

RECIPES & FOOD PREP

BALANCORE

NUTRITION & WELLNESS PROGRAMS



ABOUT THESE RECIPES, TIPS & TRICKS

You've been asking me to write down my healthy recipes that are quick, hassle-free but also satisfying and interesting enough to cope with burgeoning taste-buds of city-foodies and/or family.

The biggest issue I have with writing things down is that I'm an "ish" cook. That is, I never use precise measurements or timings, going with my gut-feel or winging it most of the time. I've always been like this and I blame my mother who I watched rustle up a dinner party for 12 "without anything in the fridge" in an hour has always been more of a ready steady cook than a prepared Penelope. Obviously there are major disadvantages with this – first being the most pressing: how do you write down "Ish" recipes?! Well, this book is giving it a go. Because, there are also some major advantages, in that it opens up the kitchen to a wonderful mindful, relaxed process where neither planning is a necessity, nor clocks watching over you. I appreciate this will really frustrate some, and if you know you don't work like this then I suggest you don't use these recipes and go to a normal healthy cookbook. There are loads of healthy recipes out there and more being printed by the day.

Based on this approach, I've pulled together recipes along with a week's food diary and shopping list. Most recipes are based favourites of my own which I've tried and tested as "quick wins". A few recipes are from the ideas of others' and tweaked to make either quicker to prepare and/or healthier (where this is the case I've noted where the original came from).

Most of these recipes can be done in no more than 20 mins and every single one of them aims to be a "balanced" meal of macronutrients based on a "Health Eating Plate" – i.e. of plant-based carbohydrates (mostly vegetable-based), proteins, and fats (anti-inflammatory fats mostly consisting of Omega 3s, Conjugated Linoleic Acid, Medium-Chain-Triglycerides or Mono-unsaturated fats – read more about these in the "About fats" section).

I hope you enjoy them, and I always appreciate your feedback as I continue to build on the content in here.

Warm wishes and happy days,

Charlotte

FOOD PREP TO MAKE COOKING EASIER

THESE HANDY KEEP-IN-THE-FRIDGE PRE-PREPARED INGREDIENTS, MEAL BASES & SNACKS WILL ENSURE YOU ARE NEVER CAUGHT SHORT – MEANING YOU ARE MORE LIKELY TO AVOID THE TAKEAWAY / PROCESSED OPTION.

PRE-PREPARED INGREDIENTS

1. Cooked onion and garlic

Onions are high in the important antioxidant quercetin, useful as an anti-inflammatory for conditions such as psoriasis, arthritis and cardiovascular health. Garlic is a brilliant anti-microbial and contains the antioxidant allicin, which has been used for centuries to fight off infection and boost the immune system.

Onion and garlic tends to be a good base for most recipes so it is useful to have some pre-prepared in fridge.

Ingredients

6 White/Red Onions
10 Cloves Garlic

Method

- Peel the outer layer off the onion and chop into chunks (there is a high concentration of flavonoids in the outer layers of onion flesh, so you'll want to be careful to remove as little of the edible part of the onion as possible when peeling it).
- Cook in a pan immediately on med. heat for 4 mins with nob butter
- Keep the garlic whole with skin on, and simply crush it with the side of a knife. The skin should now come away/ peel off more easily.
- Add to the pan with onions turning pale, cook together on med. heat for 2 mins
- Cool and store in airtight container for up to 4 days

2. Soaked seeds

Why soak seeds? Soaking removes the phytic acid content, making nutrients more available (see Roasted Pumpkin Seeds). It also activates the enzymes helping their absorption and digestion.

N.B. This is a 2 day prep process so it's best to make a huge batch that can be stored for later.

Ingredients

- Nuts/Seeds
- Filtered water
- Sea salt

Method

- Pour filtered water over nuts so they cover them twice over.
- Add 1-2 teasp sea salt
- Leave on counter/in cupboard overnight then drain and rinse, and dry with paper towel. *(Soaking time for nuts differs depending on the nut. Softer nuts such as cashews, macadamia and brazils need 2*

hours. Harder nuts such as pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, peanuts and hazelnuts and walnuts require 6-8 hours)

- To avoid mould on the nuts they must be either (a) eaten immediately (b) frozen to be used later in recipes or (c) dehydrated in a dehydration rack, or in oven at 75°C for 12 hours. If not, you can dry them with a paper towel and store them in the fridge for 12 hours.

PRE-PREPARED MEAL BASES

3. Baked or Boiled Sweet Potatoes

Ingredients

6 Sweet Potatoes

Method

If boiling simply chop into halves with skin on and cover with water and pinch of salt in a pan. Bring to boil and cover for 15 mins.

If baking, wrap in foil and bake at 1800F for 45 mins.

Leave to cool and store in fridge for 5 days as a meal accompaniment or a snack on its own.

N.B. Boiling has been seen to preserve the antioxidants and Vitamin A content better than steaming or baking, as well as lowering the glycaemic index of the potato! I provide both options however as a baked sweet potato is still a great snack, often preferred by children due to its sweeter flavour. It also has a higher Vitamin C content than baked and is of course still richer in antioxidants, vitamins, minerals and fiber than the white potato.

4. Large Quinoa Pot

“While no single food can supply all the essential life sustaining nutrients, quinoa comes as close as any other in the plant or animal kingdom.” (Philip White, Reseracher, Andes 1955). Quinoa is high in protein, fiber, iron and vitamin B and gluten free. NASA has proposed quinoa as an ideal food for long-duration space flights which speaks volumes about its health benefits.

Ingredients

400g uncooked White/Black/Red Quinoa (All are similar nutrition-wise. White is the most common and quickest to cook. Black has an earthier/sweeter taste. Red tends to hold its shape better)

1.5L Water

Method

- Rinse quinoa (this gets rid of a natural bitterness on the outside of the grain called saponin) and pour over boiling water, so that it covers the quinoa twice over. Bring to a simmer and cook quinoa for 15 mins (white) or 20 mins (red/black) until it starts to “sprout”.
- Don’t add a thing so it can be used with any meal (sweet/savoury) you are making. A quick fluff with a fork just before serving makes it less stodgy.
- Leave in fridge for additions to any salads/accompaniments/breakfasts (see Brekkies)

5. Cauliflower “Rice”

Finely diced cauliflower can be chopped into very small rice-like pieces and can be used instead of rice in any dish.

Ingredients

- 1 whole cauliflower

Method

- Blitz the cauliflower in a food processor or blender until it looks like small “grains”.
- Microwave or sauté for 3-6 minutes, or until it’s tender not but soggy. (I would prepare it with basic water or sauté in butter or ghee so you can then use any ingredient – sweet or savoury – with it that week.
- Let cool and store in an airtight container to use as an accompaniment to your main dishes for 5 days.

6. Chinese Lettuce Wraps

Ingredients

Pack of Chinese lettuce leaves

Method

Swap wheat/rye wraps (very common in UAE) for nutrient-packed chinese leaves. Not only will you avoid potential digestive/inflammatory/blood sugar issues from the processed gluten, sugar and preservatives found in most store-bought wraps, but this smart sandwich substitute will give you a good dose of vitamins A, C, K, calcium, fibre, magnesium and potassium too.

7. Sweet Potato/Beets/Plantain

Serves 4

Ingredients

300g Ripe plantains, beetroot or sweet potato

Method

Slice thinly. Toss with coconut oil and bake at 170°C for 30 minutes before seasoning.

8. Coconut “Pizza Crust”

Serves 4

Ingredients

Base

- 1 cup coconut flour
- 4-6 tblsp Water (absorbs liquid like a sponge!)
- 4 large Eggs
- 2 tsp Garlic powder
- 1 tblsp Dried oregano

Topping

- 1 pack tomato paste and cooked garlic
- Sprinkle of parmesan or swiss, hard cheese
- Green veggies of choice

Method

- Preheat oven to 180°C.
- Line four pizza pans with parchment paper and a touch of coconut oil or butter
- In a large bowl, whisk eggs with water, garlic powder, onion powder and dried oregano. Add coconut flour and stir in the Parmesan cheese
- Rest and let thicken for a couple of minutes to allow the coconut flour to soak up the liquid.

- Using a rubber spatula, transfer half of the mixture onto each of the prepared pans. Use a spatula to spread it out evenly into 8-inch circles.
- Bake the pizzas until set for 15 minutes
- Remove the pizzas from the oven and switch the oven to grill.
- *(Can be stored at this stage in fridge for 4 days or frozen)*
- Spread each pizza with half the pizza sauce, sprinkle with half the shredded cheese and your thinly sliced vegetable

9. "Coodles"

Ingredients

Courgette

Method

Shred raw courgette into thin noodle-like strands (with spiralizer) or tagliatelle-like strips (with a peeler) as a great substitute for pasta.

Works with pesto/ some marinara tomato and garlic sauce /raw cheese/raw butter and garlic, etc.

10. Paleo Bread

Ingredients

100g Almond flour (or almond meal)

2 eggs

1 nob Coconut oil

50g Coconut flour

(Mixture should stick together without being sticky – add a splash of water if required to make dough come together with mixing)

Method

Turn oven onto 180°C and line bread tin with greaseproof paper and coconut oil. Mix together all the ingredients until it comes together like dough. Bake in bread tin for 20 mins. Just because you're looking to cut down on grains doesn't mean you can't enjoy a nice slice of bread, muffin or sandwich. Can be served with savoury or sweet.

11. Sweet Potato "Bread buns"

Ingredients

1 large round sweet potato

Method

Slice the potato into rounds that are about ¼ inch thick

Put in the toaster for 5 minutes or bake in the oven at 180°C for 15 minutes to replicate carb-dense rolls or bread.

12. Rice-less Sushi

Nori is an edible red seaweed that's popular in East Asia and is packed with protein, fiber and trace minerals — and is, in fact, an iodine-rich food that can also prevent an iron deficiency.

Ingredients

Nori sheets

½ avocado

Veggies of choice (e.g. beansprouts, carrots)

Tuna

Method

Lay out a nori sheet and top with avocado, veggies, tuna, then roll up and dip into olive oil dip/hummus or tamari (sesame seeds).

BREAKFAST

Naturally sweet breakfasts

13. Chia (or any!) seed pudding – filling and lovely.

Serves 4

Ingredients

- Chia seeds
- 1.5-2 cans coconut milk

Method

- Pop 8 tablespoons of chia seeds into 4 cups (2 per cup), cover with canned coconut milk, sprinkle with cinnamon and allow to set in the fridge for 10 minutes. Add berries for extra flavour. Also makes a lovely pudding – especially with grated dark (72%+) chocolate on top!

14. Quinoa bircher

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 100g Pre-cooked quinoa
- Coconut milk
- Seeds/almonds
- Cinnamon

Method

- Use pre-cooked, cold quinoa – place 1 tablespoon into cup and add coconut milk with handful seeds or almonds and cinnamon to soak overnight. Add fruit if needed for extra taste.

15. Quinoa porridge

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 100g quinoa uncooked (or can use 8 tablespoons cooked quinoa)
- Cinnamon
- Hazelnuts & flax seed (ground is best for absorption)
- Milk (Coconut/Unsweetened Almond/Raw dairy milk) or Hot water
- Greek Yoghurt

Method

- Rinse and cook quinoa until sprouted (20mins in simmering water – cover quinoa with water twice over and it will absorb all the water without needing to be drained. Always make sure you can see the sprouts as anything under than may give you dicky tummy).
- Halfway through cooking add nuts/seeds.
- 1 cup warm milk (*can remove this step if you are just using yoghurt*)
- Pour warm milk over quinoa porridge, add cinnamon and eat.

16. No-Rice Rice Pudding

Serves: 4

Ingredients

1-2 cauliflower heads (makes 1 cup cauliflower rice)

4 eggs

½ teaspoon sea salt

¼ cup gluten free (e.g. coconut/almond/teff/chickpea) flour

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 cup maple syrup and/or 1 cup raisins (*These are optional for a sweeter pudding. Those with insulin resistance or trying to lose tummy fat should avoid*).

1.5 cans coconut milk

Method

- Pre heat oven to 165°C
- Pulse cauliflower in a food processor until “rice grains” are made.
- Combine the cauliflower grains, eggs and salt in a bowl and mix well. Stir in flour and vanilla (add raisins and syrup if including for a sweeter pudding). When combined, add in milk.
- Pour into baking pan.
- Bake for 25-30 minutes (should be set on the top)

17. Gluten-Free Blueberry Muffins

Taken from Dr Axe.

Ingredients

2 cups almond flour

3 eggs

⅓ cup honey

½ teaspoon baking soda

Pinch of sea salt

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

5-6 tablespoon coconut oil or ghee, melted

1 cup fresh blueberries

Method

- Preheat oven to 180°C
- In a bowl, combine almond flour, baking soda and sea salt.
- In a separate bowl, combine eggs, honey, vanilla and coconut oil/ghee.
- Combine both mixtures together. Once well incorporated, add blueberries and mix.
- Fill a muffin pan with liners. Fill each liner with batter.
- Bake in oven for 20-30 minutes

18. Sugar-Free Mousse Treat

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 1 can coconut milk, preferably organic and free from additives/emulsifiers
- 8 pieces of organic, 72% ++ Dark Chocolate
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract / cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons soaked nuts, chopped (optional)

Method

Place coconut milk in the refrigerator for a few hours or overnight so that the cream (the fatty delicious part) hardens, separates and rises to the top. Open the can and scoop out this hardened cream, placing it in a large glass or stainless steel mixing bowl. You won't need the remaining liquid at the bottom of the can for now, but you can save it for use in other recipes.

Melt dark chocolate in a bowl over simmering water. Using a hand held mixer on low speed, slowly start to whip the coconut cream (using the same techniques you would for regular dairy cream). Add chocolate and vanilla extract or cinnamon and gradually work to a higher speed until ingredients are well combined and you have incorporated enough air for desired texture. Top with your favorite variety of chopped nuts for a bit of added crunch, or a handful of fresh berries and serve immediately. Mousse will also keep well in the refrigerator for several days.

Savoury breakfasts

19. Quick scramble

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 8 eggs.
- Cream cheese or Grass fed butter (dairy-free alternative is coconut cream)
- ½ tsp each of Parsley, Cayenne Pepper & Black Pepper.

Method

Over low heat stir eggs and butter/cheese/butter. Add parsley, cayenne pepper & black pepper. Eat with a green leaf (e.g. rocket/lambs tongue lettuce/spinach).

20. Courgette Egg Stack

Serves 4

Ingredients

For the outer layers

- 2 Large Aubergine
- 1 Tsp butter or coconut oil
- Cold pressed Olive Oil

For the filling

- 2 Organic free-range egg
- 50g Smoked salmon
- 1 Avocado
- 2 Courgette
- 1 Tbsp Apple cider vinegar

Method

- **PREPARE AUBERGINES:** Preheat the oven to 180 degrees, cut each aubergine in to 4 length-way slices – (so you end up with 8 x 1 inch slices). Heat the butter in a griddle pan on a medium heat. Add the aubergine slices to the pan and cook for a few minutes on each side, then place in the oven for 15 minutes.
- **PREPARE OTHER INGREDIENTS:** While that is cooking through:
 - Haphazardly mash-up the avocado
 - Thinly slice the courgettes into slivers (can use a peeler to get them really thin)
 - Poach the egg for 3-5min in the water + apple cider vinegar

- **STACK:** Remove the aubergines from the oven, transfer to a plate and drizzle with olive oil layer the egg, smoked salmon, avocado and a sliver or 2 of courgette on one half of the aubergine, top with the second half.

Tip: Experiment with different fillings – e.g. this can be a great steak sandwich with a grass-fed steak.

See Batch Recipes for more breakfasts

LUNCH & SUPPER

21. Grass Fed Beef Sandwich – bread-free

Serves 4

Cooking time: 20 minutes

For the outer layers

- 8 slices Iceberg Lettuce or lightly steamed White Cabbage
- 1 Tsp butter or coconut oil

For the filling

- 1 Avocado
- 1 Tomatoe – sliced
- Dijon or wholegrain mustard
- 4 Steaks

Method

Fry the steak 3-6 min on one side, whilst boiling pan of water.

Turn steak over and place cabbage in steamer on pan of water – cook steak and cabbage for 3-6 mins

STACK: Remove steak and cabbage – place cabbage on bottom and stack mashed avocado next, then steak, mustard, tomato and lettuce on top as a “sandwich”.

22. Quinoa Risotto

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 1 10-ounce package pre-washed spinach
- 1 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon red chilli flakes
- 1 cup quinoa, rinsed under cold water
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 4 cups low-sodium, fat free chicken broth or vegetable broth
- 1 4-ounce package fresh goat cheese, room temperature
- 4 tablespoons grated Romano or Parmesan cheese
- 1 lemon, zested and juiced
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

Method

- Microwave the spinach in its bag on high 1-2 minutes or until it wilts. Set aside. Warm the oil in a large skillet over medium high heat.
- Add the oil, garlic, and red chili flakes. Cook 2 to 3 minutes until the garlic becomes fragrant but does not brown. If the garlic begins to brown, reduce the heat to low.
- Add the quinoa and cook another minute, stirring once or twice until the garlic is mixed in. Add the wine and bring to a boil.
- Cook another minute until most of the liquid is evaporated.
- Add the broth, and bring to a slow simmer. Cook 10 to 12 minutes until more than half of the liquid is absorbed.

- Roughly chop the spinach. Stir it in along with the goat cheese, lemon zest, lemon juice, the nutmeg, and salt. Sprinkle with grated cheese and serve immediately.

23. 7 minute omelet

Serves 4

Ingredients

- Pack Mushrooms
- 1 Brown Onion
- 2 cloves Garlic
- 2 Tomatoes
- 4 Handfuls Spinach
- Broccoli
- 8-12 Eggs
- Parsley

Method

- Heat nob butter with onion, garlic until see-through.
- Add all other veg bar spinach for 3 mins, add spinach and cook for 1 more min.
- Add whisked eggs and cook on low heat for 5 min. Sprinkle Parsley on top. Can be served with large rocket & parmesan salad on side.

24. Lamb & Cauliflower rice

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp. coconut oil for stirfry, 4 tablespoons coconut oil for rice
- 350g grass fed lamb back strap, cut into strips
- 1 tsp. all spice
- 1 tsp. crushed chilli
- ½ green birdseye chilli
- ½ red birdseye chilli
- 1 tsp. sesame seeds
- Himalayan salt and black pepper
- 1 small head cauliflower, blitz in a food processor until fine (rice like)
- 1 small brown onion, blitz in a food processor until fine
- 1 carrot, blitz in a food processor until fine
- 1 clove garlic, crushed

Stirfry Method

- Heat 1 tsp. of coconut oil in a pan on a medium heat.
- Add the lamb, stir and cook for 2 mins to brown.
- Add the birdseye chillis, sesame seeds, salt and pepper; cook for a further few minutes stirring occasionally whilst you make the rice.

Rice Method

- Heat half the coconut oil in a pan over a medium heat. Add onion and garlic and sauté for around 2 minutes.
- Add the carrot and sauté for a further 3-5 mins or until onions are soft and light brown.
- Add cauliflower and remaining oil; sauté for 10 minutes.

- Season with salt and pepper

PLEASE ALSO SEE BATCH RECIPES FOR MOER LUNCH/DINNER OPTIONS THAT CAN BE MADE IN ADVANCE.

Batch Recipes for Lunch & Supper

Great for keeping in fridge for the week, or freezer for future use.

25. Keto Fish Curry

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 4 fillets Salmon or Silver Hake (/other sustainable white fish)
- 4 Tbsp Coconut Oil
- 2 long green chillies, cut in small pieces/deseeded
- 5 SPICES: 1 tsp fresh ginger, grated, ¼ tsp ground cumin, ½ tsp mustard seeds, whole, 1 tsp curry powder, ½ tsp ground turmeric
- ½ red onion finely chopped
- 3 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 1.5 cup full fat coconut cream
- ¼ cup coriander
- ½ tsp sea salt
- ½ cup water

Method

- Heat half of the coconut oil/butter in a large saucepan.
- Add mustard seed and stir until it starts to pop.
- Add the onion, garlic and ginger and sweat for about 5 minutes.
- Add the chilli, curry, cumin and turmeric and cook for a further 5 minutes.
- Add the coconut milk and salt and bring to the boil then simmer for about 15 minutes.
- Meanwhile, heat the rest of the oil/butter in a nonstick pan to fry fish for 2 to 3 mins, turn gently after 1 min.
- Add the fish to the curry sauce, cook for another 5 minutes on low flame.
- Add the cilantro and mix well.
- Can be served immediately or left to stew – the longer the tastier!

26. Quinoa Phyto Pot

Serves 4

Ingredients

400g Quinoa
Chicken stock (1.5L)
Butter/Coconut oil
3 clove Garlic (to taste)
2 red onion - chopped
1 red pepper - chopped
Dried Oregano, Dried + Fresh Parsley

1 birdseye chilli - chopped
1 tomato - cubed
1 whole cucumber – cubed
Squeeze of 1/2 fresh Lemon
Drizzle of cold pressed Olive Oil + Balsamic

Method

- Rinse and place quinoa into boiling stock water (should cover the quinoa x2), cook on simmer for 20 mins (until grains turn lighter and have started to sprout).
- Chop all veg and place garlic and onion into frying pan for 3 min until onion is see through, add chilli, and red peppers with the herbs for another 3 mins.
- Once quinoa is cooked, add onion mix and tomatoes, cucumber, fresh herbs, lemon juice and olive oil and balsamic.
- Can be eaten immediately warm, or kept in fridge for 4 days as snack, main base of a meal (can add halloumi, meat or fish) or accompaniment.

27. Italian Meatballs

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 1 lb. ground grass-fed mince/turkey/chicken OR Cooked Quinoa
- 1 tblsp ground flax seeds
- 2 med eggs
- 3 tbsp. chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 50g. Parmesan cheese (If using quinoa instead of meat, add an extra tablesp parmesan)
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- Salt & Pepper
- Coconut oil / 3 Nobs butter
- 1 drizzle (tblsp) extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 can plum tomatoes + 1 small carton tomato paste
- 4 medium courgettes, cut into peeled slivers to make “tagliatelle” or use a spiralizer to make “noodles”

Method

- Combine meat, flax, egg, parsley, Parmesan, 1 garlic clove, and 1/2 teaspoon each salt and pepper in a bowl to form into 12 meatballs. (add extra parmesan here for quinoa meatballs)
- Heat 1 butter in a large skillet over medium heat.
- Add garlic for 1 min then add tomato and paste and simmer for 10 mins.
- Meanwhile,
 - Heat 1 butter in a large skillet over medium heat. add meatballs and cook, turning occasionally, until brown on all sides, 4 to 6 minutes. Reduce heat to medium-low and gently stir in tomato sauce. Simmer, turning meatballs occasionally, until meatballs are cooked through and sauce is thickened, 14 to 16 minutes.
 - Heat final nob butter in a medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add courgette and remaining garlic and cook until just tender and heated through, 2 to 3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

Serve meatballs over courgette noodles topped with grated parmesan.

28. Plant Patties

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

- 3 sweet potatoes
- 2 carrots
- 1 Can Mixed Beans/Butter Beans
- Balsamic Vinegar
- Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 1 red birdseye chilli
- Herb mix of choice (any – e.g. cumin, fenugreek seeds, fennel seeds OR parsley, oregano, sage OR basil and parsley, etc.)
- 1 Tblsp flax seed (or ground almonds or ground oats)
- 2 Tblsp Parmesan

Method

- Boil Sweet potatoes (in milk or water) for 20 mins – 5 mins before end, add carrots
- Cook onions and garlic (or use pre-cooked – above) and add chilli to cook for 3mins
- Drain pots, add drained/rinsed can beans, balsamic and olive oil and mash all together
- Add onions, garlic, chilli and herbs
- Mix parmesan and flax together. Roll out palm-sized “patties”/”burgers” onto parmesan/flax mix.
- Fry on hot skillet for 1 min each side. (Can be stored like this for 3 days in fridge and served cold, or microwaved/reheated wrapped in foil in oven (to avoid drying out))
- Serve with handful lambs lettuce

29. Wholegrain quinoa risotto

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

- 1 10-ounce package pre-washed spinach
- 1 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon red chili flakes
- 1 cup quinoa, rinsed under cold water
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 4 cups low-sodium, fat free chicken broth or vegetable broth
- 1 4-ounce package fresh goat cheese, room temperature
- 4 tablespoons grated Romano or Parmesan cheese
- 1 lemon, zested and juiced
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

Method

- Microwave the spinach in its bag on high 1-2 minutes or until it wilts. Set aside. Warm the oil in a large skillet over medium high heat.
- Add the oil, garlic, and red chili flakes. Cook 2 to 3 minutes until the garlic becomes fragrant but does not brown.
- If the garlic begins to brown, reduce the heat to low. Add the quinoa and cook another minute, stirring once or twice until the garlic is mixed in. Add the wine and bring to a boil.
- Cook another minute until most of the liquid is evaporated. Add the broth, and bring to a slow simmer. Cook 10 to 12 minutes until more than half of the liquid is absorbed.

- Roughly chop the spinach. Stir it in along with the goat cheese, lemon zest, lemon juice, the nutmeg, and salt. Sprinkle with grated cheese and serve immediately.

NO GRAIN BREADS

30. Cheesy bread

Serves: 8

Ingredients

- 8 eggs
- ¾ cup water
- 120g pot kefir (or ½ cup natural bio yoghurt containing lactobacillus cultures)
- 1 tsp Himalayan sea salt / ground black pepper
- 350g almond flour
- 200g chia seeds
- 150g shredded raw cheese (e.g. parmesan)
- DIRECTIONS:
- **Method**
- Preheat oven to 180°C
- Whisk eggs, kefir, water, salt and pepper. Add flour, chia and raw cheese to the mixture.
- Pour into a greased loaf pan and bake for 40 minutes until golden brown.

31. Sweet Coconut Pancakes

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 4 large organic eggs
- 1/2 cup pumpkin puree (canned)
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 2 tblsp coconut flour
- 1/4 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 spoonful ghee for cooking

Method

In a medium sized bowl whisk together eggs, pumpkin, vanilla extract. Sift in the coconut flour, baking soda and cinnamon. Mix until all ingredients combine and no lumps remain in the batter. Add ghee to a pan over medium heat. Once melted, spoon several tablespoons of coconut batter onto the pan per each pancake. When bubbles appear on the surface and the sides of the pancakes become firm, flip, cook for 1 more minute and enjoy!

32. Coconut Bread Loaf

Makes 1 loaf

This bread lacks gluten and doesn't contain yeast so it has a different texture and taste than wheat breads. However it's a great versatile bread that can be served with sweet or savoury spreads or ingredients.

Ingredients

- 6 organic eggs
- 1/2 cup grassfed ghee, coconut oil or butter*, melted
- 1/2 tsp himalayan sea salt
- 3/4 cup organic coconut flour, sifted

1 tsp organic baking powder
(Optional - 2 tbsp maple syrup or raw honey)

Method

Preheat oven to 180°C. In a medium-sized bowl mix eggs, ghee*, honey and sea salt until well-blended. Combine sifted coconut flour and baking powder, and whisk them slowly into the batter until no lumps remain. Spoon the batter into a small greased loaf pan (9x5x3 or smaller). Bake for about 40 minutes. Remove from pan and cool on rack.

Ingredients can be doubled for a larger loaf, or divided into 2 smaller loaf pans for a tea bread.

33. No-grain Toast

Makes a large pan - serves 4 for a week

Ingredients

8 Eggs (2 each)
1 cup ground flax
1 cup coconut flour OR dessicated coconut
2 cups almond flour OR ground almonds
1 cup chia seeds (optional)
3 eggs to mix
1 nob of coconut oil

Method

Grease large baking sheet

Mix together all the seeds with the egg and coconut oil and pat it into a thin layer (thickness of a thin slice of bread, about 1 inch) onto a baking sheet

Bake in 200°C for 20min. Cut into squares as soon as out then leave to cool before turning sheet over and bashing out.

N.B. Can be used with soaked seeds/nuts to increase nutrient-content.

SNACKS, TREATS & PUDDINGS

34. Balancore Balls

Serves: 8

Ingredients

- 2 eggs
- 100g Desiccated Coconut
- 100g Ground Almonds
- 50g Ground Flax/Chia
- 50ml Coconut cream/milk (organic, from can)
- ½ tsp organic stevia leaf (ground) or 3 drops stevia extract
- 2 drops vanilla extract

Method

Mix together all ingredients and squash into palm-sized balls. Bake in a greased tray (with coconut oil) or in bun papers in a bun tray for 15 mins until golden brown. Store in airtight container. (Can also be covered in 72-90% dark chocolate. If so, place the balls in the fridge for an hour to cool. Melt the chocolate in a glass

bowl over a pan of hot water then dip the balls into the chocolate and place onto greased foil. Place back in fridge for 40 mins / until set).

35. Rocket fuel

Serves 1-2

Ingredients

2 handfuls rocket (or spinach/lettuce/celery leaves)

1 handful ice

1 tsp cayenne pepper

½ tsp turmeric

½ tsp cinnamon

½ tsp black pepper

You can add a kiwi or coconut milk if this is too bitter – but I promise you will get used to the taste if you do find it too bitter at first!.

Method

Blend in nutribullet for 15 seconds. Drink any time of day.

This drink curbs cravings, reduces hunger, stimulates metabolism, fights toxins, provides electrolytes as well as a plethora of antioxidants, vitamins A, C and E, potassium, magnesium, calcium and iron.

YOUR WEEKLY SHOPPING LIST

PROTEIN/MEAT/FISH

- 24 x eggs
- Tins Tuna (canned in brine or water)
- Tins Sardines/anchovies
- 1 whole organic Chicken (for fridge)
- Organic Grass Fed Beef (steak)
- Organic Grass Fed Lamb Chops
- Wild salmon/Hake or other sustainable wild fish*
- Smoked salmon

DAIRY

- Feta or Halloumi
- Parmesan
- Full Fat Cream Cheese
- Sour cream (for dip)

VEGGIES (aim for all organic – e.g. from Geant):

- Pack Spinach (part-steam and freeze)
- Pack Kale (part-steam and freeze)
- Packet small cucumbers
- Pack Carrots
- 2 Whole Broccoli
- 1 Whole Cauliflower
- 3 Brown Onions
- Garlic
- Pack Celery
- Pack Mushrooms
- 6 Avocados
- 2 Tomatoes
- 4 courgettes
- Mixed herbs (any)
- 3 iceberg lettuces/bags spinach/rocket

FRUIT

- 2 Kiwis
- 1 pack blueberries
- Fresh Olives

HERBS/SPICES – fresh where possible but dried are fine

- Parsley (Fresh)
- Coriander (Fresh)
- Dill (Fresh)
- Ginger (Fresh)
- Birdseye Chillis (x4)
- All spice

- Cumin (ground, dried)
- Curry Powder
- Cayenne pepper/Birdseye chilli peppers
- Black Pepper
- Cinnamon
- Mustard Seeds
- Turmeric (Dried)
- Chilli (Fresh/Dried)

GRAINS/NUTS

- Gluten –free Oats
- Gluten-free Oatcakes
- Quinoa
- Almonds
- Hazelnuts
- Mixed seeds (e.g. pumpkin/sunflower)
- Ground flaxseeds
- Rye bread or Sourdough Bread (*if you are gluten / grain free, avoid these breads and replace with paleo bread*)

JARS & CANS

- Bottle Cold Pressed Olive Oil
- 4 Tinned Tomatoes
- 3 Cans Coconut Milk (Full Fat)
- 1 Jar large capers

OTHER

- Fresh Organic Olives
- Coyo Yoghurt (natural)
- Dark chocolate (72%)

***SUSTAINABLE FISH**

- Silver Hake (Atlantic Whiting) - a great white fish alternative to cod/haddock.
- Barramundi 0 delicate texture and a mild taste. Substitute for red snapper, grouper, sea bass.
- Sardines (Pacific)
- Mackerel (Atlantic)
- Arctic char - rich flavor so a substitute for salmon and trout. (Tends to be farmed with clean practices)

Alaskan Salmon

SAMPLE WEEKLY MENU

SUNDAY

- Greek yoghurt with ground flaxseeds & hazelnuts (pour water over seeds and nuts night before and soak in fridge) with blueberries or a kiwi
 - Tuna nicoise salad (without croutons), olive oil, lemon & balsamic dressing with crudités in labneh
 - Lean grass-fed steak with grass-fed butter, broccoli, carrots & kale
- (You may also want to cook 4 sweet potatoes at this point – for everyone’s brekky or lunch TUES)

- ½ Coyo yoghurt for desert (found in waitrose)

1.5 L Water throughout day

MONDAY

- ½ cold sweet potato with with 1 egg and mixed herbs
- Tuna / Sardine / Parmesan salad, with ½ sweet potato, olive oil and balsamic vinegar
- Keto Fish Curry

1.5 L Water throughout day.

TUESDAY

- ½ avocado and cream cheese
- Salad with meat/fish and veggies and 2 x Oat cakes
- 7 minute omelet with rocket and olive oil salad

1.5 L Water throughout day.

WEDNESDAY

- Greek yoghurt with quinoa, seeds and nuts (pour water over oats, seeds and nuts night before and soak in fridge)
 - Hummus with crudités (cucumber, celery), olives, lump of cheese
 - Wholegrain quinoa risotto
- cooked in stock with courgette, avocado, tomatoes, almonds. Add organic chicken for flavour/extra protein.

1.5 L Water throughout day.

THURSDAY

- ½ avocado stuffed with cream cheese
- Soup – e.g. Mushroom and cream / Veggie stock with lump cheese.
- Crudités in labneh
- Grass-fed lamb chops with cauliflower rice, apple sauce and salad on side.
- 2 pieces dark chocolate (72%)

1.5 L Water throughout day.

DRINKING: A glass of wine in the evenings throughout the week is fine – up to 14 units.

SNACKING: There are no snacks mentioned as snacking is not encouraged. However, it is important that you listen to your body and hunger levels. If you are hungry in between meals and feeling signs of hypoglycaemia (faint, dizziness, extreme thirst, exhaustion, other), then please always have one of the following low-glycaemic snacks handy. A handful should enter the bloodstream to support your body through and out of the glycaemic low.

Some Low glycaemic snacks:

1. Handful in a bag - hazelnuts & almonds
2. Large handful Organic cucumber sticks and nob of butter/nut butter or mayo
3. 1/2 Avocado
4. 30g lump of raw cheese (e.g. Gouda/Parmesan)
5. Oatcakes with cheese x 2
6. Large handful organic baby carrots with moutabal / sour cream / pure avocado dip

QUICK TIPS

ON STORAGE

i) USE A MUFFIN TIN

If you need single muffin tins allow for individual portions of soup/porridge to be stored if you are serving one person at a time. Place them in muffin tins and once thoroughly set, remove from tins by placing it in hot water – they should slip out to be bagged and stored with minimal space, or eaten immediately.

USEFUL FOR: BATCH COOKING; PORTION CONTROL; SAVING FREEZER STORAGE; FOOD WASTE

ii) NO NEED TO DEFROST

Already-baked casserole can be put straight from the freezer into a cold oven, turn on oven and cooking it for a little longer — 20 to 30 minutes on average — than you normally would. (Warning: do not put a frozen dish into a hot oven!)

Frozen uncooked fish can be cooked straight from frozen – pre-heat oven to 230C (450F). Once hot, add fish for 4-5min, then take it out to season if you'd like

USEFUL FOR: SHORT-ON-TIME; QUICK PREP; BATCH COOKING; FOOD WASTE

ON HEALTH

iii) REMOVE READY-MADE DRESSINGS & DIPS

Dressings and dips that come ready-made are a quick way to eat trans fats that will degrade your health (see "About fats").

- REPLACE dressings with COLD PRESSED, EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL & BALSAMIC/APPLE CIDER VINEGAR
- REPLACE dips (e.g. tsatzikis/hummus) with, e.g.
 - Mashed avocado (can and cayenne pepper to spice it up, or add chilli, sour cream & garlic to make it into guacamole)
 - Blitzed natural yoghurt, cucumber (add mint or spring onion to taste)
 - Cream cheese

iv) TAKE A MULTI-NUTRIENT & ANTIOXIDANT

About Multis: I advocate that everyone requires a multivitamin & mineral, particularly if living in the UAE where the local produce has either been

- a) grown/fed on "fake soil" (we live in the desert!) which is not nutrient-dense, or
- b) produce has been shipped from afar so is injected/covered with toxic chemicals to avoid rotting, or
- c) produce has lost nutrients in the transporting time/heat/process.

I would recommend specific brands for certain needs, but if you'd like to research yourself I recommend the brands Thorne Research, Allergy Research Group, Nutri, Biocare.

About Antioxidants: The same goes for AOs as it does for multivitamins. Fruit and veg are the main source of antioxidants – these little chemicals fight toxins (known as free-radicals) and inflammation across the body. If you have belly-fat, IBS, joint issues, are obese, or have other inflammatory issues, you will have a level of toxins or inflammation or both. Antioxidants literally quash the toxins by chemically reacting with them, "neutralising" them. Fruit and veg these days tend to be much lower in AOs than they were 10, 20, 30 (etc.) years ago due to:

- a) over-farmed soils,
- b) chemical damage,
- c) pollutants in rain and

d) fewer insects. Every time an insect eats a plant, the plant gives of antioxidants known as “phytochemicals” to make the plant taste different/bitter. This deters the insect and gives us the range of flavours.

I’m a purist when it comes to antioxidants and ideally would like them straight from the source (i.e. from natural foods). Unlike multivitamins and minerals which can be extracted from the source more easily, Antioxidants are usually chemically extracted. The brand I recommend that isn’t chemically extracted is [Juice Plus+](#),

v): **WORK OUT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HUNGER AND CRAVINGS**

Listen to your body after food – are you craving more? Do you feel hungry or is it a “craving”. Test this out by waiting for 10 minutes after you’ve eaten and drinking a glass of water. Are you still hungry or is it more of a craving for something? If you’re craving something, you may have eaten something that has triggered an insulin response, so make a note of it and try to limit it next time. You may also be lacking some nutrients or fats in what you’ve just eaten, so try to ensure you include plenty of green leafy vegetables and good fats in your meals/snacks – this should reduce the common post meal cravings.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT FATS

I'm a big advocate of ensuring moderate amounts of fat in your diet – but I was pretty late to the fat-loving team – I only started eating them last year after 10 years studying nutrition and health!

But before you dip into that deep fried mars bar, you need to understand that fats are different. And not all of them are good.

The following “good ones” should be eaten in moderation:

- Omega 3 fatty acids (essential fatty acids) (oily fish – EPA/DHA; Flax seeds – linolenic acid).
- Omega 6 fats – if these are eaten in the right amount. However, we tend to have high Om6 fats naturally in our diets through vegetable oils, nuts, seeds, animal products (especially non-grass-fed). If you don't have any of these in your diet, you should ensure you incorporate these alongside your Omega 3s as the body cannot make them – hence their name “essential fatty acids”.
 - o Conjugated Linoleic Acid (A type of Omega 6 fat that is very good for us found in grass-fed animal fats such as raw butter, parmesan cheese, hard swiss cheese, any grass fed meats)
- Monounsaturated fats (Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Avocados)
- Moderate Saturated Fats (in Coconut Oil, Animal fats)
 - o Medium Chain Triglycerides (Types of saturate fats that the body can easily turn into fuel. Found In Coconut Oil, raw cheese and butter, yoghurt)

The following fats are “bad” and should be totally avoided where possible. These fats aggravate inflammation in the body, change our DNA structure and are associated with disease:

- Trans fats – found in anything processed or heated at a high temp. (in chips, battered foods, deep fried, processed cheese/meats, takeaways)

WHY I CHOSE THESE RECIPES

Quick background: Everyone has a reason for looking into their diet. Like many people, I had more than one reason. I'd had acne and hormone imbalance for 10 years starting since a classic teenage period of binge/starve and then a coeliac. After trying EVERY single thing possible (studying nutrition, I tried going Veggie, Fruitarian, Vegan, Specific Carbohydrate Diet, GAPS diet, a "phytonutrient-rich" diet. As a PT I became an exercise-aholic, I focused on daily meditation, I tried kinesiology, naturapathology, I became a yogi, etc. etc.), yet still I continued to suffer. My hormones and gut health were a mess.

It was then that I landed on a high fat, very low carb diet. And within one week, it worked. My skin cleared, my moods stabilised, and my weight went back to a healthy size.

So, what had I been doing wrong? *Fundamentally, my insulin was out of balance.* Despite the fact that I was eating loads of nutrient-rich foods, no processed sugars and my healthy fats and had phytonutrients, Omega 3 and fibre coming out of my ears, my nutrition was not balanced. My hormones (insulin - the glucose balancing hormone, and cortisol - the stress hormone) had gone out of whack from over-use and needed to be fixed. Insulin and cortisol are finely balanced, and can go out of balance for a number of reasons and via a number of mechanisms such as:

- A severe stress, or a period of chronic stress,
- Too much glucose in the blood which can come from too many carbs, even "healthy carbs", especially fructose (including naturally sourced fructose from fruits)
- Simply being sensitive to insulin. Some people are just susceptible to insulin sensitivity
- Lack of sleep –this can put cortisol out of balance which triggers a high glucose load in the blood, triggering insulin to be released
- Allergies or sensitivities to foods
- Chronic inflammation – from e.g. an injury, or intestinal wall inflammation caused by pathogens or low digestive enzymes

What did I do? I swapped my carbs for fats. Even the "healthy" carbs such as fruit, root veg and quinoa. I increased all natural fats such as grass-fed butter, olive oils, raw cheese, olives, Oily fish (2xweekly), coconut oil, ghee, etc. It took about 1 month to be fully restored, before I slowly brought in some low-glycaemic carbs again. I now continue to follow a low-carb, high fat diet.

How did it work? It's important to know that everyone is different. Whilst some people can tolerate carbs (my husband is a "quinoa king" and if he didn't eat sweet potatoes he would disappear), others who are particularly carb-sensitive, have a tendency to become insulin resistant. These people will do better on a lower carb diet.

How do you know if you are carb-sensitive? If you are reading the above and thinking "this sounds like me" and are answering yes to 2+ of the following questions, you are possibly carb-sensitive and should go for a fasting blood glucose test at your GP in order to confirm it.

- ? Do you have belly fat that can't be shifted?
- ? Do you suffer from light-headedness?
- ? Do you struggle with highs and lows in energy?
- ? Do you often feel sleepy mid-afternoon?
- ? Do you every feel restless like you want to break out of your skin?
- ? Do you have a diagnosed candida or fungus (e.g. athlete's foot)?
- ? Do you have cravings for sugar?

? Do you never feel satisfied by your food?

What I eat now:

- I keep up a low-carb diet – however I never compromise green and colourful VEGETABLES. These are pure carbohydrate, but very low in carbohydrate content and full of vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients.
- I still avoid any sugar, grains, beans, root veggies and high/med sugar fruits.
- I always ensure I eat a range of fats, which means I am never hungry.
- I keep my protein to moderate intake (as protein in med/high quantities can also have insulin-stimulating effects).
- I go 4+ hours between meals – which is easy as I'm satisfied by having high fats in my diet. This means my body (my gut, blood and lymph circulation) gets time to rest between eating which allows for a natural detoxification and regulation that can't occur if you are constantly grazing – we are not cows.
- I take a multivitamin (I would recommend everyone takes a good quality multi and would recommend certain brands depending on the person's dietary intake and needs) and a full-spectrum antioxidant (I find Juice+ has everything I need in terms of Antioxidants and supports my skin, hair and nail health as well as energy)
- **A SAMPLE OF MY DIET IN A DAY:**
 - Breakfast: 2-3 scrambled eggs with handful of rocket/spinach and a nob of grass fed butter. Black Coffee or White Coffee with organic double cream (not milk).
 - Lunch: Salad with loads of greens (e..g watercress, lambs lettuce, courgette, cucumber) and a large sprinkle of parmesan shaving, mushrooms cooked in butter, a good drizzle of extra virgin olive oil and apple cider vinegar.
 - Dinner: Lamb casserole in full fat yoghurt; OR Coconut Veggie Curry OR a grass fed meat / oily fish with 2 Green veg and 1 colour veg (not a root veg).
 - Pudding: Raw cheese and walnuts OR coconut mousse, OR a cup of hot unsweetened almond milk with a sprinkle of cinnamon.
 - (If I am hungry in the day which is rare on this low carb-approach), I would eat either one of: a handful of raw olives, handful of hazelnuts, a chunk of raw cheese, a boiled egg, a slice of coconut bread / paleo bread)).
- **IMPORTANT SUGGESTIONS IF YOU'RE FOCUSING ON STAYING LOW CARB:**
 - Don't eat if you're not hungry- which I used to think needed an extraordinary amount of willpower, but with the extra good fats in the diet, it's genuinely easy to do!
 - Test your blood sugar (via a glucometer) OR test ketone levels (via a ketonix stick) at least once a week to see that I'm in balance.

It may seem like a drastic diet to many people but I am really honest when I say, I've tried it all and this has really worked for me. For those not suffering from insulin resistance, and who are keen for a "less drastic" approach, I've obviously included recipes in here that are healthy and carb-rich – such as those that contain quinoa, sweet potatoes, beetroot etc. so don't shy away from the recipes in here. They are made for everyone and should be used as and when appropriate to you and your family's health.