baby aubergines or 1 large, sliced
3 tbsp olive oil
3 shallots, sliced
1 red pepper, deseeded and sliced
1 yellow pepper, deseeded and sliced
3 cloves garlic, sliced
1 Scotch bonnet chilli, halved
1 tsp allspice
1 tsp cayenne pepper
1 tsp ground coriander
2 x 400g cans full-fat coconut milk
½ small pineapple, peeled, cored and cut into cubes
3 tbsp crunchy peanut butter
juice of 1 lime, plus extra wedges to serve
small bunch of coriander, roughly chopped
50g coconut flakes, toasted
salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Prepare the roti. Sift the flour and salt into a large mixing bowl and add the sesame seeds. Make a well in the centre and pour in the vegetable oil with 130ml warm water. Stir together, tip onto a clean work surface and knead for a few minutes or until smooth. Place in a lightly oiled bowl, cover with a clean tea towel and leave to rest for about 25–30 minutes.

2 Meanwhile, start on the curry. Preheat the oven to 180C/fan 160C/gas 4. Bring a large pan of lightly salted water to the boil, add the potatoes and cook for 15 minutes. Drain and set aside.

3 Place the aubergines on a roasting tray, drizzle with 2 tablespoons of the olive oil and toss together. Cook in the oven for 15–20 minutes or until soft.

4 In a casserole pot, heat the remaining oil over a medium heat. Add the shallots to the pan and cook gently for 5 minutes. Add the peppers, garlic and chilli to the pan and cook for a further 5 minutes. Stir through the spices and cook for a final minute. Add the potatoes and aubergines to the pan and pour over the coconut milk. Slowly, bring to the boil, reduce to a simmer and cook, uncovered, for 20 minutes.

5 Remove the chilli halves, then stir through the pineapple, peanut butter, lime juice and coriander. Taste and adjust the seasoning to your liking.

6 Divide the roti dough into 8 pieces and roll out into rounds on a lightly floured surface. Heat a non-stick griddle pan over a medium heat until almost smoking. Add the floured roti to the pan, one at a time. Cook for 2 minutes on each side or until puffed up and slightly charred.

■ **PER SERVING** 683 cals, fat 44.3g, sat fat 26.7g, carbs 60.6g, sugars 13.3g, protein 11.4g, salt 1.9g, fibre 10g

RICH LENTIL
BOLOGNESE



Rich lentil Bolognese *

This is man's best friend, recipe wise, only swapping the mince for lentils. That said, you do have to work to make lentils interesting, as they can be about as appetising as cardboard, but I think you'll be surprised at how good this Bolognese is.

Serves 4 | Prep 15 mins | Cook 50 mins

2 tbsp olive oil
1 large onion, finely diced
2 carrots, peeled and diced into 5mm pieces
2 celery sticks, diced into 5mm pieces
½ tbsp fresh or dried oregano, finely chopped
3–4 rosemary sprigs
3–4 thyme sprigs
1 clove garlic, crushed
200ml full-bodied red wine
400g can green lentils, rinsed and drained
2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes
1 tbsp tomato purée

2 tsp sugar
1 bay leaf
360g dried spaghetti (or other pasta of your choice)
salt and freshly ground black pepper
grated vegetarian Parmesan-style cheese, to serve (optional)
basil leaves, to serve

1 Heat the olive oil in a large saucepan over a low heat and add in the onion along with a pinch of salt and splash of water, then sweat for 10 minutes until really soft.

2 Stir through the carrots, celery and oregano. Tie the rosemary and thyme stems together with kitchen string and add to the pot. Continue to cook, over a low heat, for a further 15 minutes.

3 Stir through the garlic and soften for a further minute before pouring in the red wine. Simmer until the liquid has reduced by half, 1–2 minutes. Next, tip in the lentils, chopped tomatoes, tomato purée and sugar.

Season well and bring the pot to the boil. Nestle in the bay leaf and reduce to a simmer. Cook, uncovered, for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the sauce has thickened slightly.

4 Meanwhile, bring a large pan of salted water to the boil and cook the pasta for 6–8 minutes until *al dente*, then drain.

5 Remove the herb bundle from the sauce and pour the Bolognese over the drained pasta and toss to coat it well. Serve with Parmesan (if using) and basil leaves scattered over.

■ PER SERVING 601 cals, fat 10.9g, sat fat 3g, carbs 95.3g, sugars 18.7g, protein 23g, salt 1.3g, fibre 11.2g

go vegan

V This Bolognese sauce is vegan; just swap the serving of Parmesan-style cheese for a dairy-free option, such as VBites Hard Italian Style Cheezly.

Winter veggie stew with wholesome lumpy dumplings *

This is one of my favourite recipes and the family get me to make this all the time. It's a big rich thick stew for the winter with lovely cheesy herby dumplings, easy to make, healthy, wholesome and a proper chunky feed. When you bung the veg into the stock, throw in a bouquet garni – you can buy these on the herb shelf in the supermarket, it's like a teabag of herbs – not very cool amongst chefs but it delivers the right amount of herby flavour without someone ending up with an inedible leaf or twig in their mouths. And chestnuts are great. We don't eat them much in this country, but they are easy to find in all big supermarkets, healthy, tasty and good for you and makes the meat-free stew really hearty.

**Serves 6 | Prep 30 mins
Cook 50 mins**

For the dumplings:

50g butter, softened
125g self-raising flour
40g vegetarian Cheddar, crumbled
1 tbsp thyme leaves

For the stew:

3 tbsp olive oil
1 large onion, roughly diced
2 celery sticks, roughly diced

3 tbsp plain flour
1 tbsp Marmite
½ tbsp tomato purée
2 litres hot vegetable stock
3 carrots, peeled and chopped into chunky pieces
4 parsnips, peeled and chopped into chunky pieces
450g swede, peeled and chopped into chunky pieces
500g sweet potatoes, peeled and chopped into chunky pieces
2–3 rosemary sprigs, plus extra, chopped, to sprinkle
1 bouquet garni
150g orzo pasta
80g pack cooked chestnuts, roughly chopped
salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Start by making the dumplings. Rub the butter into the flour and mix with the Cheddar and thyme. Add just enough cold water to bring the mixture together to a soft dough and divide into 6 small dumplings.

2 Preheat the oven to 190C/fan 170C/gas 5. Heat the oil in a large casserole

dish and fry the onion and celery over a low heat for 10 minutes, until soft and translucent. Add the flour into the pan, whisking constantly to make a roux. Add in the Marmite and tomato purée followed by the stock, a glug at a time, whisking all the while to make a smooth base to the stew.

3 Throw the carrots, parsnips, swede, sweet potatoes, rosemary and bouquet garni into the dish and bring to the boil. Cook the stew, with the lid off, for 5–7 minutes. The vegetables should be cooking nicely but still have a bite to them.

4 Rinse the orzo pasta well, in a sieve, and then pour into the casserole along with the chopped chestnuts. Season well and place the dumplings on top of the casserole. Sprinkle over a little chopped rosemary and bake in the oven, with the lid off, for 20–30 minutes, until the dumplings are puffed up and nicely cooked and the vegetables are tender.

■ PER SERVING 460 cals, fat 18.7g, sat fat 7g, carbs 65.8g, sugars 12.1g, protein 13.5g, salt 6.3g, fibre 10g



WINTER VEGGIE STEW
WITH WHOLESOME
LUMPY DUMPLINGS



Recipes adapted from *Proper Healthy Food* by Nick Knowles (BBC Books, £14.99). Photography by Andrew Burton.

Delicious dinners to go!

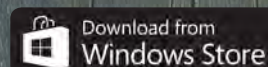
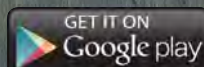
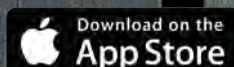
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PAGE 54

PHOTOGRAPH: LAURA EDWARDS

EVERYDAY EATS

We're sure to have plenty of what you fancy, from easy chickpea suppers to authentic pizzas and stylish toasted sandwiches.

COOKING WITH CHICKPEAS

Handy, filling and budget-friendly, Kathryn Bruton shows how a tin of nutty-flavoured chickpeas can make easy and tasty suppers.

Pomegranate, carrot and chickpea braise

Pomegranate molasses is fabulously sweet and sour and with the spicy chilli and salty feta, this easy-to-put-together dish is a real winner!

Serves 4 | Prep 10 mins
Cook 30 mins

3 tbsp olive oil
1 medium onion, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
3 medium carrots, peeled and diced
1 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped, plus extra to serve (optional)
3 sprigs of thyme, leaves picked
3 tbsp pomegranate molasses
2 x 400g cans chickpeas, drained and water reserved
1 courgette, diced
1 tsp sumac
100g pomegranate seeds
sea salt and black pepper
70g vegetarian feta, crumbled
fresh mint leaves, to garnish

1 Heat the olive oil in a deep frying pan or saucepan and sauté the onion, garlic, carrot, chilli and thyme for about 10 minutes, stirring from time to time.

2 Stir in the pomegranate molasses, followed by the chickpeas and reserved chickpea water. Simmer for 10 minutes. Now add the courgette and cook for a further 5 minutes. The sauce should have thickened slightly and be coating the chickpeas and vegetables.

3 Remove from the heat and add the sumac and pomegranate seeds. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve garnished with the feta, fresh mint and some freshly sliced chilli, if you like a bit of extra heat!

■ PER SERVING 372 cals, fat 16.1g, sat fat 4.1g, carbs 43.9g, sugars 23.8g, protein 14g, salt 1.6g, fibre 12.4g

govegan

V This braise is just as delicious without the cheese, or try Sheese Greek Style if you want to add a feta-type flavour.

Chana sundal flatbreads with raita and rocket

Sundal is a South Indian snack, made of chickpeas and spices. I remember eating it and wondering how on earth chickpeas could taste so amazing! Traditionally, you will find it served in little paper cones, but I've stuffed it into some soft flatbreads, with a little raita to cool the spice. If the idea of making your own raita and flatbreads is too much effort for a weekday meal, simply buy both.

Serves 4 | Prep 30 mins | Cook 15 mins

For the coriander and ginger flatbreads:
135ml milk
40g butter
225g plain flour
sea salt and black pepper
15g coriander, finely chopped
10g fresh root ginger, coarsely grated

For the raita:
1 whole cucumber, grated



POMEGRANATE, CARROT AND CHICKPEA BRAISE

1 tsp salt
200g natural yogurt
½ tsp dried mint
zest and juice of ½ lime
freshly ground black pepper
a few sprigs of fresh mint, to garnish

For the chana sundal:
3 tbsp groundnut oil
½ tsp black mustard seeds
1 tsp cumin seeds
2 dried chillies, broken up
1 tsp ground coriander
1 tsp ground ginger
6 dried curry leaves
2 x 400g cans chickpeas, drained and rinsed
juice of ½ lemon
½ tsp each of sea salt and black pepper
90g coconut, finely chopped in a food processor
100g rocket, to serve

govegan

V Replace the flatbreads with a dairy-free option like pitta bread, and make the raita with a plain soya yogurt.



CHANA SUNDAL
FLATBREADS
WITH RAITA
AND ROCKET

1 Begin by preparing the flatbreads. Place the milk and butter in a small saucepan, and heat until the butter has melted. Weigh the flour into a medium bowl and add a generous pinch of salt and pepper. Make a well in the centre and pour in the milk and butter mixture. Mix until the dough starts to come together, then tip onto a lightly floured surface and knead gently until smooth. This only takes a minute or two.

2 Roll the dough into a log shape and slice into 4 pieces. Take one of the balls of dough and gently flatten it out. Mix the coriander and ginger together and scatter 1 teaspoon of it onto the dough. Fold in half, then in half again, then fold all the sides underneath, giving you a smooth round ball. Roll out until it is as thin as a tortilla.

3 Place a large frying pan onto a high heat and when it is really hot add the flatbread. Cook for a minute or so (it will start to puff up). When nicely charred, turn and cook for another minute or two. Transfer onto one half of a clean tea towel, and fold the other half over the top, covering the bread. This locks in the heat and keeps it soft. Repeat with the remaining dough.

4 For the raita, mix the grated cucumber with the salt and place in a sieve suspended over a bowl. Place a plate with something heavy on top to weigh it down, and set aside while you make the chana sundal. When ready, squeeze any excess liquid from the cucumber, and return to a clean bowl with the yogurt, dried mint, and lime zest and juice. Mix together and season with a generous pinch of pepper. It is unlikely you will need any salt, but add some if you feel it needs it. Garnish with some freshly torn mint.

5 For the chickpea sundal, heat the oil in a deep frying pan. When hot, add the mustard and cumin seeds. Fry them until they start to splatter and pop, about 30 seconds or so. Add the dried chillies, ground coriander and ginger, and curry leaves, and fry for another 30 seconds or so, stirring all the time.

6 Now add the chickpeas – the pan should still be hot enough to make them sizzle. Stir to get the heat through them, then add the lemon juice, salt and pepper. Cook for about a minute, add the coconut, stir through and fry for a minute more. Taste for seasoning and adjust if necessary.

7 To serve, place a generous handful of rocket onto each wrap, followed by a spoonful of raita and the chana sundal.

COOK'S TIP Ready-prepared coconut can be bought in most big supermarkets.

■ **PER SERVING** 596 cals, fat 30.9g, sat fat 15.5g, carbs 62.9g, sugars 9.2g, protein 17.6g, salt 3.7g, fibre 10.2g

AUBERGINE AND COURGETTE
TEMPURA WITH HUMMUS



Aubergine and courgette tempura with hummus

Tempura is remarkably easy to do, and a great way to get veggies into kids too. I'm quite discerning about hummus. I like it smooth, packed with flavour, and not too oily. Here, I have only used one tablespoon of oil, choosing to use the more nutritious and flavoursome chickpea water instead.

Serves 4 | Prep 20 mins | Cook 15 mins

For the hummus:

400g can chickpeas, drained and water reserved

2 tbsp tahini

juice of 1½ lemons (about 45ml)

1 small clove garlic, finely grated

1 tbsp chickpea water, reserved from the can

1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

generous pinch of sea salt and black pepper
 1 tsp cumin seeds
 1 tsp sumac
 chilli oil
 a few sprigs of coriander

For the vegetable tempura:

1.5–2 litres sunflower or vegetable oil
 3 aubergines
 3 courgettes
 50g natural yogurt
 juice of ½ lemon
 sea salt and black pepper
 150g semolina
 1 tbsp cornflour
 1½ tbsp za'atar

1 To make the hummus, place the chickpeas, tahini, lemon juice, garlic, chickpea water, olive oil, salt and pepper into a small food processor (use a hand-held blender if you have one) and blitz until smooth. Taste for seasoning, spoon into a serving bowl and garnish with the cumin seeds, sumac, chilli oil and a few sprigs of coriander.

2 To make the tempura, pour the oil into a large saucepan and place on a medium heat. It takes a while to get hot, but keep an eye on it. When ready, you will see it almost begin to swirl in the pan. Test the heat by gently dropping in a piece of bread – when it sizzles and browns quickly, it is ready. When this happens, turn the heat down a little.

3 Meanwhile, slice the aubergines and courgettes into long strips. Mix the yogurt and lemon juice together on a large baking tray. Toss the vegetables in the yogurt mix so that they are all coated, then season with a little salt and pepper.

4 On another baking tray, mix together the semolina, cornflour and za'atar along with a generous pinch of salt and pepper. When you are ready to make the tempura, work in batches, dipping the veg into the semolina mixture and thoroughly coating it. Deep-fry a few at a time, depending on the size of your pan; it is important not to overcrowd it. Cook for no more than 30–45 seconds, then drain on kitchen towel.

5 Serve the tempura on a big platter with the hummus on the side for dipping.

COOK'S TIP Za'atar is a Northern African spice blend that you can buy ready-made in supermarkets. You can use other veg for the tempura, such as asparagus, beetroot, cauliflower and broccoli, and raita makes a lovely cooling dip too.

■ PER SERVING 596 cals, fat 35.7g, sat fat 4g, carbs 54.1g, sugars 7.2g, protein 15.7g, salt 1.9g, fibre 13.9g

govegan

V For your tempura batter, swap the dairy yogurt for a soya or coconut-based one.

MUSHROOM, ASPARAGUS AND CHICKPEA SOCCA PIZZA



Mushroom, asparagus and chickpea socca pizza

This is such a great little recipe for making a gluten-free pizza, and it's bursting with flavour and goodness! If you have time, allow the batter to stand for about 30 minutes before using, or make it the night before.

Makes 4 pizzas | Prep 10 mins | Cook 20 mins

200g chickpea (gram) flour
 300ml water
 1 tbsp olive oil
 sea salt and black pepper
 pinch of chilli flakes (optional), plus extra to garnish
 35g butter
 250g portobello mushrooms, sliced
 2 cloves garlic, finely sliced
 125g fine asparagus
 100g canned chickpeas, drained and rinsed

250g soft ricotta
 zest of ½ lemon (optional), plus extra to garnish
 small bunch of parsley, leaves picked

1 First make the batter. Whisk together the chickpea flour, water, olive oil, salt, pepper and chilli flakes until smooth. Set aside until needed.

2 Place a frying pan on a medium heat and melt the butter. Fry the mushrooms and garlic for 3–4 minutes, until starting to soften. Add the asparagus and fry for another 3 minutes. Add the chickpeas, along with a generous pinch of salt and pepper.

3 Preheat the grill to its highest setting, and swirl a little olive oil around an ovenproof frying pan. Place the pan under the grill and, after a few minutes when the oil is very hot, remove and very carefully pour in enough batter to coat the base. Place back under the

grill and allow to cook for about 5 minutes, or until the socca is golden brown. Flip over and cook on the other side for a minute or so, then remove from the oven, set aside and keep warm. Repeat the same process with the remaining batter. You can make up to 4 pizzas.

4 Mix the ricotta with the lemon zest and spread generous spoonfuls all over each socca pizza base. Divide the mushroom, asparagus and chickpea

mixture between each pizza, drizzle with a little olive oil, and season with salt and pepper. Return to the grill and cook for a few minutes, just enough to heat the ricotta and crisp up the chickpeas.

5 Garnish each pizza with parsley leaves, and some extra chilli flakes and lemon zest.

■ PER PIZZA 390 cals, fat 20.8g, sat fat 9.9g, carbs 30.8g, sugars 4.4g, protein 20.6g, salt 1.7g, fibre 10.3g

Chickpea curry with spinach and mustard seeds

This is a very delicate but full flavoured dish, which couldn't be simpler to put together.

Serves 4 | Prep 10 mins | Cook 20 mins

150g basmati rice
2 medium onions, quartered
30g fresh root ginger
3 cloves garlic
2 dried red chillies
1½ tbsp ghee or groundnut oil
1 tsp cumin seeds
1 tsp black mustard seeds
6 dried curry leaves
2 x 400g cans chickpeas, drained, reserving 100ml water
100g spinach, shredded
100ml natural yogurt
1 tsp garam masala
large bunch of coriander, roughly chopped
mango chutney and poppadoms, to serve

1 Cook the rice according to packet instructions.

2 In a food processor, blitz the onion, ginger, garlic and dried chillies to a rough paste and set aside.

3 Heat the ghee or oil in a deep frying pan and add the cumin seeds, mustard seeds and curry leaves. When the seeds begin to pop, add the paste and fry, stirring often, for 5–7 minutes. Add the chickpeas, chickpea water and spinach, and heat through for a couple of minutes until the spinach has wilted.

4 Stir in the yogurt and cook gently; at this point it is important not to boil the mixture, as the yogurt will split. Add the garam masala and coriander, stir through, then serve with the cooked rice, mango chutney and poppadoms.

■ PER SERVING 522 cals, fat 17.7g, sat fat 3.3g, carbs 73.7g, sugars 16.2g, protein 18g, salt 0.8g, fibre 11.5g

govegan

V To make your curry vegan, simply opt for the groundnut for frying and replace the dairy yogurt with a plain soya variety.



CHICKPEA CURRY WITH SPINACH AND MUSTARD SEEDS

Halloumi, spinach and chickpea puff pastry parcels

An ideal speedy supper, all these delicious little parcels need is a generous helping of lightly dressed salad leaves to accompany.

Serves 4 | Prep 15 mins | Cook 15 mins

200g spinach
100g vegetarian halloumi, roughly chopped
100g vegetarian feta, crumbled
100g canned chickpeas, rinsed and drained
100g pomegranate seeds
28g coriander, roughly chopped
3 tbsp pomegranate molasses
1 tbsp olive oil
1½ tsp sumac
sea salt and black pepper
2 sheets all-butter ready-made puff pastry
1 free-range egg, whisked with a little milk
mixed baby salad leaves, to serve

1 Wash and drain the spinach and place in a large frying pan on a medium heat. Wilt, stirring a few times, then transfer to a sieve and allow to cool while you get on with everything else.

2 Preheat the oven to 200C/fan 180C/gas 6. Mix together the halloumi, feta, chickpeas, pomegranate seeds, coriander, pomegranate molasses, olive oil and sumac. When cool enough to handle, squeeze as much liquid from the spinach as possible, then roughly chop. Add to the halloumi mixture and stir so that everything is evenly mixed. Season with salt and pepper and set aside.

3 Cut out 4 large squares from the sheets of puff pastry, each measuring about 15cm x 15cm. Place one square on a baking tray and return the others to the fridge to keep them cold while you work. Place a generous spoonful of the chickpea mixture into the centre of the pastry square and fold each corner over the mixture, bringing it together in the centre. Brush with a little of the egg wash, then repeat with the remaining pastry.

4 Bake for 10–15 minutes, or until the pastry is golden brown and crisp. Serve with a lightly dressed salad.

■ PER SERVING 682 cals, fat 42.7g, sat fat 21.1g, carbs 53.7g, sugars 18.6g, protein 21.4g, salt 3.5g, fibre 7.3g



MASTERCLASS WITH GENNARO CONTALDO

How to... Make your own pizza

The humble pizza has certainly conquered the world and can be found almost everywhere nowadays, wherever you might be. This simple dough-based treat topped with all sorts of delicious ingredients is loved by all – kids and adults alike – always a favourite for an informal evening out, children's parties, as well as street food or quite simply to enjoy at home.

The origins of pizza are not known for certain, except that it originated as street food in Naples. In fact, it probably started as a type of flatbread, which bakers used to test the heat of the oven before baking the daily loaves. To add a little flavour, the bakers would top the flatbreads with some lard, salt, garlic and herbs. With the introduction of tomatoes in the 1700s, this street food for the poor evolved. It was also a great way for housewives to use up bits of leftovers from the kitchen and top bread dough to make the meal go further.

A century later, a Neapolitan pizza maker created a pizza for Queen Margherita using ingredients of the same colour as the Italian flag for its topping – tomatoes, mozzarella, basil. The Queen loved it, the combination had been a success and that is apparently how pizza Margherita came about. Whether this story is true or not, pizza Margherita is still made and loved the world over and its ingredients used as a basic topping for many other pizzas.



Basic pizza dough V

Makes 2 round 32cm diameter pizzas

10g fresh yeast
325ml lukewarm water
500g strong white bread flour
2 tsp sea salt

MIX THE DOUGH Lightly flour a flat baking tray. Dissolve the yeast in the lukewarm water. Mix the flour and salt together on a clean work surface, then gradually stir in the yeast mixture to make a dough.

KNEAD UNTIL SMOOTH Knead the dough for 10 minutes, cover with a cloth and leave to rest for 10 minutes. Divide the dough into the required number of pieces and knead each for 2 minutes.

LEAVE TO RISE Place on the prepared baking tray, cover with a cloth and leave to rise in a warm place for 1 hour, or until doubled in size. Use as directed for your recipe.

STORING THE DOUGH The dough will keep in your fridge or freezer for when you need it.





HOW TO USE YOUR PIZZA DOUGH

A great way to use your homemade dough is to make these tasty pizzettes, perfect for smaller appetites, lunch boxes or to enable you to offer a variety of toppings for a crowd.

Pizzette alla Margherita *

MINI PIZZAS WITH TOMATO, MOZZARELLA AND BASIL

Mini *pizzette* are so common in Italian bakeries and takeaways to have as food on the go. This traditional topping of pizza Margherita is always a winner.

**Makes 5 pizzette | Prep 25 mins + proving
Cook 10 mins**

½ quantity of basic pizza dough

For the topping:

6 tbsp tomato passata (strained tomatoes)
extra-virgin olive oil, for drizzling
sea salt

1 ball vegetarian mozzarella, drained and
roughly chopped
a few basil leaves

1 Make the pizza dough. Lightly flour several large flat baking trays. Divide the dough into 5 equal pieces, about 80g each and knead each one for 2 minutes. Form into balls, cover with a cloth, and leave to rest in a warm place for about 1 hour, or until doubled in size.

2 Preheat the oven to 240C/fan 220C/gas 9. Combine the tomato passata with a drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil and some salt to taste.

3 Roll out the balls of dough into small rounds, about 10cm in diameter, and place on the prepared baking trays. Spread a little tomato mixture onto each *pizzetta*, top with the mozzarella, a couple of basil leaves and a drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil. Bake in the oven for about 10 minutes.

■ PER PIZZETTE 236 cals, fat 4.8g, sat fat 3g, carbs 39.9g, sugars 1.6g, protein 9.1g, salt 2.4g, fibre 2.4g



PIZZETTE ALLA MARGHERITA

GENNARO'S TOP TIPS FOR PIZZA MAKING

- Knead the dough well so it becomes elastic and smooth.
- Make the base as thin as you can.
- Use tomato passata instead of canned tomatoes as this is ready-sieved.
- Beware of adding too much tomato sauce as this will make the pizza soggy.
- Drizzle a little extra-virgin olive oil over the base and topping to help it crisp up.
- Ensure the oven is hot and reaches its temperature before baking the pizza.

Pizzette alla scapece

MINI PIZZAS TOPPED WITH COURGETTE AND MINT

Scapece is a southern Italian way of cooking courgettes giving them an extra kick with an infusion of mint and vinegar, then lightly deep-frying before serving them as a salad. It also makes a lovely, different pizza topping.

Makes 5 pizzette

Prep 25 mins + proving and marinating

Cook 10 mins

½ quantity of basic pizza dough

For the topping:

360g courgette, finely sliced

vegetable oil, for deep-frying

2 tsp chopped mint leaves

1 clove garlic, finely chopped

1 tbsp white wine vinegar

1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

sea salt

1 Make the pizza dough. Lightly flour several large flat baking trays. Divide the dough into 5 equal pieces, about 80g each and knead each one for 2 minutes. Form into balls, cover with a cloth, and leave to rest in a warm place for about

1 hour, or until doubled in size.

2 Heat some vegetable oil in a deep pan over a medium-high heat, add the courgettes and deep-fry until golden brown on both sides. Drain on kitchen towel. Mix the mint, garlic, vinegar, extra-virgin olive oil and a little salt together, then pour over the courgettes and leave to infuse for 30 minutes.

3 Preheat the oven to 240C/fan 220C/gas 9. Form each piece of dough into small rounds, about 10cm in diameter, and top with the courgettes. Bake in the oven for about 10 minutes.

■ **PER PIZZETTE** 253 cals, fat 7.6g, sat fat 1.2g, carbs 40.1g, sugars 1.5g, protein 6.4g, salt 2.2g, fibre 2.9g



Recipes adapted from *Gennaro's Italian Bakery* by Gennaro Contaldo (Pavilion, £20). Photography by Dan Jones.



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Suma

What's in your wine?

There's a growing interest in natural winemaking, with producers of raw, biodynamic and organic wines keen to be more transparent about their ingredients and manufacturing processes than big-brand manufacturers, which is great news for veggies and vegans.

WORDS: JON BENNETT

Asking questions about wine can feel a daunting business to some people, but if you're a vegetarian the bottom line is simple: if you don't make the effort to find out what goes into your bottle you could well end up drinking a product that has been sieved through fish guts. Don't fancy the sound of that? Well, instead of using fish bladders to 'fine' their wine – a process which makes the liquid look clear and stabilises the product against unwanted flavours and aromas – other manufacturers use gelatin, milk protein or egg whites during the production of their wines.

I can't guess how many vegetarians and vegans are aware that drinking fermented grape juice can involve ingesting pork, egg, fish or milk, but it seems astounding in 2017 – when so many of us demand to know the provenance of every product we buy – that there is no legislation forcing winemakers to indicate on their bottles how their wine is made, whether it's organic and if it's vegan or vegetarian.

It's only natural

Start looking for alternatives, though, and you'll soon discover a growing counterculture in the natural wine movement. Natural wine

doesn't have an officially recognised definition, but its core ethos is based on the small-scale manufacture of organic and preservative-free wine in vineyards with minimal intervention. Some of the growing number of natural wine fans say this is viticulture as it should be, using ancient methods to produce drinks with a true sense of place that, due to the lack of preservatives, are far better for you. Detractors say they're overpriced, inconsistent and at their worst taste like something that is truly animalistic because they have the distinct whiff of the farmyard.

You can find out for yourself if you take a trip to the Raw Wine Fair, the annual get-together for the leading manufacturers and importers of natural wine, which takes place in London on 12–13 March. In addition, the good news for non-meat-eaters is that nearly every wine on offer is vegan and all of the winemakers who take part will happily share every detail about what goes into their product.

The fair was created in 2012 by Isabelle Legeron, a London-based French-born Master of Wine who has been a driving force for the natural wine movement over the last decade. While Isabelle believes natural wine



Isabelle Legeron, the driving force behind the natural wine movement



is a superior choice on multiple levels, she makes clear that it's the lack of transparency about what is involved in the making of wine that is her fundamental concern. 'I started this project because when I was asking wine suppliers questions about how their wine was manufactured they literally couldn't give me any answers. If I wanted to know if they'd added yeast or how it had been filtered no one could tell me. I thought if that's the situation we are in when I'm speaking to people in the trade, then the consumer



doesn't stand a chance. And it's all down to the lack of labelling laws.'

Isabelle introduced a system at the Raw Wine Fair that gives the background on where the wine is produced, how much sulphite is added and if they use any filters. She says they remain the only fair that forces their suppliers to provide this information. Sulphites are regularly used by large-scale manufacturers as an anti-viral, an antioxidant and a way to control yeast, but Isabelle says the impact on the wine is profound. 'Natural wine is a living product literally; there's a bacterial population in the wine and that microbiology is only there because the suppliers haven't used anything to affect it. If you start using sulphites, then you kill a little bit of the native population and to me that is the *terroir*. And that's why to me the vineyard has to be farmed at the very minimum organically, with as little added or improved in the cellar as possible.'

From vineyard to table

The path that led Isabelle to natural wine began in childhood. She grew up on a vineyard in Cognac and saw the impact that industrial practices had on the way her family farmed. 'When I was little my grandparents used hand harvesters, but as I grew up I saw my parents turn more and more to machinery and chemicals. They started to spray really heavily and like many people of that generation they did a lot of damage. I don't blame them; they were being sold the dream that those products were going to help and that they could have more time off.'

She says she had no intention of working in the wine industry – she had moved to London to work in publishing – but the



PHOTOGRAPHY: TOM MOGGACH



Tasting natural wines at the Raw Wine Fair

What is 'natural' wine?

Natural farming techniques and low-intervention vinification

There is no single definition of what makes a wine 'natural' and nor is there a taste that is common to all natural wines. In the broadest sense, these wines are made with as little interference in the fermentation process as possible. Unlike large-scale commercial wineries, natural wines don't use additives to keep the wines stable or add chemicals to 'correct' the tannin structure, acidity or alcohol strength. This includes organic wine that is made from grapes grown without herbicides and pesticides. Biodynamic wines take that one step further and combine organic growing with the lunar cycle to determine the best days for planting and harvesting. Isabelle accepts both types of wine into the Raw Wine Fair and also publishes a 10-point charter that outlines what is expected from producers who attend the event.

Taste and looks

In terms of taste, detractors often use terms like 'funk' to describe the more extreme flavours of some natural wines, although equally a slight whiff of mould can be the element that some enthusiasts love most about them. While some of the wines are unfiltered, making them cloudier, many vegetarian options use bentonite clay or pea protein to 'fine' their wines and these bottles will be as clean and smooth as any traditional wine.

Price tag

Natural wines are made in smaller quantities and the entry-level price is higher than a bottle of big-brand supermarket plonk. Isabelle, though, dismisses claims they are in any way overpriced. 'They are more expensive but that's a weird term. If you have a wine that is made in tiny quantities by loads of people then it's going to be worth more than something made on a conveyor belt. A lot of natural wines are much cheaper than stuff put out by big brands at £50 or £60 where you are paying for the marketing budget.'



premature death of her father led her to re-evaluate what she wanted to do with her life. 'My father died of lung cancer when he was 60 as a result of all the pesticides. I started to think a lot about my upbringing and farming, and started to train myself in wine. Very quickly I became disillusioned by the wine industry because it was like seeing my parents farming - it was all about money and numbers. I wondered if I was in the wrong industry, but slowly I started meeting growers who were different and it led me to discover small-scale suppliers who worked in a new way. The natural wine community then was an underworld but a very well connected one.'

It's significantly better known now, with the Raw Wine Fair holding events in Vienna, Berlin and New York and plans to expand to California. The wines feature in more restaurants than ever before - Isabelle has advised on the wine lists for both Elliot's and Hibiscus in London - and while they can be tricky to find in supermarkets they are easily available online.

Isabelle is clearly optimistic about the growing interest in natural wines but stresses there is a long way to go. 'There are big brands in Australia which do multi-regional blending. They'll buy grapes from all over Australia and blend it and then pretend there is a sense of *terroir* or identity. There isn't. I think these manufacturers should be able to do what they want, but the issue is we don't know anything about their production methods. My view is we should all be farming organically because we don't need grapes to survive - this is a luxury industry - but the main issue is that we have no idea what producers are doing. I want to know what I'm drinking, so if people want to use fish derivatives to make wine then in my view they need to tell people. It's that simple.'



TASTING SESSION

We've got three pairs of tickets for the London Raw Wine Fair to give away to three lucky readers. To enter, go to www.vegetarianliving.co.uk. Competition closes 27 February 2017.



The Raw Wine Fair takes place on 12-13 March. For tickets, go to www.rawwine.com.



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DELICIOUSLY
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Posh toast



For those days when you want a fuss-free supper, try one of Diana Henry's smart ideas for something simply delicious on toast.



Carrot hummus, roast tomatoes and harissa yogurt with toasted sourdough

This makes more hummus than you need for a meal, but it's a real pain to use only half a can of anything. Keep the rest of the hummus in the fridge, where it will last for about three days. The tomatoes are really useful to have in the fridge, too. I often cook double quantities of them; they're great on toast with labneh, eggs or mashed avocado.

Serves 4 | Prep 10 mins | Cook 45 mins

For the roast tomatoes:

8 plum tomatoes
2 tbsp olive oil
½ tbsp balsamic vinegar
2 tsp harissa
sea salt and black pepper
1 tsp soft light brown sugar

For the hummus and yogurt:

250g carrots, peeled and chopped
400g can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
200ml extra-virgin olive oil
3½ tbsp tahini
juice of 1½ lemons
½ tsp cayenne pepper
1 tsp ground cumin
250g Greek yogurt
1 tbsp harissa

4 slices of sourdough bread

1 Preheat the oven to 190C/fan 170C/gas 5. Halve the tomatoes lengthways and put in a small roasting tin or an ovenproof dish; they need to fit fairly snugly in a single layer. Mix together the regular olive oil, vinegar, harissa and some seasoning and pour this over the tomatoes. Turn the tomatoes over to coat



CARROT HUMMUS, ROAST TOMATOES AND HARISSA YOGURT WITH TOASTED SOURDOUGH

them in oil, then rearrange them cut-sides up. Sprinkle over the sugar and roast for 40–45 minutes, or until shrunken and sweet.

2 Cook the carrots in boiling water until they're tender. Drain, reserving some cooking liquid, then whizz in a food processor with everything else except the yogurt, harissa and bread. Add some of the cooking water if you need it, to make the purée a little thinner. Scrape into a bowl.

3 Stir the yogurt to loosen it, put it into a bowl and spoon on the harissa. Toast the bread and serve it with the hummus, tomatoes and yogurt.

■ PER SERVING 901 cals, fat 71.2g, sat fat 13.5g, carbs 50.6g, sugars 15.4g, protein 17.8g, salt 2.2g, fibre 13g

govegan

V Swap the Greek yogurt for a plain soya variety, to serve with your carrot hummus.

PHOTOGRAPHY: LAURA EDWARDS

Spiced avocado with black beans, sour cream and cheese on toast

Avocado toast has almost become a cliché – I’ve lost count of the ways I’ve seen it prepared – but it’s also irresistible (and good for you). This makes a bit more of the avo-on-toast theme. Remember that the key to any avo toast is good seasoning.

Serves 4 | Prep/cook 20 mins

For the black beans:

1 tbsp olive oil
½ onion, finely chopped
1 red pepper, deseeded and chopped into small squares
2 cloves garlic, crushed
½ tsp ground cumin
75ml vegetable stock
25ml orange juice
sea salt and black pepper
400g can black beans, drained and rinsed
juice of ½ lime

For the toasts:

4 slices of sourdough bread
1 clove garlic
4 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
4 small, ripe avocados
juice of 1–2 limes (depending on how juicy they are)
2 red chillies, deseeded and finely sliced
4 spring onions, finely chopped
4 tbsp sour cream

2 tbsp roughly chopped coriander leaves
4 tbsp vegetarian feta or Wensleydale cheese, crumbled

1 Make the beans first. Heat the regular olive oil in a saucepan over a medium heat and sauté the onion and pepper until the onion softens. Add the garlic and cumin and cook for another 2 minutes. Pour on the stock, orange juice and seasoning and cook over a low heat until the vegetables are tender. Add the beans, season, heat through and add the lime juice.

2 Toast the bread and rub it with the garlic. Drizzle with a little of the extra-virgin olive oil, then scoop out the avocado flesh and spread it roughly on top. Season, drizzle with the rest of the extra-virgin olive oil, squeeze on some lime juice and scatter with chillies and spring onions.

3 Top with the black beans and serve with sour cream and coriander, sprinkling on the cheese.

■ PER SERVING 437 cals, fat 24.3g, sat fat 7.9g, carbs 41.8g, sugars 6.4g, protein 13.9g, salt 2.2g, fibre 8.6g





Mumbai toastie

Oh, my. My friend Roopa Gulati told me about these – they're sold as street food in Mumbai – and I was a bit sceptical about cheese with spices, but these toasties now make a regular appearance in my house. They're perfect for those nights when you're craving Indian food, but don't want to splash out on a takeaway. A great telly-watching supper. You'll want a cold beer.

Serves 1 | Prep/cook 20 mins

For the fresh chutney:

½ green chilli, deseeded and chopped
handful of coriander leaves
leaves from 8 sprigs of mint, torn
1 clove garlic, crushed
sea salt flakes
½ tsp caster sugar
juice of ½ lemon

For the sandwich:

2 slices of white bread

50g vegetarian Cheddar, Lancashire or Wensleydale cheese, grated or very finely sliced

1 tomato, sliced

¼ small red onion, very finely sliced

pinch of ground cumin

pinch of ground coriander

pinch of ground ginger

pinch of ground cinnamon

unsalted butter

¼ tbsp vegetable oil (optional)

1 Put everything for the chutney, except the lemon juice, in a mortar and pound it with the pestle. You can just chop everything together instead, but the chutney is better if it has had a good pounding. Add the lemon juice.

2 Spread the chutney over both slices of the bread. Lay the cheese, tomato and onion on one of them and sprinkle with the spices. Top with the other piece of bread.

3 If you have a toastie maker, use it, buttering the outside of the sandwich as usual, or melt a knob of butter and the oil in a frying pan and cook it over a medium heat for about 3 minutes on each side, weighing it down (I use a flat saucepan lid with a heavy can on top). Be careful not to burn the sandwich, and adjust the heat accordingly. The cheese should melt. Serve immediately.

■ PER SERVING 517 cals, fat 27.1g, sat fat 13.9g, carbs 46.6g, sugars 9.8g, protein 22.2g, salt 2.7g, fibre 5.3g



Recipes adapted from *Simple* by Diana Henry (Mitchell Beazley, £25). Photography by Laura Edwards.

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COOKING FOR A CROWD

Deliciously Ella's simple kitchen supper ideas, sweet and savoury pancake recipes from around the world, and a Mother's Day treat.



CHANA MASALA



For a casual dinner, go Asian with Ella Mills' sticky miso aubergines and satay sweet potato noodles, or try a fabulous chana masala curry as the centrepiece of an Indian-inspired spread.

Deliciously Ella's

SATURDAY NIGHT KITCHEN SUPPER

Chana masala

This curry is absolutely delicious and filled with incredible spices that really transform the chickpeas. I also add leeks and spinach, as I love getting the extra veg in and they add a great flavour, plus the green of the spinach makes the meal look beautiful, too. I love this served with a side dish of aloo gobi (spiced potatoes and cauliflower) and coconut rice, with a generous dollop of coconut yogurt.

Serves 6 | Prep 15 mins
Cook 35 mins

5 tbsp olive oil
6 curry leaves, or 1 tsp curry powder
1 leek, finely chopped
½ tsp ground turmeric
2 tbsp ground cumin
2 tbsp ground coriander
2 tbsp garam masala
1 tsp chilli powder
1 onion, finely chopped

2.5cm root ginger, finely grated
5 cloves garlic, finely grated
2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes
2 tbsp tomato purée
2 green finger chillies, halved lengthways
plenty of salt and pepper
2 x 400g cans chickpeas, drained and rinsed
250g baby leaf spinach
juice of ½ lemon
fresh coriander leaves, to serve

1 Heat the oil in a large saucepan and throw in the curry leaves, if using. Let them sizzle away and release their flavour for a few minutes, then drop in the leek and stir.

2 Next add the dry spices – including the curry powder if you're not using curry leaves – and stir so that they're mixed nicely with the leek. Let this cook for a few minutes before adding the onion, ginger and garlic; at this point you can add 1–2 tablespoons

of water if things are starting to stick to the pan.

3 Cook for a few minutes before adding the canned tomatoes, tomato purée, green chillies, salt and pepper. When you've poured in the tomatoes from their cans, swish a little water around in each to get the remaining juice, then add this to the saucepan, too. Let everything bubble away for 20 minutes.

4 Add the chickpeas and cook for another 10 minutes.

5 Stir in the spinach, just until it wilts. Let cool slightly, then stir in the lemon juice and serve in shallow bowls, sprinkling coriander leaves over the curry.

COOK'S TIP To make coconut rice, simply add a can of coconut milk to the water when cooking short-grain rice and season to taste.

■ **PER SERVING** 285 cals, fat 14.1g, sat fat 1.7g, carbs 27.7g, sugars 8.8g, protein 12.2g, salt 1.2g, fibre 9g

Sweet potato noodles with a creamy peanut satay sauce

These noodles were quite a revelation to me. They're so much heartier and more filling than courgette noodles, and this satay sauce really brings them to life. It's so incredibly creamy, with subtle hints of chilli and tangy lime. You will need a spiraliser for this recipe.

Serves 2 | Prep 15 mins | Cook 15 mins

For the noodles:

olive oil

1 stick celery, finely chopped

5 cloves garlic, crushed

2.5cm root ginger, finely grated

pinch of salt

250g mushrooms, thinly sliced

2 small sweet potatoes, about 200g each,

peeled and spiralised

100g baby spinach

For the sauce:

3 tbsp crunchy peanut butter (or almond butter also works)

70ml almond milk, plus more if needed

1 tsp tamari

1 tsp chilli flakes

juice of 1 lime

1 tsp honey

a little olive oil, if needed

1 Heat a glug of oil in a large frying pan, then add the celery, garlic, ginger and salt and sauté over a low heat until the celery is softening. Add the mushrooms once the pan has been bubbling for a couple of minutes.

2 After a minute or so more, add the sweet potatoes and cook for about 10 minutes.

3 Next, make the satay sauce. Simply place all the ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth, adding oil if it helps to process the sauce, then add salt to taste.

4 Once the noodles and mushrooms are tender, add the spinach and the satay sauce. Stir until the spinach has wilted and the sauce is warm. If the sauce feels a little thick, add a splash of water, olive oil or almond milk and stir it in until it reaches your desired consistency.

COOK'S TIP Slice the ends off the sweet potatoes to create flat surfaces at either end before spiralising, it makes the process so much easier.

■ PER SERVING 545 cals, fat 31.3g, sat fat 6.2g, carbs 53g, sugars 18.7g, protein 14.5g, salt 2.2g, fibre 12.6g



Miso and sesame glazed aubergines V

I've made these aubergine wedges for so many friends and everyone goes crazy for them and asks for them again and again. They're so insanely delicious! The mix of sesame, tamari, miso, maple and lemon juice creates such rich flavours that really make each bite sing! I always make extra as everyone seems to want seconds, but also because they taste great cold, so I throw any leftovers into my lunchbox the next day.

Serves 4 | Prep 10 mins

Cook 35 mins

For the aubergines:

3 medium aubergines, stalks removed, cut into small wedges lengthways

1 tbsp olive oil

salt

sesame seeds, to serve

chilli flakes, to serve

For the glaze:

3 tbsp toasted sesame oil

1½ tbsp tamari

2 tsp brown rice miso

1 tbsp maple syrup

juice of 1 lemon

1 tsp apple cider vinegar

1 Preheat the oven to 200C/fan 180C/gas 6. Place the aubergine wedges on a baking tray, drizzle with the olive oil and sprinkle with a little salt. Bake for 15-20 minutes, until soft but not completely cooked.

2 Meanwhile, whisk the glaze ingredients together in a bowl.

3 Once the wedges are soft, pour the glaze over them (while they're still on the baking tray) and mix well. Return them to the oven to cook for another 10 minutes, then turn them over and cook for a final 5 minutes until they're tender and delicious and completely coated in the glaze.

4 Take out of the oven and sprinkle with sesame seeds and chilli flakes to serve.

■ PER SERVING 109 cals, fat 7.2g, sat fat 1.2g, carbs 9.3g, sugars 9.1g, protein 3.1g, salt 2.4g, fibre 5.5g




Recipes adapted from *Deliciously Ella with Friends* by Ella Mills (Yellow Kite, £25). © Ella Mills 2017. Photography by Clare Winfield.

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The flip side

Whether you're planning a weekend brunch, a light supper or a stunning dessert, Sudi Pigott's pancake recipes from around the world are a great alternative when you have guests to impress.

A close-up photograph of a stack of five fluffy, golden-brown ricotta pancakes. The pancakes are topped with several slices of ripe banana and a drizzle of honeycomb. The stack is served on a dark, textured plate, which is being held by a person wearing a purple shirt. The background is a soft, out-of-focus purple fabric.

FLUFFY RICOTTA
PANCAKES WITH
BANANA AND
HONEYCOMB, LIME
AND GINGER BUTTER

BRUNCH
TREAT OR
DESSERT

Fluffy ricotta pancakes with banana and honeycomb, lime and ginger butter

Like sublime fluffy clouds, the texture of these pancakes is ridiculously light and delicate from the combination of ricotta and whipped egg white. Australian king of breakfast Bill Granger first introduced me to them and I was blown away. They are ideal for breakfast and they're superb as a dessert, too, with infinite accompaniments. For Aussie authenticity, I have simply pimped Bill's classic honeycomb butter with lime and fresh ginger.

**Serves 6 | Prep 30 mins + chilling
Cook 20 mins**

250g tub ricotta, strained
2 large free-range eggs, separated
100g plain flour, sifted
1 tsp baking powder
sea salt
zest of 2 limes
125g semi-skimmed milk
4 tbsp coconut oil
2 bananas, sliced or 250g raspberries

For the honeycomb butter:
150g unsalted butter, at room temperature
zest of 1 lime
1 tbsp lime juice
3cm piece of fresh ginger, peeled and finely grated
75g fresh honeycomb

- 1 To make the honeycomb butter, cream the butter until soft, then add the lime zest and juice, and the ginger. Gradually beat in the honeycomb. Shape into a long roll, then wrap in cling film and put in the freezer for 15 minutes or in the fridge for 1 hour to firm up.
- 2 Put the ricotta and egg yolks in a large bowl and mix together. Add the flour, baking powder, and a pinch of salt, then add the lime zest and milk and whisk to make a smooth batter.
- 3 Beat the egg white until foamy using a hand whisk, then gently fold into the ricotta mixture, taking care not

to knock the lightness out of the egg. (The mixture will keep overnight in the fridge at this stage.)

4 Heat a frying pan or griddle over a medium heat and add 1 tablespoon of coconut oil. Drop in two large heaped dessertspoonfuls of batter and flatten to a circle, then add batter for a couple more pancakes. Cook for 1-2 minutes until they begin to bubble and turn lightly golden. Flip over and cook for 1-2 minutes until lightly golden, taking care not to let them burn.

5 Put the pancakes on a plate and cover with a tent of foil; this is preferable to putting them in the oven as they are so delicate that they would dry out. Repeat with the remaining batter, adding more coconut oil to the pan as before.

6 Serve them warm with generous slices of the honeycomb butter and the sliced banana (or raspberries when in season).

■ PER SERVING 463 cals, fat 36.1g, sat fat 24.1g, carbs 25.5g, sugars 12.3g, protein 9.7g, salt 1.6g, fibre 2.1g

Farinata with rosemary and sea salt or pesto

Traditionally, *farinata*, a baked chickpea pancake, is made in a wood-fired oven, although it works well started on the hob and finished in the oven. I adore it as an appetiser or as a simple supper with a robust green salad and cheese, especially crumbled Gorgonzola. Usually, it is just sprinkled with red onion, rosemary and sea salt, and it's fantastic with a crisp Soave or cold Italian beer. As the dish originates in Genoa, where the fishermen often eat it for breakfast in the early hours before setting out to sea, I also like to stir in some homemade pesto, which makes for an even more striking-looking and tasting *farinata*.

**Serves 6 | Prep 10 mins + resting
Cook 20 mins**

1 litre sparkling water
2 tsp cooking salt
300g chickpea flour, sifted



100ml extra-virgin olive oil
1 red onion, quartered and sliced into ultra-thin slivers
leaves from 2 large sprigs of rosemary
sea salt, to sprinkle

For the basil pesto:
50g pine nuts
50g vegetarian Parmesan-style cheese, finely grated
1 clove garlic, crushed
75g basil leaves
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
125ml good-quality extra-virgin olive oil

- 1 Pour the sparkling water into a bowl and add the salt and chickpea flour with 1½ tablespoons of the olive oil. Stir with a whisk to form a thick batter. Leave the mixture to stand at room temperature in a warmish place for 4-5 hours or, better still, overnight, so that the mixture can start fermenting, which gives the pancake a light, airy texture.
- 2 Preheat the oven to 200C/fan 180C/gas 6. To make the pesto, if using this alternative, heat a small pan over a

medium-high heat and add the pine nuts. Cook to brown evenly, shaking the pan from time to time. Remove the pine nuts, retaining a few for garnish, and put the rest into a blender or food processor with the Parmesan-style cheese, garlic, basil leaves and seasoning. Whizz briefly. With the motor still running, gradually add the oil to make a smooth pesto. Set aside.

3 Heat a large, heavy ovenproof frying pan over a medium-high heat until it's almost smoking. Using a heatproof pastry brush, brush the base generously with olive oil. Pour in the batter until no more than 7mm thick, and swirl it around so that the batter spreads out evenly. Cook for 1-2 minutes – the mixture will begin to bubble. Scatter over the onion slices and rosemary, or stir in 4-5 tablespoons of pesto and top with a scattering of pine nuts.

4 Transfer to the oven for 10-12 minutes until set and the edges are crispy. Repeat with the remaining mixture. Serve sprinkled with sea salt and cut into wedges.

Cook's tip Buy the best quality chickpea flour you can source, preferably an Italian brand, for the tastiest of *farinata*. It will be called *farina di ceci*. Chickpea flour is now found in the Indian sections of supermarkets (under 'gram flour') and good delis.

■ PER SERVING 581 cals, fat 46.2g, sat fat 7.3g, carbs 26.2g, sugars 3.3g, protein 15.5g, salt 2.2g, fibre 8.3g

Persian-style saffron and sweet potato pancake

A Persian egg-based frittata, *kuku* is eaten at New Year in Iran. The herbs symbolise rebirth, and the eggs promise fertility and happiness for the year to come. When made with potato, it is called *kuku sibzamini*. I've long adored sweet potato, and using it here gives the pancake a slightly different, richer flavour. I've scented it with saffron, which raises the dish to another level of intense flavour. The addition of walnuts for an interesting crunch, and tiny Iranian barberries for a refreshing sour zing, is traditional and adds surprise. I make one large *kuku sibzamini* and my preference is to serve it warm or at room temperature cut into wedges, with cool yogurt mixed with cucumber and lots of fresh mint, dill and parsley.

Serves 2 | Prep 15 mins | Cook 30 mins

500g sweet potato, unpeeled and cut into quarters

½ tsp saffron threads

3 large free-range eggs



PERSIAN-STYLE SAFFRON AND SWEET POTATO PANCAKE

2 tbsp plain flour
2 tsp baking powder
½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
1 clove garlic, crushed
large bunch of parsley, finely chopped
large bunch of mint, finely chopped
large bunch of dill, finely chopped
20g chervil, finely chopped (optional)
20g tarragon, finely chopped (optional)
50g walnuts, finely chopped
50g barberries, soaked, rinsed and dried on kitchen towel
sunflower oil or rapeseed oil
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

For the yogurt sauce:

8 tbsp Greek yogurt
½ cucumber, peeled and diced
large handful each of fresh parsley, mint and

dill, leaves finely chopped
rose petals, to decorate (optional)

1 Bring a pan of salted water to the boil and cook the potato for 10-15 minutes, until fork-tender. Cool a little, remove the skins, then mash.

2 Crush the saffron using a pestle and mortar, then put it in a small bowl and add 1 tablespoon of boiling water. Leave to soak.

3 Put the eggs in a bowl and sift in the flour, baking powder and bicarbonate of soda. Add the garlic, herbs, saffron in its liquid, walnuts and barberries. Season with salt and pepper, then stir in the mashed sweet potatoes.

4 Heat a little oil in a large, heavy frying pan over a medium heat until it begins to sizzle, then reduce the heat and pour in all the

kuku batter. Cook for 1 minute, then loosen the *kuku* around the edges. Cover with a lid and continue to cook over a low heat for 20–30 minutes, or until the *kuku* is just set and still fluffy within. Cut into wedges.

5 To make the sauce, put the yogurt in a bowl and add the cucumber and herbs. Season with salt and pepper, then mix together well. Pour the yogurt sauce over the *kuku* and garnish with dried rose petals for an optional added flourish, if you like.

■ PER SERVING 1,038 cals, fat 58.2g, sat fat 18g, carbs 93g, sugars 28.2g, protein 37.1g, salt 3.8g, fibre 17.7g

Finnish pancake

An unusual pancake with real wow factor, this Finnish *pannukakku* is baked in the oven and puffs up as dramatically as a soufflé. It has a delectable custardy interior and a crisp crust and is in essence rather like a French clafoutis. Traditionally, it is served with a rhubarb and strawberry compote, providing an excitingly different flavour combination that mixes tart and sweet. The compote works brilliantly with the pancake, which must be served at once. Although the compote is usually served cold, I find it is just as scrumptious warm. This pancake is really easy to knock up and is an impressive addition to a dinner party.

**Serves 4 | Prep 20 mins + resting
Cook 25 mins**

50g butter, melted
120g plain flour, sifted
½ tsp vanilla extract
2 tbsp clear honey
2 large free-range eggs, beaten
300ml semi-skimmed milk

For the compote:
500g rhubarb, cut into 3cm pieces
zest and juice of 1 orange
60g soft brown sugar
200g strawberries, finely sliced

For the vanilla crème fraîche:
1 tbsp vanilla sugar or 1 tsp icing sugar
and ½ tsp vanilla extract
200ml crème fraîche

1 Preheat the oven to 220C/fan 200C/gas 7. Put a 20cm ovenproof cast-iron frying pan or baking dish in the oven to heat up.



DINNER
PARTY
DESSERT

FINNISH PANCAKE

2 Put 40g of the melted butter in a large bowl and add the flour, vanilla, honey, eggs and milk. Mix together using a hand whisk to make a pouring batter with the consistency of double cream. Leave to stand for 1 hour, as this will make it rise better.

3 Use the remaining melted butter to coat the heated frying pan, brushing it up the sides. Pour in the batter and put the pan in the hot oven. Cook for 20–25 minutes until the batter has dramatically risen, is a little crusty and golden brown at the edges, and looks like a just-set custard in the middle.

4 Meanwhile, make the compote. Put the rhubarb in a saucepan over a medium heat and add the orange juice and soft brown sugar. Cover the pan. Cook to dissolve the sugar and then bring to the boil. Reduce the heat to low and add the orange zest, then

simmer for 6 minutes. Stir gently, then add the strawberries and cook for 2 minutes. The compote can be served warm or cold.

5 In a small bowl, stir the vanilla sugar, or icing sugar and vanilla extract mixture, into the crème fraîche. Serve the pancake immediately with the compote and vanilla crème fraîche.

■ PER SERVING 562 cals, fat 35g, sat fat 21.8g, carbs 51g, sugars 28g, protein 11.8g, salt 0.5g, fibre 5.4g



Recipes adapted from *Flipping Good!* by Sudi Pigott (Kyle Books, £9.99). Photography by Maja Smend.

Grains of barley

One of the UK's traditional native grains, barley has fallen out of favour in recent years. Sarah Beattie urges us to rediscover this tasty and versatile ingredient in both sweet and savoury dishes.

Barley is a most ancient grain, cultivated by mankind for millennia. In the UK, it was grown before wheat and it is better suited to our climate. Why then do we use so little of it, importing rices and grains from all over the world? Except in the far north, barley only seems to appear in the occasional soup or stew. With its lower-than-wheat gluten content, it fell out of favour for bread-making except in the Scottish islands where it's also

found in bannocks, scones and biscuits. In Shetland, a coarser barley flour called beremeal is still used and its deliciously nutty flavour is appreciated.

On the supermarket shelves, most commonly, you'll find pearl barley. This is hulled barley that has been steam-processed to remove the bran and is the sort of barley you find in broths. There's also hulled barley and, in a few places, naked barley – a naturally unhusked grain. The perceived problem with barley is that it takes too long to cook. Boiling barley on the stovetop for more than an hour means you run the risk of it boiling dry. A pressure cooker will cut the time dramatically or, as in the pilaf recipe opposite, you can bake it slowly in the oven (or in a slow cooker) for easy, perfect results.

Some wholefood shops sell barley flakes. You can use them in muesli, flapjacks and crumbles (sweet and savoury) for wonderful extra flavour (try Hodmedod's Organic Naked Barley Flakes at hodmedods.co.uk). Barley flour, the milled grain, can be added to wheat or other flour for cakes, pastries and bread. Sometimes, to add an even deeper toasty flavour, barley flour is browned and



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cooled before adding. Use a heavy-based wide pan and stir frequently over a low heat until the flour becomes a lovely nutty brown. You can do the same with lightly blitzed barley flakes and then stir them into whipped cream, milk or whisky.

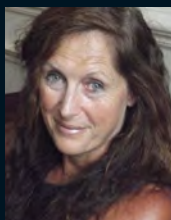
Sweet and sticky like honey, malted barley extract comes in jars and is delicious spread on buttered toast. You can use it as a sweetener in baking, icings, fillings, sauces and glazes – and even add to a hot milky drink before bed. It's made by sprouting barley grains and then heating them. As they sprout, the starch of the grains turns to sugar. Malting barley is, of course, part of the brewing process to make beer and that's where, along with animal feed, the bulk of the UK's harvest goes.

We've fallen out of love with barley in Britain, which is a shame as it's full of B vitamins, protein, soluble fibre and tastes very good. Why not try these simple recipes and rediscover barley for yourself.

ABOUT SARAH

A *Vegetarian Living* regular, Sarah is the author of seven cookbooks. She has been vegetarian since she was 17 and revels in the pleasure of good food through the alchemy of cooking. She has appeared on *BBC Food & Drink*, *This Morning* and *Woman's Hour* and has been shortlisted for the prestigious Guild of Food Writers Cookery Journalist of the Year award in 2013 and 2015.

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PHOTOGRAPH: LILLIRU

Baked barley pilaf *

Make plenty of this recipe, as leftovers can be enjoyed as a salad with a little oil and lemon, or used to stuff peppers, aubergines or mushrooms then baked. Alternatively, you can form the mixture into burgers, adding a little harissa and chopped fried mushrooms.

Serves 6

Prep 20 mins + soaking

Cook 1 hr 20 mins

250g barley

3 tbsp olive oil

2 onions, chopped

1 small bulb of fennel, chopped

100g raisins

1 tbsp tabil spice (see cook's tip, below)

2 preserved lemons

650ml vegetable stock or water

chopped fresh parsley and lemon wedges, to garnish

1 Rinse the barley and put in a bowl. Pour over boiling water and leave at least 1 hour to soak (or overnight).

2 Preheat the oven to 130C/fan 110C/gas ½. Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a flameproof casserole. Fry the onion steadily until it browns, stirring from time to time to prevent sticking. You can't hurry this; it will take at least 10 minutes and probably closer to 15, but it doesn't need your full attention. As the onion turns a lovely golden brown, add the fennel. Mix well and cook for another couple of minutes.

3 Add the remaining tablespoon of oil and the drained barley. Cook over a higher heat, stirring, until everything is sizzling. Add the raisins, tabil spice and the preserved lemons. Stir in the vegetable stock and bring to the boil. Cover and put in the oven for 1½ hours.

4 Serve hot, on its own or with a side of oven-roasted vegetables.

COOK'S TIP Tabil is a North African spice mix. If you can't find it, use a combination of ground cumin, coriander, chilli, cinnamon and ginger.

■ PER SERVING 279 cals, fat 6.9g, sat fat 0.9g, carbs 48.2g, sugars 16.1g, protein 6.6g, salt 0g, fibre 3.8g

Barley biscuits *

These biscuits are very versatile. Serve with tea or coffee, or with cheese, crowdie (Scottish cream cheese) or other savoury toppings such as avocado, potted mushroom or vegetable pâté.



**Makes 24 | Prep 5 mins + chilling
Cook 18 mins**

250g butter

75g sugar

200g barley flour

125g wholemeal flour

1 tsp salt

1 tsp thyme

½ tsp soft salt (flakes or sel de Guérande)

½ tsp demerara sugar

1 Cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Sift the flours together, then work into the creamed mixture with 1 teaspoon of salt and the thyme. Using a mixer or food processor, pulse until the mixture comes together to make a soft ball.

2 Knead lightly and roll into a fat sausage shape. Wrap in cling film and put in the fridge for 30 minutes.

3 Preheat the oven to 190C/fan 170C/gas 5. Line 2 baking sheets with non-stick paper.

4 Cut 5mm-thick slices from the dough and lay them, well-spaced, on the baking sheets. Bake for 15–18 minutes, until lightly browned. Cool on a wire rack, then store in an airtight container.

■ PER BISCUIT 138 cals, fat 8.9g, sat fat 5.5g, carbs 13.1g, sugars 3.6g, protein 1.7g, salt 0.6g, fibre 0.8g



govegan

V Replace the creamed butter with a dairy-free spread of your choice.

freezeme

***** You can freeze the uncooked dough, or the baked biscuits once cool.

Mum's the word

Spoil your mum this month with an indulgent twist on a traditional carrot cake topped with lashings of creamy, zesty frosting – you'll need pastry forks for this one!



Carrot cake with lime and coconut topping

Serves 8 | Prep 20 mins
Cook 40 mins

For the cake:

2 large free-range eggs
100g light soft brown sugar
5 tbsp oil (sunflower, vegetable or corn)
100g self-raising flour
175g carrots, grated
1 tsp ground cinnamon
50g shredded coconut

For the topping:

75g cream cheese
75g butter
50g icing sugar
grated zest of 1 lime

toasted coconut and grated lime, to decorate (optional)

1 Preheat the oven to 190C/fan 170C/gas 5. Grease and line an 18cm round cake tin or a 900g loaf tin.

2 Beat together the eggs and sugar in a large bowl until very creamy. Add the oil and beat hard. Fold in the remaining ingredients. Turn into the

prepared tin and smooth the top, then slightly hollow out the centre to avoid a very domed top on the finished cake.

3 Bake for 35–40 minutes, until golden and well risen and a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean. Remove from the oven and turn out onto a wire rack to cool.

4 To make the topping, beat the ingredients together until light and creamy, then spread over the top of the cake. Make a pattern with the prongs of a fork, then decorate with the coconut and lime, if desired.

COOK'S TIP For a more traditional carrot cake, simply leave the lime and coconut out of the topping.

■ **PER SERVING** 353 cals, fat 24.3g, sat fat 11.9g, carbs 30.2g, sugars 20.7g, protein 4g, salt 0.4g, fibre 2.7g



Recipe adapted from *Cakes, Bakes and Biscuits* (National Trust Books, £9.99). Photography by Charlotte Barton.





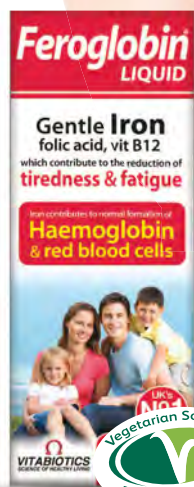
CARROT CAKE
WITH LIME
TOPPING

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Meals to put a smile on everyone's face, from Italian aubergine polpettini and Mexican corn cakes, to traditional sticky orange pud.



PHOTOGRAPH: TAMIN JONES

MISO
HAPPY

.....
PAGE 74

LOVE *from* LEON

These naturally gluten- and dairy-free dishes from the Leon restaurant kitchen are so delicious they're set to become your new family favourites.

Aubergine polpettini

Itsy bitsy teeny-weeny aubergine-y polpettini. These little meatless balls are a speciality in Puglia – they can be served fried as a snack with drinks, or as below with a tomato sauce. Leave out the chilli and they're much more teeny people friendly (kids).

Serves 4 | Prep 25 mins | Cook 1 hr

2 large aubergines, peeled
1 tbsp olive oil, plus extra for frying
1 tbsp capers, soaked and drained
2 tbsp chopped fresh basil
1 tbsp chopped fresh mint
1 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
large pinch of wild oregano
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 free-range egg, beaten
50g ground almonds
50g almond flour
3 tbsp fine cornmeal
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

For the tomato sauce:

2 onions, finely chopped
10 cloves garlic, crushed
2 red chillies, chopped (optional)
2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes

To serve:

fresh basil leaves, ripped, to serve
10 black olives, stoned and roughly chopped

1 Slice the aubergines into 0.5cm slices, then cut each slice into small dice. Heat the tablespoon of oil



AUBERGINE
POLPETTINI

PHOTOGRAPHY: TAMIN JONES

in a large pan. Tip in the diced aubergine and stir. Fry for a minute, season and cover. Cook over a low heat for 5 minutes, or until tender, then place in a sieve and press out any excess moisture.

2 Put the aubergine into a large bowl and add the capers, herbs, garlic, egg and ground almonds. Mix well and season. Place half the mix in a food processor and pulse for 10 seconds, then spoon back into the bowl and mix with the remaining unprocessed aubergine.

3 Shape into small balls, about the size of a large walnut, and roll first in the almond flour and then in the cornmeal. Heat some oil in a large non-stick frying pan and gently fry the balls for about 5 minutes, until browned all over. Remove from the pan and tip out any excess oil.

4 To make the tomato sauce, add the onions to the pan and cook over a gentle heat for 10 minutes. Add the garlic and chopped chillies, cook for another 2 minutes, then tip in the chopped tomatoes. Stir well and bring up to a simmer, then cook gently for about 30 minutes.

5 Return the polpetta to the pan and cook gently for 5 minutes. Serve sprinkled with the torn basil leaves and chopped olives.

■ PER SERVING 424 cals, fat 25.4g, sat fat 3g, carbs 37g, sugars 13.9g, protein 13g, salt 1.4g, fibre 7.8g

Squashed corn cakes

It will be very tempting to coat everything in tortilla chips after trying this recipe. These would also make a smashing breakfast patty, served with fried eggs and salsa.

Makes 8 | Prep 25 mins | Cook 50 mins

500g butternut squash, cut into small dice

2 tbsp olive oil

1 red onion, chopped

1 clove garlic, crushed

1 red chilli, chopped

pinch of ground turmeric

pinch of ground cumin

100g piquillo peppers or peeled red peppers, chopped

2 cobs of corn, kernels only

2 tbsp tomato passata

100g cannellini beans

100g kidney beans

olive oil, for frying

sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

avocado, lime and coriander salsa, to serve

For the coating:

4 tbsp rice flour

2 free-range eggs, beaten

1 small pack of tortilla chips, crushed

1 Preheat the oven to 180C/fan 160C/gas 4. Toss the squash pieces in 1 tablespoon of oil and season well. Place on a baking tray and roast in the oven for about 30 minutes, until the squash is tender. Remove from the oven.

2 While the squash is cooking, heat the remaining oil in a large frying pan and cook the onion for 5 minutes over a medium heat without allowing it to colour. Add the garlic and spices and cook for another minute. Tip in the cooked squash along with the peppers, corn and passata. Stir well and cook for 5 minutes.

3 Drain the beans and rinse well. Place half in a food processor and blitz for a few seconds to chop them roughly (this can also be done by hand). Stir all the beans, chopped and unchopped, into the squash mix, season well, then empty into a bowl and leave to cool down.



SQUASHED CORN CAKES

4 Once cool, shape the mixture into 8 small cakes. Coat each one first with rice flour, then with beaten egg and finally with crushed tortilla chips. Place on a tray in the refrigerator to firm up before frying – about an hour.

5 Heat the oil to about 1cm deep in a non-stick frying pan. Cook the squash cakes for about 4 minutes on each side, until lightly browned. Drain on kitchen paper and serve with a salsa made from chopped avocado, lime juice and coriander, seasoned with salt and pepper.

■ PER CORN CAKE 252 cals, fat 13.5g, sat fat 2.4g, carbs 26.8g, sugars 6.3g, protein 6.3g, salt 1.1g, fibre 5.1g

Miso happy

There's nothing limp about this Asian tofu salad. It's got crunch and a lovely wasabi kick.

Serves 2

Prep 20 mins + soaking and standing
Cook 20 mins

10g sea spaghetti (seaweed)
250g very firm tofu
1 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp tamari
1 tbsp arrowroot or cornflour
1 tbsp sesame seeds
100g edamame beans, cooked
50g baby spinach
¼ cucumber, peeled and shaved into strips
1 bunch of spring onions, thinly sliced
6 radishes, thinly sliced
1 tbsp black sesame seeds

For the miso wasabi sauce:

2 tsp miso paste
1 tsp wasabi paste (or more if desired)
1 tbsp rice wine vinegar
1 tsp ketjap manis
1 tbsp grapeseed oil
1 tsp toasted sesame oil

1 Heat the oven to 200C/fan 180C/gas 6. Soak the sea spaghetti in lots of boiling water for at least 30 minutes. Drain and rinse well.

2 Press the block of tofu and dry with kitchen paper. Cut into 1-2cm squares. In a bowl, mix together the olive oil and tamari. Toss the tofu through the mix and leave for 15 minutes.

3 Sieve the arrowroot or cornflour over the tofu and fold through with the sesame seeds. Place on a baking tray lined with baking parchment



MISO HAPPY

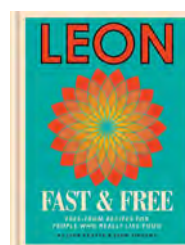
and put into the oven for about 20 minutes, until golden brown. Give the tray a shake halfway through the cooking time.

4 While the tofu is in the oven, mix together the sauce ingredients in a bowl. Remove the tofu from the oven and allow to cool for 10 minutes. Add to the sauce and fold through to combine.

5 In a large bowl, toss the tofu and its marinade with the drained sea spaghetti and edamame beans. Arrange the spinach and cucumber on a serving dish and top with the tofu, beans and seaweed. Sprinkle with

the spring onions, radishes and black sesame seeds to serve.

■ PER SERVING 453 cals, fat 28.2g, sat fat 3.5g, carbs 29.1g, sugars 4.8g, protein 20.6g, salt 3.1g, fibre 6.7g



Recipes adapted from *Leon Fast & Free* by Jane Baxter and John Vincent (Conran Octopus, £25). Photography by Tamin Jones.

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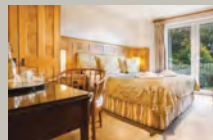


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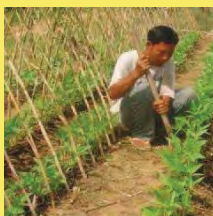
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Home cooking with Chava

While we're busy spotting the first cheery signs of spring, it can take time for new season produce to be ready for our tables. Chava raids the pantry to prepare quick and easy dishes perfect for the 'hungry gap'.



Don't those first crocuses or daffodils make you feel cheerful? I know I just can't help smiling when I see these merry little messengers of spring. My smile is like a big Cheshire cat – I love springtime!

Spotting the tender little buds in gardens and hedgerows makes me heave a sigh of relief as winter is over for another year. There is something primeval about this feeling of 'making it through' the damp, dark winter season. I am, of course, fully aware how ridiculous this sounds when we live in central-heated houses and work in toasty warm offices. But I must admit that, despite growing up with the bitter temperatures of German winters, I am surprisingly wimpy when it comes to the cold. And now I can't wait to stash away the gloves, scarves and hot water bottle!

Also, any parent will agree that leaving those dull, grey February days behind is even more welcome when you have young kids. Now it's time to start planning family walks, fun days out and prepare for some gardening! My kids and I look forward to watching those little green shoots poke their heads out of the soil, as a renewed cycle of crop-growing begins. This year, we're already excited about all the funky veggies we want to grow – purple beans, lilac-and-white striped aubergines and rainbow chard are all on our list. As a lover of unusual plants, I'm never quite sure what's more fun: choosing the seeds in spring or harvesting the crops in summer. Even if you don't have a big vegetable patch, it's amazing how much can be grown on a balcony or windowsill.

If you're really stuck for space or time, you could choose one of the many farm shops and box schemes around the country, which will provide you with seasonal vegetables and fruit. Just be aware that over the next few months, during the so-called 'hungry gap', there will be a wait for the new British produce to come through. So organic box schemes often rely on getting some food items from countries like Spain, to supply anything that can be shipped (rather than flown in from far-flung places).

This month's recipes, which include roasted cauliflower from the UK and organic oranges, are pretty quick to prepare. And hopefully they'll leave enough time to sneak in a walk – to witness nature awoken from its beauty sleep.

Smokey cauliflower dip

This delicious dip works really well in tortilla wraps or as a sandwich filling too. Roasting the cauliflower and garlic with the smoked paprika adds a great flavour and it's so easy to make.

Serves 4 | Prep 10 mins | Cook 30 mins

225g cauliflower, broken into florets
1 clove garlic
1 tsp rapeseed oil
½ tsp smoked paprika, plus extra to sprinkle
100g canned butter beans, drained
zest of ½ lemon
2 tbsp lemon juice
1 tsp lemon thyme leaves
2 tbsp rapeseed or olive oil, plus extra to drizzle
sea salt

1 Preheat the oven to 180C/fan 160C/gas 4. Place the cauliflower florets in a baking tray, together with the unpeeled garlic clove and the oil. Sprinkle with the smoked paprika and roast for 30 minutes. Use a spoon to turn the cauliflower over halfway through the cooking time. Set aside to cool.

ABOUT CHAVA

Chava Eichner is a freelance food writer and photographer who passionately creates for many meat-free companies and organisations like Viva! and the Vegetarian Society, among others. She lives in the Cotswolds with her partner David and two young boys, Sam (9) and Alex (7). Visit her website and blog, where you can find more mouth-watering food inspiration.

www.flavourphotos.com

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2 When the garlic is cool enough to handle, remove the outer skin. Place the roasted garlic and cauliflower in a food processor (or use a hand-held blender). Add the butter beans, lemon zest and juice, lemon thyme leaves and rapeseed or olive oil. Blend until smooth.

3 Add salt to taste and serve with a little drizzle of oil and an extra pinch of smoked paprika. Serve spread on crackers, or as a filling for a sandwich or wrap.

■ PER SERVING 120 cals, fat 9.5g, sat fat 0.7g, carbs 5.9g, sugars 2g, protein 3.1g, salt 1g, fibre 2.8g

Cranberry and hazelnut stuffing balls

I've used Paxo stuffing as a base here and turned it into super-quick and delicious 'meatballs'. The hazelnuts blended with the slightly sweet flavour of the cranberries work really well in this dish. A crafty way to use a storecupboard staple and turn it into a family favourite!

Serves 4 | Prep 15 mins | Cook 35 mins



CRANBERRY AND HAZELNUT STUFFING BALLS



TRADITIONAL ORANGE PUDDING

50g hazelnuts
30g dried cranberries
85g sage and onion stuffing mix
75g frozen or chilled vegan mince
220ml boiling water
vegetable oil, for brushing

To serve:
cooked pasta
tomato sauce
grated vegan cheese
fresh basil leaves

- 1 Grind the hazelnuts and cranberries coarsely together in a blender. You want to have most of the nuts ground but still retain a bit of texture.
- 2 Add the ground hazelnuts and cranberries to a bowl with the stuffing mix and vegan mince. Pour in the boiling water and combine well. Let the mixture stand for 5 minutes.
- 3 Preheat the oven to 180C/fan 160C/gas 4. Line a baking tray with non-stick paper.
- 4 Take a tablespoon of the mixture, form into a ball and place on the tray. Continue with the remaining mixture. You could freeze the 'meatballs' at this stage. Brush them with a little oil and bake for 35 minutes, turning once after 20 minutes.
- 5 Serve with your favourite pasta and a

tomato sauce, a good sprinkling of vegan cheese and some fresh basil leaves.

■ PER SERVING 621 cals, fat 21.7g, sat fat 4.7g, carbs 85.7g, sugars 14.4g, protein 22g, salt 1.7g, fibre 8.4g

Traditional orange pudding ▢

This recipe adds a lovely vegan twist to a traditional British pudding. The moist sponge cake and sweet syrup work perfectly with the slight bitterness of the orange. I would recommend lashings of vegan custard but it would be gorgeous with a scoop of vanilla ice cream too.

Makes 6 puddings | Prep 25 mins | Cook 25 mins

15g dairy-free margarine
45g light brown sugar
1 organic orange
1 eating apple, coarsely grated
55g light brown sugar
100g plain flour
½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
40ml vegetable oil
90ml orange juice
chopped pistachio nuts, goji berries and orange zest, to garnish (optional)
vegan custard, to serve

- 1 Grease 6 small pudding moulds and line with a disc of non-stick paper. If you don't have pudding basins, then a 12-hole muffin tray could do the job at a push. It will just be a bit trickier to turn the puddings out after baking. Gently melt the margarine with the 45g of sugar to make a caramel sauce, then divide between the pudding moulds.

- 2 Zest the orange, add the zest to a mixing bowl and set aside. Use a sharp knife to slice off all the skin of the orange, so that you end up with a diameter that fits into your pudding moulds. Cut the orange into 3mm-thick slices and place on top of the caramel sauce.

- 3 Combine the grated apple, 55g of sugar, flour and bicarbonate of soda with the orange zest. Pour in the oil and orange juice and mix well. Divide the batter between the pudding moulds and bake for 25 minutes.

- 4 Let the puddings rest for 5 minutes, then carefully run a knife around the edge of each mould and turn them out onto a plate. Sprinkle with chopped pistachio nuts, goji berries and some extra orange zest, if desired. Serve with custard.

■ PER PUDDING 382 cals, fat 15.1g, sat fat 3g, carbs 54.1g, sugars 35g, protein 8.3g, salt 0.6g, fibre 1.8g

Spring is in the air

© WORLD BOOK DAY



© ALEX RUMFORD

Jacqueline Wilson (below) reads to children from Soho Family Centre to launch the 20th anniversary of World Book Day



© WORLD BOOK DAY

Read all about it

MUCH-LOVED CHILDREN'S AUTHORS PEN NEW £1 BOOKS FOR WORLD BOOK DAY 2017

Whether you're a Gangsta Granny or a wand-waving Schoolboy wizard, World Book Day gives schoolchildren the opportunity to turn into literary heroes for the day and, crucially, encourages greater engagement with reading through £1 books, which can be snapped up for free thanks to the National Book Voucher scheme.

This year's World Book Day, which takes place on 2 March, marks the 20th anniversary of the event, and an all-star line-up of authors and illustrators will joining in the occasion.

Titles for the nation's youngest book lovers will feature Peppa Pig and extraterrestrials from

the Aliens Love Underpants series. For readers at Key Stage 1, Julia Donaldson (pictured above centre) and Lydia Monks will contribute a new Princess Mirror-Belle title, and Martin Handford has made one of his Where's Wally? adventures available. There are new opportunities to check in with Horrid Henry or catch up with the Famous Five, and Key Stage 2 readers will be able to enjoy new books from popular authors David Walliams and Dame Jacqueline Wilson.

World Book Day director Kirsten Grant says: 'World Book Day is about creating readers for the future by igniting a

love of books and reading in children and young people. It's about encouraging them to visit their local bookshop and empowering them to make their own choices about the kinds of books they want to read. What better way to do this than offering them stories from the best writing and illustrating talent being published in the UK and Ireland today. We couldn't be happier to have so many national treasures on board for our 20th anniversary – nobody can better capture children's imaginations.'

● To find out more and see the full list of £1 books, visit www.worldbookday.com.



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www.sophiecharles.co.uk.

EAT THE RAINBOW

These simple pitta pizzas are great served hot for tea or cold in lunchboxes, and are lots of fun to make. If your little ones aren't fans of onion try chopped aubergine or for sweetness swap the sweetcorn for pineapple.

Rainbow pitta pizzas

Serves 4 | Prep 15 minutes
Cook 10 mins

4 wholemeal pitta bread
4 tsp tomato purée
60g mature reduced-fat

vegetarian Cheddar cheese, grated
8 cherry tomatoes, chopped
½ orange pepper, deseeded and chopped
small can sweetcorn, drained
½ green pepper, deseeded and chopped
½ red onion, chopped

1 Preheat the oven to 180C/fan 160C/gas 4 and place a baking sheet inside to heat up.

2 Spread each pitta bread with 1 teaspoon of tomato purée, using the back of the teaspoon for easy spreading.

Sprinkle a quarter of the cheese evenly over the top, then add all the vegetables in order of the colours of the rainbow.

3 Carefully place the pitta pizzas on the hot baking sheet and bake in the centre of the oven for 8–10 minutes.

■ PER SERVING 307 cals, fat 6.9g, sat fat 3.5g, carbs 49.5g, sugars 7.9g, protein 12.6g, salt 1.1g, fibre 4.4g

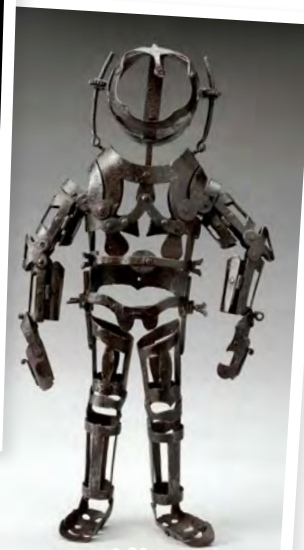
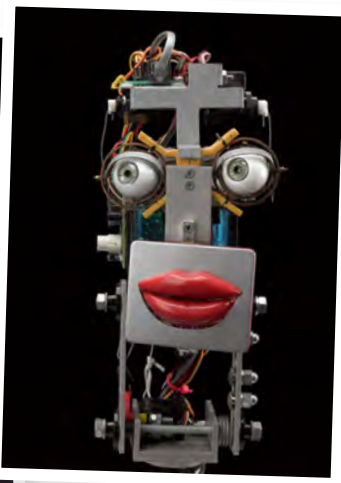
govegan

V It's easy to make this recipe vegan-friendly, just add a melting dairy-free cheese, like Violife for Pizza.

COOK



Recipe by ProCook, taken from *More Please: Tasty Recipes Children Will Love* (£4.99 from www.procook.co.uk/page/cookbook), produced in association with the Children's Food Trust. All profits go to the Children's Food Trust, a charity on a mission to get every child eating well at home, school and beyond.



Join the rise of the robots

There's mechanical mayhem at the Science Museum this month in the London attraction's new exhibition, Robots. Exploring humanity's 500-year quest to recreate ourselves in mechanised form, the show represents the most significant collection of humanoid robots ever displayed in the world. Over 100 robots will be on show, from a 16th-century mechanical monk to robots from science fiction and modern-day research labs.

● Robots runs from 8 February to 3 September.

Admission: £15 adults, £13 concessions (free entry for under-7s; family tickets available). For tickets and more information, see sciencemuseum.org.uk/robots.



Try some pedal power

On 20–31 March, schools around the UK will take place in the UK's largest inter-school cycling and scooting challenge, to inspire pupils, staff and parents to choose two wheels for their journey to school. Individual classes or whole schools can take part in the event, and will compete to see who can record the greatest number of pupils, staff and parents cycling or scooting to school. For schools that can't commit to the full fortnight, there's also a one-day challenge.

● Find out more at www.bigpedal.org.uk.



Start stitching

Welcome the arrival of spring with a seasonal embroidery kit from PippaBlue, featuring cute little critters and pretty spring scenes. PippaBlue's sewing and embroidery kits are designed, cut and even packed by mummy team Ger and Eva in their studio on the west coast of Ireland, and the kits contain everything you need to create your own gorgeous embellished picture.

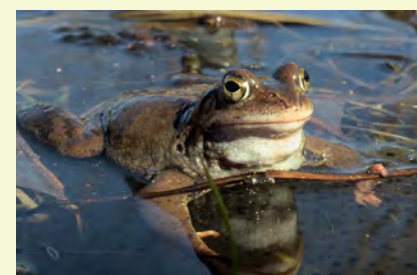
● Kits are priced at around £12.50 from www.notonthehighstreet.com/pippablue.

(Note: the kits should be used with adult supervision, as they contain a real needle.)

Switch off for an hour

It's lights out for millions around the globe, when the WWF's annual Earth Hour takes place. Designed to send out a powerful and symbolic message about the need to preserve our planet's resources, last year's event saw over 10 million people, across 178 countries and territories, switching off their lights.

● Earth Hour takes place 8.30–9.30pm on 25 March. Find out more at www.org.uk/earthhour.



Get a spring in your step!

Celebrate the spring equinox on 20 March with a trip out to spot the first signs of the season. The excellent Wildlife Watch website offers printable 'spotter' sheets to take on outdoor adventures, including a spring flower spotter, signs of spring spotter and a bug spotter. The website also includes great ideas on where to go in spring to enjoy wildlife.

● Visit www.wildlifewatch.org.uk for more information.

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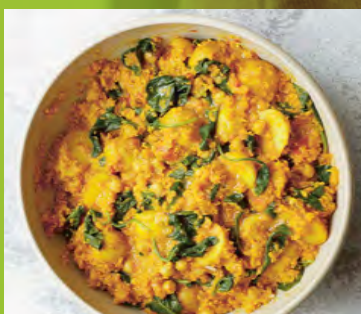
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PHOTOGRAPH: ANNE TIMMER

MINDFUL MEALS

Learn how Tess Masters used her blender to inspire healthy eating, and enjoy a deliciously light menu from nutritionist Rens Kroes.

HOW TO FIND YOUR PERFECT BLEND



Driven by a desire to find the optimum way of eating and living, Tess Masters and her kitchen blender have proved to be a winning team.

LA-based food writer Tess Masters, best known as 'the blender girl' thanks to her hugely popular blog, is a self-confessed 'blendaholic' who has made a successful career from her passion for blender recipes. She now regularly works with commercial partners, including an upcoming collaboration with KitchenAid to promote their Power Plus blender in Europe, and following a book tour for her first cookbook – *The Perfect Blend* – she'll be working with the Four Seasons in Washington DC to put some of her recipes on their menu. With further exciting projects coming later in the year, Tess says she thrives on the diversity of her career, and sometimes can't believe it all started with blender experiments in the family kitchen at home.

The experimental kitchen

'My mum and dad gave me my first blender when I was a teenager, and I grew up in an experimental kitchen watching my mum make homemade cleaning products, skincare, and recreations of the many exotic dishes we sampled on our travels around the world,' says Tess. 'When I adopted a wholefoods lifestyle in my twenties and was introduced to less familiar concepts and ingredients, it was a natural next step to play with new combinations and flavours. But it wasn't until I started my blog in 2010 that I really started to push the boundaries of what could be created in a blender. I'm

always looking for the next idea that's going to create fabulous flavours and make healthy living easier.'

But Tess admits she was surprised by just how popular her blog became, as at the time most bloggers were only using blenders for making juices and smoothies. 'I saw an opportunity to do something different in the space, and I was fortunate that the point of difference got noticed by some key people very early on, and was celebrated in the media. The "What's your perfect blend?" question seemed to inspire people, then other media, publishers, agents and brands starting reaching out to me, and it grew from there. Five emails a week turned into 500, and then 5,000, and then more, and here we are.'

Like many healthy-living bloggers, Tess's food experiments have also been motivated by a desire to tackle a persistent health issue. After feeling constantly lethargic during her teenage years, Tess was eventually diagnosed with Epstein-Barr, and at the suggestion of a naturopath she gave up gluten, dairy and meat and started to feel better almost overnight. 'I'd been brought up on a conventional meat-and-three-veg diet, and was, indeed, both gluten- and dairy-intolerant. This was my awakening to food as medicine and a revolution in the way I ate. I pursued a keen interest in the relationship between food and health, studied nutrition science, and took cooking classes to develop my culinary skills.'

After realising food could be the key to better health, Tess was introduced to macrobiotics by a friend which, although it proved to be an important step in her journey of self-discovery, still didn't make her feel as well as she knew she could. 'Frustrated that I hadn't found the golden ticket, I was convinced that there had to be, somewhere out there, a perfect wholefoods diet that would be my magical "cure". As a perfectionist, I was going to master the art of my own health, even if it killed me!' she says.

Eating for better health

'In my self-imposed and largely self-directed crusade, I tried countless wholefood diets. I became vegetarian, then vegan, discovered the benefits of raw foods, practised Body Ecology anti-candida principles, employed Chinese yin and yang strategies, dabbled in Ayurvedic techniques, tried out the blood-type theory, embraced the pH Miracle alkalinity plan, and whipped up zillions of green smoothies. Yes, I really was one of those people who finds the answer every six months! But while all these healthy approaches had things to offer, none was quite right. When I embraced the concept of bio-individuality – the recognition that no single, blanket health strategy will work for everybody – things shifted.'

Today, Tess takes a flexible 'pick-and-mix' approach, adopting the tactics and foods that work for her and creating her

own personal 'immune-boosting Tess diet'. Incorporating lots of leafy greens, alkaline vegetables and raw sprouted nuts, seeds and grains, plus daily green juices and smoothies, it's a basic plan that she believes is beneficial to most people. Other than that, she encourages everyone to feel free to tweak and adapt her simple and versatile recipes to find their own perfect balance.

'When I started my blog, I got inspiration from my blender, and quickly saw blending not only as a method of food preparation but also as a guiding metaphor for how I live,' she explains. 'Combining different concepts, flavours, and philosophies plays a crucial part in my ideal balance of food, exercise, work and fun. While my approach isn't a system exactly, it does add up to a recipe for success and happiness, and one that I believe is worth sharing.'

● Find out more about Tess at www.healthyblenderrecipes.com.

TESS'S BLENDER-INSPIRED RECIPES

Satay skewers ✔

This almond-butter-based take on satay is divine, and if you add the pumpkin seed oil your sauce will taste pretty close to the traditional peanut version. And don't miss the herb boosters for gorgeous presentation and added flavour.

Makes 8 skewers | Prep 30 mins
Cook 35 mins

For the marinade:

2 tbsp gluten-free soy sauce or tamari
2 tbsp toasted sesame oil
1 tbsp finely chopped garlic (about 3 cloves)
1 tsp sea salt
½ tsp freshly ground black pepper
½ tsp finely chopped fresh ginger
¼ tsp chilli flakes

For the vegetables and tofu:

1 red pepper, deseeded and cut into 3cm chunks
1 yellow pepper, deseeded and cut into 3cm chunks
1 small red onion, cut into 8 chunks
2 courgettes, cut into 1cm rounds
8 button mushrooms, halved
16 cherry tomatoes
397g packet extra-firm tofu, cut into 16 equal pieces

For the sauce:

½ tsp extra-virgin olive oil
35g shallot, finely chopped
120ml full-fat canned coconut milk (shake, then pour)
130g roasted almond butter
2 tbsp pumpkin seed oil, plus extra to taste (optional)
2 tbsp gluten-free soy sauce or tamari
1½ tbsp fresh lime juice
2 tsp finely chopped garlic (about 2 cloves)
2 tsp finely chopped fresh ginger
2 tsp coconut nectar, plus extra to taste
1 tsp red curry paste, plus extra to taste
¼ tsp chilli flakes, plus extra to taste
⅛ tsp sea salt, plus extra to taste

OPTIONAL BOOSTERS:

1 tsp finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
1 tsp finely chopped coriander
1 tsp finely chopped basil

1 If using bamboo skewers, soak 8 in water for 30 minutes so the skewers won't burn.

2 To make the marinade, whisk all of the ingredients together in a large mixing bowl. Add all of the vegetables (not the tofu) and toss to coat evenly. Transfer the vegetables to another bowl and use the marinade left in the bowl to coat the tofu by gently rolling the pieces in the marinade or by applying the marinade with a pastry brush so the pieces don't break up.

3 Preheat the oven to 220C/fan 200C/gas 7. Line 1 large baking sheet or 2 smaller baking sheets with silicone liners or baking paper.

4 Assemble the skewers by threading the vegetables and tofu onto each one in the following order: 1 tomato, 1 mushroom half, 1 courgette round, 1 red pepper piece, 1 yellow pepper piece, 1 tofu cube, 1 red pepper piece, 1 yellow pepper piece, 1 onion chunk, 1 courgette round, 1 tofu cube, 1 mushroom half, 1 tomato. Place the skewers lengthways on the prepared baking sheets. Reserve any remaining marinade.

5 Roast the skewers for 15–20 minutes until the vegetables are lightly browned. Remove from the oven, gently turn the skewers over and roast for a further 15 minutes until the vegetables are tender. (Alternatively, grill the skewers over a high heat for about 10 minutes on each side.)

6 While the skewers are cooking,

make the sauce. Throw all of the sauce ingredients into your blender and blast on high for 30–60 seconds until smooth and creamy. You may have to scrape down the sides of the container. Tweak the pumpkin seed oil, coconut nectar, curry paste, chilli flakes and salt to taste.

7 Brush the cooked skewers with the reserved marinade and sprinkle with the herb boosters. Serve immediately and pass the sauce around the table.

■ PER SKEWER 324 cals, fat 24.1g, sat fat 4.9g, carbs 18.2g, sugars 6.5g, protein 14.8g, salt 1.9g, fibre 5.6g

RECIPE BOOSTERS

TESS SAYS: 'These extra ingredients are listed for each recipe to enhance flavour and/or nutrition. I've chosen them to work on their own or together, so you can supplement any base recipe with one, two or all three.'

SATAY SKEWERS



BASIL-IS-THE-BOMB SAUCE V

120ml extra-virgin olive oil
50g basil leaves
20g finely chopped salad onion (white and green parts)
1½ tbsp fresh lemon juice
2 tsp finely chopped garlic (about 2 cloves)
¼ tsp apple cider vinegar
¼ tsp sea salt, plus extra to taste
⅛ tsp chilli flakes, plus extra to taste

Throw everything into your blender and blast on high for 30–60 seconds until smooth and emulsified. Tweak the salt and chilli flakes to taste. This is best served immediately, but will keep, sealed and chilled, for about 5 days.

SO GOOD! SOURED CREAM V

80ml filtered water
2½ tbsp fresh lime juice, plus extra to taste
1½ tbsp apple cider vinegar, plus extra to taste
140g raw unsalted cashews, soaked (see note, opposite)
2 tsp Dijon mustard
1 tsp finely chopped garlic (about 1 clove)
¾ tsp sea salt, plus extra to taste

Optional boosters:

30g raw cauliflower florets
1 tsp onion powder
1 tbsp finely chopped chives

Pour the water, lime juice and apple cider vinegar into the blender. Then add the cashews, mustard, garlic, salt and the cauliflower and onion powder boosters. Blast on high for about 1 minute until smooth and creamy. You may have to stop the machine periodically and scrape down the sides of the container. Tweak the lime juice, vinegar and salt to taste. Stir in the chive booster. Transfer to a container and chill in the fridge for a few hours to thicken.



GENTLE LENTILS

Gentle lentils V

When my friend Denise goes lentil, I go mental. Add my basil sauce to her protein-powered soup, and ka-pow! You've got a knockout. The sauce is essential and rockets this rustic vegetable and legume soup into the stratosphere. The lemon juice is key, brightening and lifting the flavours, and I never say no to a dollop of my cashew-based soured cream. Top with slices of avocado and greens for some raw nutrition.

Serves 6 | Prep 30 mins | Cook 30 mins

2 tbsp grapeseed oil or extra-virgin olive oil
2 tsp finely chopped garlic (about 2 cloves)
150g yellow onion, diced
132g celery, diced
160g carrots, diced
1 tsp sea salt, plus extra to taste
370g dry green lentils
1 tbsp finely chopped fresh thyme, plus extra to taste
½ tsp ground black pepper
2 litres vegetable stock
fresh lemon juice

240ml basil-is-the-bomb sauce (see recipe, left)

OPTIONAL BOOSTERS:

1 avocado, stoned, peeled and sliced
So good! Soured cream (see recipe, left)
40g pea shoots

1 Heat the oil in a large saucepan over a medium-low heat and sauté the garlic, onion, celery, carrot and ½ teaspoon of the salt for about 5 minutes until the vegetables start to soften slightly.

2 Stir in the lentils, thyme, pepper and stock. Increase the heat to medium-high, bring the mixture to a lively simmer (not a full boil) and cook for about 5 minutes.

3 Reduce the heat to medium-low, cover, add the remaining ½ teaspoon of salt and simmer for about 20 minutes, until the lentils and vegetables are tender but not mushy. Add salt to taste.

4 Ladle the soup into bowls and add about ¼ teaspoon of lemon juice to each serving. Drizzle 1 tablespoon of the basil sauce over the top of each bowl and serve with a few of the avocado slices, a dollop of the soured cream and some of the pea shoots. Pass the remaining basil sauce and more lemon juice around the table.

■ PER SERVING 452 cals, fat 23.6, sat fat 3g, carbs 47g, sugars 4.4g, protein 16.5g, salt 1.3g, fibre 8.6g

‘Combining different concepts, flavours and philosophies plays a crucial part in my ideal balance of food, exercise, work and fun’



CAULIFLOWER
MAC 'N' CHEEZE

Cauliflower mac 'n' cheese ✓

This healthy homage to a family fave tastes like it's swimming in mature Cheddar. For kids, omit the mushrooms and herbs. For grown-ups, max out the flavour with the cayenne, chives and salad onion boosters. Mac 'n' cheese just got interesting!

Serves 4 | Prep 20 mins | Cook 20 mins

454g gluten-free elbow macaroni
6 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
sea salt
220g shiitake or chestnut mushrooms, diced
1 tbsp gluten-free soy sauce or tamari
1 tbsp finely chopped fresh thyme
150g onion, diced
1 tbsp finely chopped garlic (about 3 cloves)
4 tbsp vegetable stock
2 tbsp fresh lemon juice
140g raw unsalted cashews, soaked
(see note, right)
140g cauliflower florets, steamed
44g nutritional yeast flakes, plus extra to taste
1 tbsp white miso paste
⅓ tsp ground turmeric
2 tbsp finely chopped flat-leaf parsley, plus extra to taste
freshly ground black pepper

OPTIONAL BOOSTERS:

⅓ tsp cayenne pepper

2 tbsp finely chopped chives, plus extra to taste

2 tbsp finely chopped salad onion (green parts only), plus extra to taste

1 Bring a large pot of water to the boil with 1 tablespoon of the olive oil and a pinch of salt. Cook the pasta according to the instructions on the packet until *al dente*, and drain thoroughly.

2 While the pasta is cooking, in a large frying pan over a medium heat, warm 3 tablespoons of the olive oil and sauté the mushrooms with the soy sauce and thyme for about 5 minutes, until the mushrooms are tender. Transfer to a large bowl.

3 In the same frying pan, heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil over a medium heat and gently sauté the onion and garlic for about 5 minutes, until soft and translucent. Allow to cool slightly.

4 To make the sauce, throw the onion mixture, 1½ teaspoons of salt, the stock, lemon juice, cashews, cauliflower, nutritional yeast, miso paste, turmeric and the cayenne pepper booster into your blender and blast on high for 30–60 seconds, until smooth and creamy.

5 Transfer the pasta to a large pot, and stir in the remaining tablespoon of olive oil. Stir the sauce into the pasta along with the mushrooms and gently warm over a

low heat. Stir in the parsley and the chive and salad onion boosters. Tweak the salt, nutritional yeast, parsley, chives and salad onion to taste, and season with black pepper.

■ PER SERVING 913 cals, fat 35.6g, sat fat 5.5 g, carbs 117.1g, sugars 11.1g, protein 40.6g, salt 3.2g, fibre 16g

SOAKING NUTS, SEEDS AND GRAINS

THE QUICK WAY Cover with boiling water; leave to stand for 10 minutes. The down side is this destroys live enzymes.

THE BETTER BUT SLOWER WAY

Submerge in filtered water with ½ teaspoon of salt and 1 teaspoon of lemon juice or vinegar per litre; wait the recommended time. Ideally overnight.



Recipes adapted from *The Perfect Blend* by Tess Masters (Jacqui Small, £16.99). Photography by Anson Smart.

Go Dutch!

If you've got friends coming for supper but don't want to over-indulge, try this deliciously light menu from the kitchen of Dutch nutritionist and bestselling food writer Rens Kroes.



PHOTOGRAPHY: ANNE TIMMER

Stuffed portobello mushrooms

This is the perfect dinner party appetiser that is guaranteed to impress. And don't tell anyone, but I've also been known to make these stuffed portobello mushrooms on a weekday evening, just because. My boyfriend and I share them for dinner and I reheat the leftovers for lunch the next day.

Serves 6 | Prep 5 mins | Cook 35 mins

150g buckwheat groats
480ml water
1 organic bouillon cube
6 portobello mushrooms
olive oil, for drizzling
1 red onion
3 cloves garlic
1 tsp coconut oil
1 tbsp organic white wine
100g peas
1 heaping tsp oregano
2 tbsp pesto
sea salt and black pepper, to taste
hard vegetarian goat's cheese
basil leaves

1 Rinse the buckwheat groats in a sieve and transfer to a small pot. Add the water and the bouillon cube. Bring to the boil, cover, lower the

heat, and simmer until the water has been absorbed, about 30 minutes.

2 In the meantime, preheat the grill to its highest setting. Clean the mushrooms and remove the hard stems. Lay them in the ovenproof dish, rounded-side down, and drizzle with olive oil. Grill for 8 minutes, turning the mushrooms over after 4 minutes.

3 Chop the onion and garlic and sauté in the coconut oil in a frying pan over low heat for about 2 minutes. Add the wine, cooked buckwheat groats, peas, oregano, pesto, and salt and pepper to taste. Stir to combine and continue cooking for another couple of minutes. Taste and adjust the seasoning, if desired.

4 Position the mushrooms on a serving dish, top each with 2 tablespoons of the buckwheat mixture, some grated goat's cheese, a drizzle of olive oil, and a basil leaf. Ready to serve!

■ PER SERVING 243 cals, fat 12.6g, sat fat 5.1g, carbs 23.5g, sugars 3.4g, protein 9.4g, salt 2g, fibre 2.9g

Lasagnette

My boyfriend loves lasagne with meat, but when I served him this variation on a theme, he was

STUFFED PORTOBELLO MUSHROOMS



TOMATO SAUCE V

1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
1 onion, finely chopped
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 tsp oregano
1.5kg ripe roma tomatoes, finely chopped
sea salt and black pepper, to taste
a few basil leaves, finely chopped (optional)

Add the olive oil to a medium-sized pan and sauté the onion for 2 minutes over a medium-high heat. Then add the garlic, oregano and tomatoes. Let the sauce simmer for around 30 minutes. Stir often, using a wooden spoon to prevent the sauce from sticking. Once the sauce has thickened up, press it through a sieve or vegetable mill. Return the strained sauce to the pan and simmer over low heat for another 30 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste, and sprinkle with finely chopped basil.

positively surprised. What's more, this lasagnette – made without pasta – is much lighter than traditional lasagne, so you don't have to feel guilty about eating a second helping.

Serves 2

Prep 10 mins

Cook 25 mins

1 tbsp coconut oil
1 small red onion, chopped
7 mushrooms, chopped
2 cloves garlic, chopped
350g tomato sauce (see recipe, above)
1 free-range egg
1 tsp sea salt
1 tsp black pepper
1 tsp ground galangal
1 tsp curry powder
1 tsp turmeric
pinch of cayenne
65g soft vegetarian goat's cheese, divided
olive oil, for greasing
¾ courgette, thinly sliced into 'sheets'
1 tomato, chopped
small handful of fresh parsley, for garnish

1 Preheat the oven to 180C/fan 160C/gas 4. Warm the coconut oil in a frying pan and sauté the onion, mushrooms, and garlic for about 3 minutes. Add



the tomato sauce, egg, spices, and a scant tablespoon of the goat's cheese. Stir and simmer for about 5 minutes.

2 Grease a 30cm x 30cm ovenproof dish with olive oil and lay the first layer of courgette 'sheets' in the dish. Make layers, alternating between courgette, chopped tomato, sauce,

and a sprinkling of goat's cheese, in that order.

3 Bake the lasagnette for about 15 minutes, until tender. Sprinkle with the chopped parsley before serving.

■ **PER SERVING** 468 cals, fat 27.4g, sat fat 14g, carbs 37.5g, sugars 31.5g, protein 19.1g, salt 4.6g, fibre 13.1g

Pistachio ice cream

Forget gelato. The tastiest ice cream is the one you make yourself!

Serves 2

Prep/cook 25 mins

2 large handfuls of shelled pistachios, divided
pinch of sea salt
1 tbsp maple syrup
½ avocado
2 frozen ripe bananas, sliced
1 tsp pure vanilla extract
½ tsp almond extract
1 tbsp almond milk (optional)

1 Roughly chop a handful of pistachios and toast them in a dry frying pan with a pinch of salt. Add the maple syrup, stir, then set aside and allow to cool.

2 Put the avocado, frozen bananas, vanilla, almond extract, almond milk (if needed, depending on how thick the mixture is), and the remainder of the pistachio nuts into a food processor, and process until a creamy ice cream is formed. Don't over-process here! You're not looking to make a milkshake.

3 Serve the ice cream in bowls, with a good sprinkling of the toasted nuts.

■ PER SERVING 490 cals, fat 36.3g, sat fat 6.4g, carbs 32.9g, sugars 28.8g, protein 8.7g, salt 1.5g, fibre 8.2g

PISTACHIO ICE CREAM



Recipes adapted from *Power Food: Original Recipes for Happy Healthy Living* by Rens Kroes (Fair Winds, £16.99). Photography by Anne Timmer.

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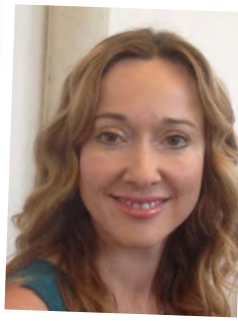


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Sweet dreams

BY SARA NIVEN, BEAUTY EDITOR



Create a restful bedtime beauty routine with our pick of calming beauty products.



Skin deep

Your skin repairs itself while you sleep so it is worth investing in a good quality product to treat it while you slumber. Katherine Daniels' new vegan Nurturing Night Balm is a luxury skin treatment rich in essential fatty acids and formulated with rose oil to calm the mind.

● £35 from www.katherinedanielscosmetics.com

Beauty sleep

Neom Organic's Intense Night Repair Face, Body & Hair Oil is part of their Scent to Sleep range and a multipurpose vegan product containing an aromatic mix of English lavender, sweet basil and jasmine essential oils to instantly calm. Ideal for smoothing on after a warm relaxing bath before falling into bed, it may not be cheap but you'll soon be hooked by this gorgeous bedtime treat!

● £32 from www.neomorganics.com



Pillow talk

A pillow spray signals time for sleep and the new Goodnight Pillow Mist from Neal's Yard Remedies is a subtle but soothing vegan-friendly blend of lavender and vetiver for grounding and de-stressing.

Also check out the Beauty Sleep range, which includes products for the face, body and bath infused with calming ylang-ylang.

● £15 from www.nealsyardremedies.com



From dusk to dawn

Perfect for popping in a pocket and handy for travel, Heavenly Days Sleep Temple Balm from Champneys is an uplifting blend of geranium, soothing lavender and chamomile in an almond oil and shea butter base. Also available as a pillow mist.

● £6 from shop.champneys.com



In the dark

A completely dark room is a sleep essential. If that's not practical, invest in a sleep mask.

This luxury Peaceful Doves Eye Mask by Born Peaceful is made from natural linen with a lavender and flaxseed filling, and a removable cover for washing.

● £28 from www.notonthehighstreet.com

Disclaimer: *Vegetarian Living* only features products that are entirely vegetarian and/or vegan in formulation. The magazine also requests an assurance that the product and ingredients within it are not tested on animals and the company does not carry out or fund animal testing either in the UK or overseas. However, formulations can change and policies can vary, so we would advise checking directly with the companies if you have any concerns.

HOT SHOT

German natural skin care company Annemarie Börlind has produced a range called Beauty Shots – tubes of intense facial skin treatments that are perfect for applying as part of a pre-bedtime routine. With five in the range, targeting everything from sensitive to tired or mature skin, there will be one to suit. We like both the Anti-Aging Revitalizer and Hydro Booster for the innovative, no-mess dispenser and the fact the formulations are non-greasy and absorb super-quickly, making them suitable for applying before make-up in the morning too.

● Prices start from £29.95 for 15ml; all the options are vegan-friendly and available at www.borlind.co.uk.



HAVE A BOOST!

We have four Annemarie Börlind Hydro Boosters to win. Great for plumping up and treating dehydrated skin, they are suitable for all skin types and ages. To enter, visit www.vegetarianliving.co.uk. Competition closes 9 March 2017.

Your bedtime routine

BRUSH

London-based dentist Dr Richard Marques says it's essential to brush your teeth before bed. 'When you hit the sack without brushing, plaque starts to harden and calcify on your teeth. Once plaque has calcified, it's impossible to remove with just a toothbrush and floss. The gums see plaque build-up as an infection, so your immune system springs into action to attack that infection. By attacking the plaque build-up, your body starts to destroy the healthy tissues that hold your teeth in place, making the gums begin to pull away from the tooth. Taking two minutes to brush and floss before bed can save you years of pain.'



CLEANSE

Sleeping with make-up on is the quickest way to cause a breakout or leave your skin looking dull and jaded the next day. Even if you haven't worn make-up, the grime of the day still needs removing. Facial wipes aren't the most effective way to cleanse, but for when you want a quick option, Neal's Yard Remedies Organic Facial Wipes are a handy standby (£5.50 for 25 from www.nealsyardremedies.com).

MOISTURISE

Skin renews itself while you sleep, so give it a helping hand with a hydrating product that suits your skin type. A few drops of a nourishing oil like Sanatio Naturalis Rosehip Seed Oil is another good option, particularly if you suffer from sensitive skin (£28 from www.sanationaturalis.com). Bedtime is also a great opportunity to give hands a squirt of intensive hand cream, and feet will benefit from the same, before putting on socks for an overnight moisturising treatment. Try Spa Find Heavenly Hydration hand and foot creams which are both vegan-friendly (£22 for both products from shopforspa.com).



SLEEP TIGHT

National Bed Month takes place in March when the Sleep Council promotes the health benefits of a good night's sleep and how best to get one.



Dr Craig Hudson, author of *Feel Great Day & Night: The natural approach to treating insomnia*, shares his top tips.

While the amount of sleep individuals need varies, it's important to focus on quality of sleep rather than quantity. The unfortunate truth is that there are many things in our current lives that work against the brain's own natural inclination (or rhythm) towards a healthy sleep; often our lifestyles are too frenetic to allow the natural sleep chemicals to take over at the end of the day, and our sleep environments are too bright and too noisy.

Sleep deprivation results in tiredness and irritability and will impair your ability to carry out day-to-day tasks, as well as work efficiently. A lack of sleep can also result in weight gain as the two hormones ghrelin and leptin that are key in regulating your metabolism are also affected. In addition, research has identified that a lack of sleep causes changes in brain activity that leads to people feeling hungrier and craving more fattening foods.

Diet plays an important role in your ability to sleep. Tryptophan is an amino acid that is metabolised into melatonin by night. Your body cannot make tryptophan but by eating a diet high in tryptophan (soya beans, peanuts and sunflower seeds are good vegetarian sources), or taking a tryptophan-rich drink before bedtime, you can further increase your chances of falling asleep. Avoid stimulants such as caffeine and alcohol, and exercise in the morning rather than in the evening.

Because tryptophan needs darkness to make melatonin, your bedroom must be dark enough for you to fall asleep, and stay asleep. Even low amounts of light, such as the glow from a mobile phone, tablet or other device such as a clock radio, will suppress the production of melatonin. Invest in blackout curtains or blinds. Set your alarm and then turn the digital clock face away from you or even cover it with a cloth. Buy a good quality sleep mask that fits snugly around your features. Even the nightlight left on the landing for your children is enough of a glow to disrupt sleep, so close your door.

● Dr Hudson's free guide, 'The One Week to Better Sleep Program', can be found at www.zenbev.co.uk. For more advice, go to www.sleepcouncil.org.uk.

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RECIPE: CHEESE & CANNELLINI BEAN PIE, FROM ON THE PULSE BY GEORGINA FUGGLE (KYLE BOOKS)
PHOTOGRAPH: ALI ALLEN

Super Sunday lunches

APRIL ISSUE, ON SALE 9 MARCH

USEFUL CONVERSIONS

Use these handy conversion guides to help you out in the kitchen. For readers in Australia or the USA who prefer to use cup measurements, try an online converter, like the user-friendly calculator at www.theonlineconverter.co.uk.

WEIGHT

10g	1/4oz	700g	1lb 9oz
25g	1oz	800g	1lb 12oz
50g	1 3/4oz	900g	2lb
75g	2 3/4oz	1kg	2lb 4oz
100g	3oz		
125g	4 1/2oz		
150g	5 1/2oz		
175g	6oz		
200g	7oz		
225g	8oz		
250g	9oz		
275g	9 3/4oz		
300g	10 1/2oz		
325g	11 1/2oz		
350g	12oz		
375g	13oz		
400g	14oz		
425g	15oz		
450g	1lb		
500g	1lb 2oz		
600g	1lb 5oz		



OVEN TEMPERATURES

Celsius	Fahrenheit	Gas mark
110	225	1/4
130	250	1/2
140	275	1
150	300	2
170	325	3
180	350	4
190	375	5
200	400	6
220	425	7
230	455	8

VOLUME

30ml	1fl oz
50ml	2fl oz
100ml	3 1/2fl oz
125ml	4fl oz
150ml	5fl oz (1/4 pint)
175ml	6fl oz
200ml	7fl oz
300ml	10fl oz (1/2 pint)
400ml	14fl oz
500ml	18fl oz
600ml	1 pint
700ml	1 1/4 pints
850ml	1 1/2 pints
1 litre	1 3/4 pints
1.2 litres	2 pints

SOURCE: Guild of Food Writers

FRESH AND NATURAL

Organyc's vegan-friendly panty liners are made using 100% organic cotton that's been grown without the use of artificial pesticides and bleached without chlorine, which greatly reduces the risk of intimate irritations, rashes and redness. The soft organic cotton is highly breathable while the ultra-thin pad is discreet and shapes to the contours of your body for comfort.

● £3.49 from www.organyc.co.uk.



BABY LOVE

The award-winning 100% natural baby care range from Handmade Naturals started with their best-selling Bottom Dream Balm, formulated to soothe nappy rash, and now includes includes hair care, bath products, flower water washes, baby wipes and oils blended to sooth cradle cap. Handmade Naturals baby products contain no synthetic ingredients, harsh SLS or chemical preservatives, which means they are also suitable for adults with very sensitive skin. All are Vegan Society registered and certified cruelty-free.

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Total Sweet is a natural sugar alternative made from sustainable European birch and beech wood. With fewer calories and 'available' carbohydrates than sugar, it releases energy slowly making it ideal for those looking to live a healthier lifestyle. It also actively promotes healthy teeth and has the taste and texture of ordinary granulated sugar. There's no need for any special recipes, simply replace sugar with Total Sweet one-for-one in baking or hot drinks for the same great-tasting results.

● Available in supermarkets and health stores nationwide for £2.70. For more information, visit www.totalsweet.co.uk.

THE ESSENTIAL COLLECTION

A shopping guide to the latest products for your vegetarian or vegan lifestyle...



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● From £11.99, available at health food stores and pharmacies, as well as online at www.manukahealthuk.com.

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MEAT-FREE ANY DAY

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Alex Bourke of Vegetarian Guides beetles around Merseyside's veggie delights.

LIVERPOOL

The European Capital of Culture 2008 makes a super veggie break. Visitors flock to the Waterfront for ferry trips, Tate Modern, the Beatles Story, and the Maritime, Slavery and Liverpool museums. There's shopping, football, pubs and clubs, or venture to Crosby beach and beyond for Antony Gormley's *Another Place* life-size iron statues, red squirrels, and vegan cream tea at the Crosby Tea Rooms. The city boasts a dozen veggie eateries, vegan festivals this year in March and August, and many mainstream restaurants offer a separate vegan menu.

The Egg Café, in a Victorian warehouse loft near Central and Lime Street stations, was for years the only full-time veggie place in town. Open late every day, it's incredible value at £9.75 for three courses. Mains include

potato and pea Madras, spicy bean burger and Sunday roast. Their vegan wheat-free apple crumble and chocolate crunch cake have long been local legends. At night the candles come out for a more relaxed and romantic restaurant vibe, and you can bring your own wine for £1 corkage per bottle.

The Bagelry vegetarian café gives a nod to its Chinatown setting with specials like pho noodle broth with tofu, but beguiling bagels are their business, made with untreated organic Shipton Mill flour. Favourites include rye bagel with avocado and salsa, or jalapeño bagel with herby cashew cream cheese. There are also pancakes, porridge with blackcurrant compote and toasted almonds, and some unusual soups and salads. Finish with a slice of chocolate orange cheesecake and a bag of bagels for later.

You can try drop-in yoga or meditation before eating at **White Wolf Kitchen** vegetarian café and yoga studio, near the Cavern Club. Breakfast



ranges from sourdough toast with avocado to the blowout scrambled turmeric tofu with tortilla, spiced black beans and seasoned seitan steak. For lunch have quesadillas, falafel, sweet potato and lentil soup with spinach, tofu and kale Caesar salad, or chickpea fake flaked tuna rye butty. They also serve juices, raw cakes, and matcha latte with cashew milk.



Also recommended...

- **Ital Fresh** vegan Jamaican takeaway goes all rasta-raunt at night. Try cauli wings in ginger beer batter, jerk mushrooms, curried lentils, dumplings, and chocolate plantain dessert.
- **Sanskriti** vegetarian restaurant's huge menu includes South Indian dosas, Gujarati thalis, North Indian curries, and vegan ice cream.
- **The Old Hardware Shop** is a master of 'meaty' traditional café nosh, vegan-style, like

the titanic triple toastie with sausage, pepperoni, baloney, chorizo, chicken, Cheddar and mozzarella.

● **Greendays** vegetarian café near Sefton Park specialises in cooked breakfast, pancakes and vegan desserts like Bakewell tart and chocolate and ginger cheesecake.

● **The Juicery** at Exchange Flags does smoothies, soups and raw vegan cheesecakes.



SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

NEED TO KNOW

Crosby Tea Rooms

www.thecrosbytearooms.co.uk

The Egg Café

www.eggcafe.co.uk

The Bagelry

www.thebagelryliverpool.co.uk

White Wolf Kitchen

www.whitewolfyoga.co.uk

Ital Fresh

www.italfreshhq.com

Sanskriti

www.sanskritirestaurant.co.uk

The Old Hardware Shop

www.theoldhardwareshop.yolasite.com

Greendays

Facebook: Greendays Café

The Juicery

Facebook: The Juicery Liverpool

TOURIST INFO

www.visitliverpool.com

www.scouseveg.co.uk



ABOUT ALEX

Alex Bourke from is the co-author with Ronny Worsey of *Vegetarian North of England*, which includes more places to eat out in Liverpool and a map of the city centre. Available from bookshops for £9.95 or online at www.vegetarian.travel.



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