

*How to*

# LOVE YOUR WAISTLINE AND YOUR FOOD

a food lovers guide to healthy cooking + eating habits in 28-days

2nd Edition

*jules clancy*

For all the food lovers who have tried the 'eat less and exercise more'  
approach to losing weight and failed.  
There is hope!

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*interactive*  
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# THANK YOU!

THANK YOU so much for supporting Stonesoup and picking up a copy of this book.

I can't tell you how much I appreciate you allowing me to do my favourite thing in the world...

Write cookbooks!

But this isn't just a cookbook. It's way more than a collection of simple, healthy recipes.

It's a guide book as well.

To help you on the journey to becoming someone who loves food and fully enjoys all the pleasures of the table.

AND someone who loves their body. Someone who is happy with their waistline and their overall health.

Impossible dream?

Definitely not.

## Why Love Your Waistline?

It all started back when I was 11 years old and my parents shipped me off to boarding school.

I had the most rude awakening of just how bad food can be. And how much I missed my mother's cooking.

Ever since then I have been completely in love with food and everything to do with it. The shopping, the cooking, the planning and especially the sharing.

But I also care deeply about my health, how I feel and I'll be honest, how I look.

For a long time my love of food seemed to battle with my love of health. Throughout my 20s and 30s I was able to keep my waistline somewhat under control by running.

A lot of running.

But it was always a struggle.

Then in the course of conceiving and having my children in my early 40s I started to experiment with different diets. First Paleo, then Tim Ferriss' Slow Carb finally ending up with my own version of Low Carb.

Over the years I've reached a place where I no longer need to run marathons. Where I'm actually happy with my waistline most of the time. Where my appetite is in a naturally balanced place and I feel at peace with food.

If I can solve this puzzle for myself, you can totally do it too.

I'm excited to show you how!

And the best part is, it's actually easier than you think. Let's dive in...

With love,

*jules* xx

[www.thestonesoup.com](http://www.thestonesoup.com)  
Wamboin, Australia

## -- Using This -- eCookbook

If you're anything like me, you probably have a lot of cookbooks in your 'collection'.

And probably a lot of cookbooks that you've never actually cooked anything from.

Sound familiar?

I used to be the same.

But then I came up with an idea to make sure I do use my cookbooks.

Basically I have a rule that when a new cookbook comes into my life I have to cook something from it within 2 weeks. And if I don't, I have to donate the book to charity.

I find that personal challenge is enough to make me take action.

It's so much nicer to look at my cookbook collection knowing that I've actually used each one.

So I challenge you to choose at least one recipe from 'Love Your Waistline', make a note of the ingredients, buy what you need and get cooking.

---USING THIS EBOOKBOOK---

I promise, cooking something from this book will make it much more enjoyable. And useful!

## - Making The most of This eCookbook

### 1. SAVE IT IN MULTIPLE LOCATIONS.

Work computer, home computer, smart phone and tablet. You will always have these recipes at your fingertips.

### 2. FIND EXACTLY WHAT YOU WANT WITH THE SEARCH FUNCTION.

Got a craving for something chocolate? A quick search and you'll have all the chocolate recipes ready to choose from.

### 3. JUMP STRAIGHT TO YOUR CHOSEN PAGE WITH THE HYPERLINKS.

My favourite feature. Just click on the links and be taken instantly to your chosen page. The bookmarks help navigation as well.

### 4. MAKE THE MOST OF THE VARIATIONS.

Each recipe has at least 4 suggestions for alternatives to suit different dietary requirements.

If you think a recipe might not be exactly right for you, make sure you check out the variation suggestions.

The variations are also there to keep things interesting. If you enjoy a particular recipe, challenge yourself next time to try one of the different options.

*interactive*  
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QUICK START GUIDE

# 11 MINDSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

*"Whether you think you can, or you think you can't,  
you're right either way."*

**- Henry Ford**

Welcome!

This bonus training is designed to get your mindset ready for making some exciting AND lasting changes to your waistline and your health!

I wanted to start this training with the quote from Henry Ford because it's one of my all time favourites. It highlights the key message I wanted to convey... The biggest factor influencing whether you will get results is your mindset.

The actual lessons you'll be learning around eating low carb are important but no matter how good the material is, if you don't approach it with the right state of mind, you aren't going to see real, lasting changes in your life.

## *11 Mindset Management Strategies*

### **1. You must believe you can change.**

Here's the thing. If you don't believe you can make changes to your cooking and eating then it's not going to happen.

But there is good news! Everyone can get to a healthy place.

The key is to manage your thoughts and beliefs. Remember our Henry Ford quote... 'If you think you can or can't you're right either way.'

If you have thoughts like "I'll be miserable if I can't eat bread", you won't stick to a low carb lifestyle.

So how do you overcome negative thoughts? I have two techniques:

**i. Turn the negative thought into a question.** So instead of ‘I’ll be miserable if...’, ask ‘How can I make low carb work for me?’

**ii. Connect with your compelling reasons for achieving your goals.** Take a moment to think about why you want to change. Or what will happen if you don’t change.

## **2. You and only you can find what’s best for your life.**

You are a unique snowflake! Only you have your particular blend of taste preferences, genes and biochemistry.

These subtle differences are the reason why nutrition can be so confusing. It’s why there isn’t an easy one-size-fits-all solution.

The best part of this is **only you** can determine what is going to work best for you at this stage of your life.

It can be a little scary. But it’s also empowering. You just need to keep ‘experimenting’ until you find the approach that works for you.

## **3. Carbs are NOT the enemy.**

Blood sugar spikes every now and then aren’t going to cause problems. It’s long term exposure to high blood sugar that damages your health.

There’s no need to swear off carbs for the rest of your life. And certainly no need to have a carb binge before we start the daily lessons.

What I am going to show you is how to make low carb a sustainable lifestyle choice. Not some strict diet that’s impossible to stick to.

If you love bread, or pasta. Or if you’re like my Irishman and can’t live without potatoes, it’s OK. In the book we’re going to find the balance between enjoying your favourite foods AND achieving your health goals.

I know this may sound ‘too good to be true’, but trust me, I’ve found the balance for myself. It IS possible!

## **4. No forbidden foods!**

Food moralizing, or labeling specific foods as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ is very destructive. And thinking of yourself as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ for eating these foods even more unhelpful.

Eating broccoli doesn’t make you a ‘good’ person just as eating a brownie doesn’t make you ‘bad’.

There are NO forbidden foods.

If you really want to eat honey straight off a spoon, we’ll find a way for you to enjoy your indulgence AND still meet your health goals.

For me there aren’t any foods I ‘never’ eat, except maybe tripe. There are plenty of things I save for ‘special occasions’ like mangoes and pasta and sourdough bread and salted caramel ice cream. But nothing is ever completely ‘off limits’.

## **5. No guilt or shame.**

The other part of not buying into food moralizing is refusing to feel guilt or shame around what you eat.

This has taken me a while to internalize. I find it’s so much more helpful to be kind to myself. I explore what happened as a ‘gentle detective’, trying to find out what went wrong rather than using over-indulgence as an excuse to beat myself up.

## **6. Quantity counts.**

When researchers at the Australian research group CSIRO looked at dieters who had lost weight, they found the group who regained the weight had an ‘all or nothing’ diet mentality. They were either 100% compliant or they completely ‘fell off the wagon’.

The group who kept the weight off for 12 months or longer saw healthy eating as a range of different options.

They didn’t fall prey to the ‘what the hell effect’ which is when dieters binge after ‘screwing up’ their diet for the day.

The thing to remember is the amount you eat is just as important as what you eat. Having one slice of chocolate cake probably isn't going to do much damage, whereas eating the whole cake in one sitting isn't going to help.

## **7. Cooking is fun!**

Part of embracing a low carb lifestyle, focusing on eating real food, is that you're going to need to cook. Or at least 'assemble' some food at home.

If you're like me and love cooking, skip on to the next strategy.

If, on the other hand, you're not into cooking, we need to talk. If you're going to meet your health goals, home cooked meals makes it much much easier to get there.

So here's my challenge to you...

Could you 'reframe' how you think about cooking?

Rather than seeing it as another chore, could it mean something else? For me cooking is a chance to relax and unwind after a long day. It's an opportunity to indulge in some fun and creativity. Plus I get something tangible (and delicious!) to show for my efforts. So much better than an empty email inbox.

The more you cook, the easier and more fun it's going to be. You can do it!

-- PART ONE. QUICK START GUIDE --

## **8. Real healthy food, (especially vegetables) taste amazing if prepared properly.**

Healthy food has a bad reputation. Rice cakes and carrot sticks anyone?

Let me let you in on a secret... Much of the packaged crap that has been marketed as 'health food' isn't actually good for us. And it usually tastes terrible.

Want to know what IS good for you?

Real food. Especially veggies. And as I've discovered over the years, some of the most delicious food is fresh ingredients prepared simply.

I want you to start thinking about vegetables in a different light. If there's something you don't enjoy, there's no point in forcing yourself to eat it. Healthy eating is as much about pleasure as it is about nutrition.

If you haven't liked a particular veg in the past, it doesn't mean you won't ever like it. It just means you didn't like it prepared that way.

Keep an open mind.

When I was a child I HATED brussels sprouts with a passion. But in the last few years I've grown to love them so much I'd have to include them in my top 10 favourite veg.

So what happened?

First, I grew up.

As we grow our taste buds become less sensitive and more sophisticated so we appreciate different things.

But the biggest game changer was trying a different cooking technique. My Mum (who was an amazing cook apart from her sprouts) used to boil her sprouts which retains a lot of the disgusting sulfur flavours.

But if you pan fry or roast them, you get rid of the icky sulfur flavours. Plus you get lovely crispy bits around the edges to enjoy. It's like a completely different food!

## **9. It's never too late to change.**

I love the Chinese proverb that the best time to plant a walnut tree was 40 years ago. And the second best time is now.

Don't beat yourself up for not getting on top of your food habits before. It was your past that led you to be right where you need to be... Reading this book!

## **10. Your Health is a journey not a destination.**

One of the biggest problems with diets is that they focus your attention on getting to a particular weight or fitting into those jeans.

So you are focused on the outcome rather than the everyday changes that you need to make to get there.

But it's way more complex than that.

Your health is the accumulation of your food and other lifestyle choices over the weeks and months.

Not one point in time.

The good news about this is that there's room for all the delicious and decadent foods you love in your (mostly) low carb lifestyle. That's where the (mostly) part comes in.

You can have your cake and have a healthy waistline too.

It's all about taking a long term approach to find a sustainable balance and build your habits around this.

It can take time but by taking small steps you'll not only get where you want to go. You'll be able to stay there!

## **11. You only 'fail' at something when you stop trying.**

Making changes is hard.

There will be setbacks along the way. That's a given no matter how dedicated you are.

The key thing to remember is that you only 'fail' when you give up or quit trying.

So the answer is to treat 'failures' as learning experiences or experiments and keep trying!

When you find yourself eating more carbs than you should, that's not the time to quit.

Use it as a chance to 'double down' on your commitment to achieving your health goals.

It's easier than you think.

# WHY BEING A FOOD LOVER GIVES YOUR WAISTLINE AN ADVANTAGE

Have you ever heard someone excuse their excess weight by saying something along the lines of 'I can't help it, I just love food too much'?

Maybe, you've even thought it secretly about yourself?

Well I'm here to tell you that loving food is no excuse for not having a healthy waistline.

In actual fact, being a food lover means you actually have an advantage when it comes to managing your weight.

What?

As a food lover, you probably enjoy thinking about your next meal and love spending time planning what you're going to eat.

This can actually be a valuable characteristic.

All you need to do is make sure you use your natural food thinking skills for good, rather than evil. Channel your time and energy onto focusing on healthy food options.

There's another benefit of being a little food obsessed.

As a food lover you probably already love and appreciate a wide variety of food. So I'm sure you'll be able to see the beauty in eating fresh, real food such as the recipes in this book.

This will help you from feeling 'deprived' that you're not chowing down on doughnuts, french fries or highly processed packaged 'treats'.

# WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

## WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

When we reduce the carbohydrates in our diet, we change the way our bodies use energy as we switch from burning sugar to burning fat.

There can be some **short term side effects** with this change including weakness, fatigue, nausea, diarrhoea, constipation and dizziness.

The more gradually you cut down on carbs the less likely you will experience any of these.

If you encounter any negative side effects **please stop the changes to your diet and consult your doctor.**

If you are on any medication especially for diabetes or high blood pressure, it's critical that you consult your doctor before radically changing your diet.

## IMPORTANT NOTE:

While I do have an honours degree in food science, and a certificate in health coaching, I am not a doctor or nutritionist.

In this book I share my personal journey of managing my weight by eating (mostly) low carb, this information is not intended as specific advice.

Please discuss with your doctor or dietician before changing your food intake. Especially if you're on medication or have any special medical concerns.

# MY QUICK START 'RULES'

Please take these quick start 'rules' as a starting point for developing your own eating plan based on what works for you and your body.

We'll go into more detail in the next few pages, but here's a quick overview:

1. EAT REAL, WHOLE FOOD
2. AVOID GRAIN, SUGAR + STARCH
3. DON'T DRINK CALORIES, DRINK LOTS OF WATER
4. PLAN ONE MEAL OFF A WEEK (OPTIONAL)

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## **Making your own rules**

Basically the less carbohydrates you eat, the faster your weight loss will be. So it's up to you to choose how much to include in your diet.

If you're finding yourself getting hungry between meals I recommend increasing the amount of fat.

However if you're having problems with how you feel, it might be wise to increase your carb intake by including small amounts of higher carb vegetables like sweet potato or well cooked legumes like lentils and beans.

This way you can aim for a more steady, sustainable weight loss, rather than being grumpy and irritable. Whatever changes you make to your diet need so be something you can stick to for the long term. There's no point completely cutting out carbs, losing weight and then packing it all back on when you go back to eating your old style.

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# RULE NUMBER 1

## 1. EAT REAL, WHOLE FOOD

The more I learn about nutrition, the more I've come to realise that the more natural and unprocessed our food is, the more likely it is to be good for us.

The biggest positive change you can make to your waistline and health is to focus on choosing real, natural foods and avoiding anything that comes in a package.

One of the things I love about this way of eating is that you still have an amazing variety of food to choose from. Get excited about the possibilities rather than being afraid of the limitations.

Here's a list of things you can enjoy:

**+ Vegetables** – broccoli, cabbage, asparagus, zucchini, mushrooms, avocado, peppers (capsicum), tomato, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, peas, beans, onion, bok choy, endive, chard, collard greens, broccolini, radish, snow peas, sprouts, summer squash, cucumber, celery, eggplant (aubergine),

**+ Leafy Greens** – spinach, kale, salad greens, bok choy + other asian greens, endive, chard (silverbeet), collard greens, any lettuce, radicchio

**+ Meat** – beef, pork, lamb, venison, chorizo, ham, bacon.

**+ Poultry** – chicken, turkey, duck, quail and any other bird you fancy.

**+ Fish & Seafood** – tuna, salmon, snapper, lobster, scallops, octopus, all the creatures from the sea are fine.

**+ Eggs** – as many whole eggs as you like.

**+ Dairy products** – includes butter, yoghurt and all cheeses.

**+ Tempeh** – while processed 'fake meat' products are a no-go, fermented soy based protein like tempeh is OK.

**+ Fats & Oils** – butter, olive oil, avocado oil, macadamia oil, coconut oil. Avoid highly processed 'vegetable' oils and margarines.

**+ Herbs** – parsley, sage, rosemary, thyme, basil, tarragon, chives.

**+ Seasonings** – All spices, soy sauce, wine vinegars (only use limited amounts of sweetened vinegars or balsamic), lemon juice, lime juice, sea salt or kosher salt, pepper.

# RULE NUMBER 2

## 2. AVOID GRAIN, SUGAR + STARCH

Pretty straight forward. Includes whole grains, potatoes, honey, anything made from flour, agave syrup or other natural sweeteners.

This is all about avoiding carb-central. If it has an impact on your blood sugar and you want to lose weight, the simplest thing is to skip it.

At the risk of sounding a little like my Dad (who is addicted to conspiracy theories), there are some very big international food businesses who are almost 100% reliant on grain and sugar based products for their enormous profits. So be mindful of their motives.

The other interesting thing with grains is the theory that they actually harm our digestive processes and negatively impact our healthy and well-being.

We all know someone who has been diagnosed with coeliac disease or gluten intolerance right?

Well Robb Wolfe in 'The Paleo Solution' proposes that gluten has a negative impact on everyone, it's just less obvious in some than others.

According to Wolfe, grains (and legumes) cause malabsorption of nutrients which leads to:

- § Damage to the gut lining
- § Gall bladder and bile production issues which inhibit our ability to absorb fat-soluble vitamins
- § Binding of metal ions such as iron, calcium and zinc.
- § Increased incidence of cancer and autoimmune diseases such as MS, arthritis, depression, lupus, autism and more.

I'm not sure whether Wolfe is on the money or not, but it does make another compelling reason to limit grains.

# RULE NUMBER 3

## 3. DON'T DRINK CALORIES, DRINK LOTS OF WATER

Fruit juices, sugary drinks and beer are like an instant transfusion of fat to your thighs. Because of their liquid form they are rapidly absorbed by the body and give your blood sugar an instant spike.

One of the most beneficial changes you can make is to switch to drinking water.

### **Tea & coffee**

Avoid milk and sugar in your tea and coffee. Switch your latte for a long black or 'Americano'. If you can't stand the thought of black tea or coffee, use a little cream instead of milk.

### **Diet drinks**

While diet soft drinks are OK if you must, limit them as much as you can because artificial sweeteners stimulate weight gain.

### **Alcohol**

The less alcohol you drink the better. Avoid beer, champagne and mixed drinks. If you must drink, dry red or white wine is the best but no more than 2 glasses a day. Any more will effect your sleep patterns.

I haven't got to the bottom of the alcohol scenario, but my gut is telling me there's more to the alcohol = weight gain equation than just empty calories. Alcohol can only be processed by our livers and I'm not 100% on the implications in terms of weight loss. But I have noticed that for me, the more alcohol-free days I have, the more positive my weight loss. And the same goes for my Irishman. Even having one glass of wine a day can have a negative impact on our waistlines.

### **Water**

It's also really important to drink LOTS of water. Tim Ferriss mentions in the '4-Hour Body' that his mother's weight loss had plateaued so he had a look at her diet and suggested drinking a few more glasses of water a day. And hey presto, her weight-loss kicked back in.

# RULE NUMBER 4

## 4. PLAN ONE MEAL OFF A WEEK

It is said that perfect is the enemy of good.

And when it comes to maintaining or regaining our waistlines, there is a danger that if we strive to be 100% compliant all of the time, we are setting ourselves up to fail.

It's just part of human nature that if we aspire to perfection and then fail, there can be a temptation to pack it all in.

To get discouraged and quit, rather than seeing the digression as just that.

Choose one meal a week to eat whatever you like.

And however much.

I agree with Oscar Wilde that 'the best way to remove temptation is to yield to it'. However, yielding to temptation every day isn't going to help your waistline.

Once a week on the other hand means you can't do too much damage and you get to enjoy all your favourite things as well. It's something I intend to do for the rest of my life.

As you think of food you'd love to eat, make a list (mental or otherwise) to include it on the menu for your planned exception meal.

It's amazing how knowing you can have something on Saturday makes it so much easier to say no for now.

# BONUS TRAINING: LOW CARB SNACK IDEAS

Snacks tend to be where people make the least healthy choices (myself included). So I've included this snacking bonus in the quick start guide to inspire you to start in the place that will have the most positive impact!

## DON'T SNACK!

Apart from the problem of stopping once you get started, there's actually an even stronger reason to avoid snacking if your blood sugar control isn't the best. Our bodies start producing insulin when we think about eating. Before any food crosses our lips. And whenever there's insulin around, our bodies are in 'storage' mode so we can't actually burn any of the energy we have already stored.

So the less times you're thinking about food and the less times you're eating, the more time you have to be burning your fuel stores. So less snacking = less love handles!

## TEA OR COFFEE OR WATER

There are many reasons we can feel compelled to snack that have nothing to do with hunger. Stress, boredom, tiredness are all times when our brains can feel like they need a break and trigger us to think about food to give that little bit of a breather. So while I usually don't snack on food between meals, I'm a huge fan of drinking throughout the day. And since I'm not working in the wine industry any more, my beverages of choice are black coffee, white tea, herbal tea and water.

## NUTS

When I really do need some food between meals, nuts are my favourite go-to. They're super tasty and there are so many to choose from that I never get bored. Macadamias are the best from a low carb/high fat perspective but I also keep brazil nuts, almonds, cashews, hazelnuts, pecans, walnuts, pistachios and pine nuts in the house. And for special occasions and treats I like to flavour my roast nuts like these dangerously moreish [Smoked Paprika & Rosemary Almonds](#).

## NUT BUTTERS + TAHINI

We LOVE peanut butter in our house. I happily give my boys (and myself) big scoops straight off the spoon. But from time to time we also have other nuts butters around like almond butter or cashew. Remember to check the ingredient list and avoid any added sugars or crappy vegetable oils.... All you need are nuts and salt. I'm also happy eating tahini from a spoon but it's not for everyone!

## PATE

I'm not a fan of the whole 'superfood' concept, but if I was, liver would be my super food numero uno! I find pate the most approachable and really delicious format. It's especially rich in iron so if you tend to get tired a lot, eating some pate might be the best thing for you to snack on. Occasionally I [make my own](#) but generally I buy a commercial one and either have it with my eggs, or some seed crackers, or straight off the spoon.

## COCONUT OIL

If you're craving something sweet at the end of a meal, a teaspoon (or two) of coconut oil can be just the thing to satisfy. Sometimes I even live 'dangerously' and mix mine with a few teaspoons of peanut butter.

-- PART ONE. QUICK START GUIDE --

## CHEESE

When I was studying food science, I did my honours thesis on the bacterial populations of Blue Vein and Camembert cheese. But really it was just my plan to get access to free cheese. Yum! There are so many amazing cheeses out there and they're all a brilliant low carb high fat snack OR replacement for dessert as long as you forget the crackers.

## YOGHURT

I make my [own yoghurt](#) and it's one of my favourite sources of probiotics. There are plenty of great commercial yoghurts, just make sure you avoid the fruit and sugar laden traps. Look for 'natural' or 'Greek style' yoghurt with the highest fat content you can find. And make sure you check the ingredient list so that there isn't any sugar, honey or other source of carbs you just don't need. There are some decent dairy-free yoghurts out there these days which tend to be even lower carb. I've found some good coconut yoghurt. Or you could try making my [cashew yoghurt](#).

## CHARCUTERIE

I love the word charcuterie which is a French term for salami, prosciutto, terrines and all those lovely types of food. I've often grabbed a few slices of salami or prosciutto from the deli when I'm out and about but I try not to snack on these more than once a month or so because they generally contain nitrites (also called 'curing salts) which can be carcinogenic.

## FRUIT

Generally I avoid fruit because I'd rather skip the sugar and get my vitamins and minerals from vegetables. But if you really really must have something sweet and coconut oil isn't going to do it for you, fruit is your next best choice. Berries and stone fruit like peaches, plums and nectarines tend to be the lowest carb options. Serve with a generous dollop of cream to make sure you're getting enough fat! Actually now that I'm more aware of the carbs in my diet, fresh or roast fruit with lashings of double cream is one of my favourite Saturday night indulgences (well that and dark chocolate!).

## TOAST WITH BUTTER OR AVOCADO

What?! Bread is going to help my blood sugar? The thing is you need to find the right kind of bread to toast! Of course white processed bread isn't going to do any favours for your insulin and blood sugar levels. And even 'healthy' sounding whole grain breads or traditional sourdoughs are problematic if like me, your blood sugar control isn't great. But there's always another option! Try my Low Carb [Almond Bread](#) in the toaster next time you get a craving. So good (they even satisfy my toast-loving Irishman).

## KALE CHIPS

Commercial ones tend to be expensive but it's amazing how satisfying a good kale chip can be. Occasionally [I make my own](#), they're not hard and they don't take long. Plus it's the only way I'm getting my 3-year-old to even consider putting kale anywhere near his mouth! I need to make more kale chips.

## SEED CRACKERS

After years of being happy eating my cheese without crackers, I decided to try my hand at developing a low carb salty snack. [These crackers](#) are a total favourite in our house. My husband, who is Irish, even said he was happy to eat them instead of potato crisps – very high praise!

## HUMMUS AND VEGGIES

While regular hummus made with chickpeas isn't too bad from a carb perspective, this [Roast Cauliflower Hummus](#) brings it into Low Carb territory and tastes super delicious! Or my latest favorite is this [Almond Hummus](#) which only takes a few minutes to make.

## OLIVES

For snacking it's hard to go past a good [marinated olive](#). All olives are great but my favourites are the big green Sicilian olives or the tiny black Ligurian ones. My Irishman is a fan of the classic kalamata.

-- PART ONE. QUICK START GUIDE --

## General Tips for Snacking

Now that you have a heap of tasty snack ideas, here are a few general tips I try and follow.

### SERVE BEFORE EATING

It can be easy to eat too much at snack time so I try to serve out what I'm going to eat into a little bowl. I then put the container away before starting to eat. Sometimes I go back for more but usually it's enough of a 'pause point' to help me stop.

### MAKE IT OFFICIAL

I also try to sit down and make my snack a proper occasion. No multitasking with my phone or books or other screens. This helps me enjoy the snack more and avoid continual grazing.

### USE THE 'I'LL HAVE IT LATER' TRICK

When I think I've had enough but my 'hunger tiger' still wants more, I tell myself I can have more if I still feel like it in 10 minutes. Mostly the time goes by and I've moved on without giving more food a second thought. But occasionally if I still feel like eating, I allow myself the extra.

## ACTIVITY

### **Review your snacking strategy.**

Are you going to include snacks? If yes, choose 1-2 snacks from the list above to have on hand.

# BONUS CHEAT SHEET: WHICH FRUIT + VEG ARE LOW CARB?

## THE SHORT ANSWER: LOW CARB VEG

Grow above the ground.

Think salads, herbs, broccoli, greens etc.

Root veg tend to be high carb – but there are exceptions (see below)

## THE SHORT ANSWER: LOW CARB FRUIT

Grow in cold climates.

Think berries!

Stone fruit are moderate carb. Tropical fruit and anything that tastes really sweet tends to be High Carb.

## THE LONGER ANSWER: LOW CARB VEG

Salad leaves

Herbs

Spinach

Kale

Chard (Silverbeet)

Collard Greens

Mustard Greens

Cauliflower

Broccoli

Broccolini (Shooting Broccoli)

Eggplant (Aubergine)

Zucchini

Fennel

Cabbage

Brussels Sprouts

Summer Squash

Mushrooms

Asparagus

Radish

Daikon

Bok Choy + Asian Greens

Spaghetti Squash

Celeriac (Celery Root)

Swede (Rutabaga)

Turnip

Leeks

Garlic

Olives

Avocado

Tomatoes

## THE LONGER ANSWER: LOW CARB FRUIT

Strawberries

Raspberries

Blackberries

Blueberries

*part two*  
RECIPES

A top-down view of a white rectangular tray filled with roasted potato wedges. The potatoes are golden-brown with some darker, charred spots. A semi-transparent white horizontal band is overlaid across the center of the image, containing the word "BREAKFAST" in a dark blue, hand-drawn style font.

BREAKFAST

# BREAKFAST

CHOCOLATEY COCONUT GRANOLA

NUTTY LOW CARB GRANOLA

COCONUT AND ALMOND 'CEREAL'

LITTLE ALMOND BREADS

BROCCOLI BREAD

GREEN SMOOTHIE

OVERNIGHT SEEDS

HEARTY WALNUT, KALE AND GOATS CHEESE FRITTATA

FETA AND VEGGIE BREAKFAST MUFFINS

ZUCCHINI BREAD

COCONUT PANCAKES

PECAN 'PORRIDGE'

POACHED EGGS

FRIED EGGS WITH SMASHED AVO

HARISSA SCRAMBLED EGGS

GOATS CHEESE AND BASIL OMELETTE

THE NEXT DAY SHAKSHUKA

CUMULUS SPICED EGGS

A glass of layered chocolatey coconut granola sits on a wooden surface. The glass contains three distinct layers: a thin layer of dark seeds at the bottom, a thick layer of white yogurt in the middle, and a top layer of dark, chocolatey granola. To the right, a large glass jar is filled with the same granola. A small silver spoon with a dollop of light-colored spread is on the table. The background is a light-colored wooden surface with a red and white striped cloth on the left.

*chocolatey coconut granola*

# CHOCOLATEY COCONUT GRANOLA

MAKES 1 large tray  
TAKES 45 minutes

75g (3oz) butter  
or coconut oil

pinch pure stevia powder\*

25g (1oz) cocoa powder

150g (5oz) coconut flakes

250g (9oz) chopped nuts

1. Preheat your oven to 150C (300F).
2. Melt butter or coconut oil in a small saucepan. Add stevia and cocoa powder. Stir.
3. Combine coconut and nuts in a bowl. Stir in the cocoa syrup mixture until the flakes are just coated.
4. Spread mixture on a baking tray. Bake for 25-30 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes or so. Stop when the coconut is well browned (which can be difficult to tell through the cocoa) or everything tastes roasted and yummy.
5. Cool and transfer to an airtight container. Will keep for a few months at room temperature.

If the thought of chocolate for breakfast gets you excited, I highly recommend starting with this granola. It's seriously delicious served on top of [home made natural yoghurt](#) or [coconut yoghurt](#). In case you're wondering, I have chia seed bran in the bottom of the glass in the photo above.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**important note about stevia!** – there are 4 types of stevia:

1. Pure Stevia Powder – looks like icing (powdered / confectioners) sugar. It's expensive but a tiny amount goes a long long way. We're talking 1/4 teaspoon to sweeten a whole cake. This is what I use.
2. Granular Stevia (like Natvia or Truvia) – looks like regular white sugar. It's a blend of erythritol and stevia. Usually 1/4 teaspoon = 4-6 tablespoons granular stevia.
3. Fresh or Dried Stevia Leaves – from a real stevia plant! I haven't baked with them but they will behave similar to the pure stevia powder. Just add to taste.
4. Liquid stevia. I haven't used this. But add to taste.

**granular stevia** – use 1-2 tablespoons.

**no stevia** – use your favourite sweetener... Honey, maple syrup or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level. 2-3 tablespoons should do the trick.

# CHOCOLATEY COCONUT GRANOLA

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**optional additives** – vanilla extract (1 teaspoon), cinnamon (1 teaspoon), chia seeds (2 tablespoons) and cocoa nibs (2 tablespoons) are all lovely additions. So feel free to add in any or all of these. But honestly I prefer this simple 5 ingredient version.

**different nuts** – I used brazil nuts and pecans but feel free to use any nut you like.

**vegan** – make sure you use coconut oil instead of the butter.

**nut-free** – if you're catering for nut allergies, you could replace the nuts with extra coconut (just double the amount of coconut and skip the nuts) or use a combo of coconut and seeds such as pumpkin seeds, linseeds (flax seeds) and sunflower seeds – whatever you feel like.

**salty** – add sea salt flakes for a sweet / salty trail mix.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Keeps for months in an airtight container in the pantry. Can be frozen indefinitely.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**coconut oil / stevia / cocoa / coconut / nuts** – keep them in the pantry.

**butter** – will keep in the fridge for weeks.



*nutty low carb granola*

# NUTTY LOW CARB GRANOLA

MAKES 1 large tray  
TAKES about 30 minutes

250g (9oz) coconut flakes

500g (1lb) nuts such as  
almonds, macadamias,  
hazelnuts, walnuts.

1. Preheat your oven to 150C (300F).
2. Line a large baking tray with baking paper. Scatter over coconut in an even layer and roast for about 10 minutes or until golden brown.
3. Transfer coconut to a large mixing bowl. Then scatter nuts over the baking paper lined tray. Roast for 10-15 minutes or until nuts are cooked to your liking.
4. Allow nuts to cool a little before roughly chopping them. It's up to you how coarse or fine you go.
5. Toss roasted chopped nuts with the coconut. When completely cool, transfer to an airtight container to store.

Every afternoon when my boys are having their afternoon tea I treat myself to a little snack. I soak 1-2 tablespoons linseeds (flax) in a few tablespoons of water for at least 15 minutes but longer if I'm organized.

Then I top it with a few tablespoons [home made yoghurt](#) and either some almond butter or this granola.

So good!

And even better because it's a savoury mixture you can use it as a crunchy topping for pretty much everything. I love it to add texture and crunch to salads, soups and vegetable dishes.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**chocolate granola** – try [the recipe over here](#).

**nut-free** – make a seed granola by replacing the nuts with sunflower seeds, pepitas and linseeds (flax). No need to roast the linseeds.

**no coconut** – I use coconut flakes because they're inexpensive compared to other nuts and lighten the texture but you could just use flaked almonds or other nuts if you aren't into coconut.

**snacky** – toss in sea salt flakes and serve with drinks.

# NUTTY LOW CARB GRANOLA

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes. Keeps for months in an airtight container in the pantry. Can be frozen indefinitely.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

Keep all ingredients in the pantry.



*coconut & almond 'cereal'*

# COCONUT + ALMOND 'CEREAL'

MAKES about 2 cups

TAKES 20 minutes

1 cup coconut flakes

1 cup sliced almonds

4 tablespoons psyllium  
husks (optional)

2 tablespoons chia seeds or  
flax seeds (linseeds),  
whole or ground (optional)

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Spread almonds on a baking tray and toast for about 10 minutes. Stir and cook for another few minutes until the almonds are just lightly golden.

2. Cool the almonds on the tray then toss in the coconut, psyllium (if using) and chia (if using).

3. Store in an airtight container in the pantry for a few months.

This grain-free Paleo cereal mix was inspired by the lovely Eleanor Ozich from over at [Petite Kitchen](#).

I generally have it with coconut yoghurt and sometimes a handful of blueberries or raspberries.

But you could eat it with milk or your favourite dairy-free milk if you prefer a more traditional 'bowl of cereal' experience.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**raw 'cereal'** – don't worry about toasting the almonds.

**sweet** – feel free to add your favourite dried fruit. Or serve with a drizzle of honey or maple syrup.

**more!** – feel free to double or triple the recipe.

video

--- BREAKFAST ---

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# COCONUT + ALMOND 'CEREAL'

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Absolutely! Keeps in the pantry for months.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

Keep them all in the pantry.

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**nut-free** – replace almonds with sunflower seeds or pepitas or both. Skip the toasting step.

**different additives** – any whole, chopped or ground seeds or nuts like hazelnuts, macadamias, pecans, linseeds, sunflower seeds or pepitas. You could also add rolled oats or oat bran for a more cost-effective cereal but it won't be low carb any more.



*little almond breads*

# LITTLE ALMOND BREADS

MAKES 9  
TAKES 25 minutes

200g (7oz) almond meal  
2 tablespoons psyllium husks  
or oat bran (optional)  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
2 eggs (or 3 egg whites)  
100g (3.5oz) cream  
or melted butter

1. Preheat your oven to 200C (400F). Line a tray with baking paper.
2. Mix almond meal, psyllium / oat bran (if using), baking powder and salt in a medium bowl. Add eggs, cream (or butter) and stir until just combined.
3. Divide mixture into 9 and form each into a little balls. I find using wet hands helps stop it being too messy. Place balls on your prepared tray and flatten roughly with your fingers until each is about the thickness of a slice of toast.
4. Bake 'breads' for 10-15 minutes or until lovely and golden brown.
5. When the 'breads' are cooked, cool on a rack.

For a long time I resisted the idea of finding a low carb bread because I thought it would be incredibly difficult to get something to be as tasty as a slice of tangy sourdough.

But having three bread-loving carbaholics in the house got me experimenting with healthier alternatives.

These 'breads' have earned a tick of approval from my Irishman who loves peanut butter toast for breakfast - and he's a very tough customer to impress!

He recommends having them with a nice strong cup of Irish Breakfast Tea.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**no cream** – use greek yoghurt (gives a lovely slightly tangy flavour), whole milk or replace with 1/2 melted butter and 1/2 water.

**dairy-free / paleo** – use coconut yoghurt, coconut cream or your favourite dairy-free milk instead of the cream.

**higher fiber** – add more psyllium or oat bran. You could also add ground linseeds (flax seeds) or chia seeds – or whole seeds for that matter.

**larger batch** – I often double the batch to make more for freezing.

video

--- BREAKFAST ---

# LITTLE ALMOND BREADS

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Keeps for 1-2 weeks in the fridge or indefinitely in the freezer. Just warm in the toaster or oven before serving.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**almond meal / psyllium husks / oat bran / baking powder / salt** – keep them in the pantry.

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

**cream** – unopened cartons will generally keep in the fridge for a few weeks. If you need to store for longer, just pop in the freezer in a sealed container. Or freeze in icecube trays so you can easily defrost just what you need.

**butter** – will keep in the fridge for weeks.



*broccoli bread*

# BROCCOLI BREAD

MAKES 6-8 slices

TAKES 40 minutes

500g (1lb) broccoli, 2 small

4 eggs

100g (3.5oz) almond meal

1/4 teaspoon salt

1. Preheat your oven to 200C (400F).
2. Process your broccoli using your food processor until it looks a bit like fine couscous. Or chop as finely as possible.
3. Add eggs, almond meal and salt to the food processor bowl. Stir with a spoon until combined.
4. Line a baking tray with baking (parchment) paper. Tip the broccoli mixture onto the lined tray then using your hands smooth into a rectangle about 1cm (1/3in) thick.
5. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until the bread is slightly browned and feels firm and springy when touched.
6. Cool on the tray for a few minutes then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. Cut in half crosswise and then into 3-4 lengthwise to make 6-8 slices (or cut to your preferred size).

When I'm in the mood for a sandwich or a slice of toast, this is my go-to recipe, inspired by David and Luise at [Green Kitchen Stories](#). I love how something that feels and tastes quite 'bread-y' is actually a serve of vegetables.

I slice and freeze so I can just defrost in the toaster as needed.

This broccoli version does look very green, which I love but I've found my boys are much happier eating the white, cauliflower version instead. What is it with kids and green food?

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**different quantities** – the 500g (1lb) broccoli is a guideline but if you only have 400g (14oz) or up to 600g (21oz) it will be fine.

**higher fiber** – add 1-2 tablespoons psyllium, oat bran, ground chia seeds or ground flax seeds (linseeds). I've also made it with whole linseeds.

**nut-free** – replace almond meal with bread crumbs, ground linseeds (flax seeds) or ground sunflower seeds. Each of these will soak up different amounts of moisture so you'll need to be prepared for different baking times. When I made it with ground sunflower seeds the texture was wetter and it took 30 minutes.

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

video

--- BREAKFAST ---

# BROCCOLI BREAD

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**different vegetables** – cauliflower works really well. You could also replace up to half the broccoli / cauliflower with grated raw veg like carrot, beets, sweet potato, parsnip or zucchini. I wouldn't use all root veg though as the texture would be too dense.

**other flavours** – I like to keep this simple so my sandwich flavours come through but you could play around with some grated parmesan, garlic or chopped herbs.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes. Keeps for up to a week in the fridge. Can be frozen.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**broccoli** – will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for about 2 weeks or sometimes a little longer. Can be frozen (if you have time, chop before freezing so it will defrost quickly).

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

**almond meal / salt** – keep them in the pantry.

*green smoothie*



# GREEN SMOOTHIE

MAKES 1 serves  
TAKES 5 minutes

*handful green veg*

*2-3 tablespoons  
something creamy*

*1-2 tablespoons protein  
powder, optional*

*1 tablespoon fibre, optional*

1. Place veg in a blender or food processor. Process until the veg are finely chopped.
2. Add remaining ingredients and 1/2 to 1 cup cold water and process again until smooth.
3. Taste and adjust if needed.

Generally I recommend not drinking your calories. So personally I don't have smoothies on a regular basis. But I've included a recipe here because I know this is a option that works for some people.

Feel free to play around with your smoothie ingredients. If the whole green thing freaks you out, you might like to ease yourself into it by including some low carb berries as well.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**veg** – broccoli, broccolini, kale, cavalo nero, spinach, baby spinach, carrots, celery, parsley, mint, cauliflower. Green peas from the freezer as especially good because they add sweetness and chill everything down. The only veg I've tried and didn't like was bok choy.

**something creamy** – natural yoghurt is my favourite. Coconut milk or coconut yoghurt is also lovely. Also consider replacing the water with milk, soy milk or rice milk or almond milk

**protein** – I use a commercial vanilla flavoured protein powder because it's convenient. I also have some powdered egg whites for when I want more of a 'pure protein' hit. Be careful of whey based protein powders as this can spike insulin.

*video*

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# GREEN SMOOTHIE

## PREPARE AHEAD?

You can but best when freshly made. Will keep in the fridge for a few days but the fresher the better.

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**additional flavourings** – vanilla extract, cinnamon, cardamom, cocoa powder.

**fibre** – I use either psyllium husks or ground linseeds (flax) which help thicken the smoothie and add to the texture.

**fruit** – feel free to replace some or all of the veg with fruit. Pears, apples, blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, peaches, cherries, nectarines are all good with the berries being the lowest carb choice.

*overnight seeds*



# OVERNIGHT SEEDS

MAKES 1 serves

TAKES 5 minutes + soaking at  
least 1 hour

1/4 cup linseeds (flaxseeds)  
or chia seeds

1/4 cup other seeds  
or nuts

1/2 cup milk

2 tablespoons peanut butter  
(optional)

yoghurt & berries, to serve

1. Combine seeds and nut and milk in a small bowl or jar. Refrigerate for at least an hour or overnight or even a few days.

2. Top with yoghurt, peanut butter (if using) and berries and eat with a teaspoon.

Back in my grain eating days, one of my favourite work-day breakfasts was bircher muesli or 'overnight oats'. Basically you just soak rolled oats and grated apple in milk or water overnight and in the morning add some yoghurt and you're good to go.

Recently I've been getting seriously into linseeds (flaxseeds) and had the inspiration to use them for a similar breakfast. Soo good!

In fact I'm enjoying my 'overnight seeds' even more than the old oatly version because of the nutty complex flavours and the more puddingy texture. And you don't really need to soak them overnight. An hour should do.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**no linseeds or chia** – you really need one or both of these to soak up the milk and thicken, other seeds and nuts won't do this.

**dairy-free** – use your favourite nut milk, coconut milk or water.

**nut-free** – use all seeds. Pumpkin seeds (pepitas), sesame seeds and sunflower seeds are all delicious.

**extra creamy** – serve with double cream instead of the yoghurt (this is what I often do).

video

--- BREAKFAST ---

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# OVERNIGHT SEEDS

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**sweeter** – add some grated or chopped apple or pear to soak with the seeds.

**crunchy** – top with your favourite granola before serving.

**extra indulgent** – serve with more peanut butter on top! (another of my favourite tricks).

**higher fiber** – add a little psyllium or oat bran.

**oaty** – if you don't mind the carbs, use steel cut oats instead of the linseeds / chia.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes. Just keep peanut butter and berries separately. Will keep in the fridge for 3-4 days. Don't freeze.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**seeds / nuts / peanut butter** – keep them in the pantry.

**milk** – will keep in the fridge for a week or so. Best to use for another meal.

**yoghurt** – usually has a shelf life of a month or so. Otherwise, have it for another meal like breakfast! Don't freeze.

**berries** – freeze them.



hearty walnut, kale & goats  
cheese frittata

# HEARTY WALNUT KALE AND GOATS CHEESE FRITTATA

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 30 minutes

1 bunch kale, sliced

6 eggs

small bunch chives chopped

2 tablespoon cream

100g (3.5oz) roasted walnuts

1 pack goats cheese (about  
100g / 3.5oz), sliced

1. Turn your oven on to 200C (400F). Heat a big glug of oil in a medium saucepan on a medium high heat. Add sliced kale and a splash of water. Cook covered, stirring every now and then until kale is wilted down. About 5 minutes.

2. Mix eggs, chives, cream and a big pinch of salt in a bowl. Line a small baking dish (about 22cm x 28cm / 8.5in x 11in dimensions) lined with baking paper. Or a round 28cm (11in) spring form pan will also work.

3. When the kale is cooked, spread it over the base of your baking dish. Pour the egg mixture over. Scatter over walnuts and slices of goats cheese.

4. Bake frittata for 12-14 minutes or until the egg is set and the cheese has browned a little. Serve hot or at room temp.

I love a good frittata at any time. But this one with walnuts and kale is especially substantial and fab for a meat-free dinner where you won't be missing the meat (my Irishman didn't). It's also good for lunches the next day.

And I love that it's a complete meal on its own. No need to add a sauce or side salad.

Just make sure the tray you use to cook it is a similar size to mine. Or if it's smaller, expect the cooking time to be longer. And for a larger tray it will cook more quickly - it's all about the surface area / depth of the mixture.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**short on time** – use pre-cooked greens or defrosted frozen spinach or other greens. Squeeze greens to remove extra moisture and expect to add another 5 minutes to the cooking time. Or skip the greens and serve with baby spinach leaves on the side (the frittata may not take as long to cook so check after 10 minutes).

**vegan / egg-free** – try these [buddha bowls](#) instead.

**more substantial (carb lovers) / family-friendly** – serve with hot buttered toast or warm pita bread. Or add some cooked sweet potato or potato or pasta as well as or instead of the kale.

**more substantial (low carb)** – more walnuts, more cheese or more eggs.

video

--- BREAKFAST ---

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# HEARTY WALNUT KALE AND GOATS CHEESE FRITTATA

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**Low FODMAP** – don't use the stems from the kale.

**different greens** – any leafy green will work. Or any other cooked veg.

**nut-free** – just skip the nuts or replace with sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds or cooked low carb veg like zucchini, mushrooms, capsicum (bell peppers).

**dairy-free** – skip the goats cheese and serve with pesto, [tahini lemon sauce](#) or [almond hummus](#) drizzled over.

**carnivore** – bacon, ham or cooked chicken.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

You can but the nuts will lose their crunch over time and it's difficult to reheat without over cooking the eggs. But if you're happy to eat it cold or at room temp, just cook as per the recipe. Will keep in the fridge for a week. Don't freeze. Serve cold or at room temp.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**kale** – will keep for 1-2 weeks in a plastic bag in the fridge. Or for longer if cooked as per the recipe. Can be frozen.

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

**chives** – best to use for another meal.

**cream** – unopened cartons will generally keep in the fridge for a few weeks. If you need to store for longer, just pop in the freezer in a sealed container. Or freeze in icecube trays so you can easily defrost just what you need.

**roasted walnuts** – keep them in the pantry.

**goats cheese** – if unopened it usually has a shelf life of a few weeks in the fridge. If it is opened, will only keep for a few days so use for another meal or freeze.



*feta & veggie breakfast muffins*

# FETA + VEGGIE BREAKFAST MUFFINS

MAKES 6

TAKES 40 minutes

*50g (1.75oz) coconut flour*

*1 teaspoon baking powder*

*1/4 teaspoon salt*

*2 eggs*

*50g (1.75oz) neutral  
flavoured oil*

*1 cup milk*

*1 medium zucchini  
(250g / 9oz), grated*

*100g (3.5oz) feta, crumbled  
or diced*

**1.** Preheat oven to 180C (350F). Line 6 holes of a 1/2 cup muffin tray with papers.

**2.** Place coconut flour, baking powder, salt, eggs, oil and milk in a medium bowl. Mix with a spoon until just combined. Add zucchini and feta and stir to combine.

**3.** Spoon mixture into your prepared muffin tray dividing between the 6 papers.

**4.** Bake for 25-30 minutes or until the muffins are deeply golden brown and feel springy when touched.

**5.** Cool for a few minutes in the tin, then move to a cake rack to finish cooling. Or eat warm!

These are brilliant if you're looking for a do-ahead brunch, a portable breakfast or lunch box option that's more exciting than sandwiches.

Or if you happen to have small boys who aren't so interested in eating vegetables apart from potato.

The muffins in the photo are feta and zucchini but there are endless options!

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**dairy-free** – use your favourite dairy-free milk. And skip the cheese or replace with olives or sun dried tomatoes.

**different veg** – grated carrot, parsnip, broccoli, or cauliflower. Or add cooked veg like mushrooms, peppers, eggplant, kale, chard or spinach.

**different cheese** – grated parmesan, cheddar, ricotta, goats cheese are all great.

**different flavourings** – add a handful of pitted olives, sun dried tomatoes, basil, thyme, parsley, canned artichoke hearts or anything you'd serve on a pizza.

**buttery** – use melted butter instead of the oil.

# FETA + VEGGIE BREAKFAST MUFFINS

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**no coconut flour** – you really need it for these I'm afraid! Although it's not too hard to track down these days... my supermarket stocks coconut flour in the health food and baking sections. Or you could try making a savoury version of these [almond meal based muffins](#).

**more fiber** – stir in a few tablespoons linseeds (flax seeds), chia seeds or oat bran.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes but I like these best on the day they're made but after they've had a chance to cool down. Can be kept for 1-2 weeks in an airtight container in the fridge. Keeps for months in the freezer.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**coconut flour / baking powder / salt / oil** – keep them in the pantry.

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

**milk** – Use for another meal.

**zucchini** – will keep for 2 weeks or longer in a plastic bag in the fridge. To keep it even longer, cook sliced zucchini in a little butter until just soft then store in an airtight container in the fridge.

**feta** – keeps for months unopened in its packet. Or can be frozen. Or you could make a marinated feta by putting it in a super clean jar from the dishwasher and covering with oil and then keeping it in the fridge. Sometimes I like to add flavourings like bay leaves, lemon zest and peppercorns or chilli.

*zucchini bread*



# ZUCCHINI BREAD

MAKES 6 to 8 serves

TAKES 70 minutes

400g (14oz) zucchini

250g (9oz) almond meal

1/4 teaspoon pure stevia  
powder\*

2 teaspoons baking powder

2 tablespoons honey  
(optional)

2 eggs

100g (3.5oz) neutral  
flavoured oil

1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
(optional)

**1.** Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Line a loaf pan 24cm x 12cm (approx 9in x 5in) with baking paper.

**2.** Grate your zucchini (I use my food processor). Mix zucchini, almond meal, stevia, baking powder, honey, eggs, oil and vanilla (if using) in a medium bowl or just add it to the food processor. Mix with a spoon to combine but don't stress if you end up with a few lumps.

**3.** Scoop the mixture into the prepared tin. Bake for 45-55 minutes or until the cake is deeply golden brown and feels springy. And a skewer inserted in the middle comes out clean. The honey will cause it to brown more than you'd normally expect.

**4.** Cool in the tin before serving.

What!?! Honey in a low carb book?!

I know honey is pretty much just sugar and I treat it as such.

But the honey here is totally optional. So it's up to you whether you include it or not.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**honey / sugar-free** – replace honey with an extra teaspoon vanilla extract to make 2 teaspoons total.

**\*important note about stevia!** – there are 4 types of stevia:

1. Pure Stevia Powder – looks like icing (powdered / confectioners) sugar. It's expensive but a tiny amount goes a long long way. We're talking 1/8 teaspoon to sweeten a whole cake. This is what I use.

2. Granular Stevia (like Natvia or Truvia) – looks like regular white sugar. It's a blend of erythritol and stevia. Usually 1/4 teaspoon = 4-6 tablespoons granular stevia.

3. Fresh or Dried Stevia Leaves – from a real stevia plant! I haven't baked with them but they will behave similar to the pure stevia powder. Just add to taste.

4. Liquid stevia. I haven't used this. But add to taste.

**granular stevia** – replace pure powder with 4-6 tablespoons granular stevia.

**no stevia** – use your favourite sweetener... Honey, maple syrup, xylitol or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level.

# ZUCCHINI BREAD

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**sugar lovers** – use 75g (3oz) sugar instead of the stevia. If you like things on the sweeter side double the sugar.

**nut-free / budget** – replace almond meal with plain (all purpose) flour. Reduce baking time to 25-30 minutes. Or replace almond meal with finely ground sunflower seeds (I use a little coffee grinder) – no need to change the baking time.

**different veg** – zucchini is my favourite because it's low carb and mild in flavour. But feel free to experiment with carrot, parsnip, cauliflower or broccoli.

**muffins** – divide mixture between 8-10 lined holes in a 1/2 cup muffin tray. Bake for 20-25 minutes.

**round cake** – use a 20cm (8in) round cake tin. Baking time should be closer to 40 minutes.

**extra pretty** – sprinkle with a handful of whole or sliced almonds before baking like I have in the picture.

--- BREAKFAST ---

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Will keep in the fridge for up to a week. Can be frozen.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**zucchini** – will keep for 2 weeks or longer in a plastic bag in the fridge. To keep it even longer, cook sliced zucchini in a little butter until just soft then store in an airtight container in the fridge.

**almond meal / stevia powder / baking powder / honey / oil / vanilla extract** – keep them in the pantry.

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.



*coconut pancakes*



# COCONUT PANCAKES

## PREPARE AHEAD?

No. Best when hot from the pan.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**coconut flour / coconut oil** – keep them in the pantry.

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

**milk / cream** – freeze it or use for another meal.

**fruit** – use for another meal.

*pecan 'porridge'*



# PECAN 'PORRIDGE'

MAKES 1 serves  
TAKES 10 minutes

1/2 cup whole pecans  
(60g / 2oz)

1/4 cup milk

1 egg

extra pecans & cream to serve

1. Pulse pecans in a food processor or spice grinder until finely ground. I like to leave a few chunks for texture.
2. Place pecans, milk and egg in a small saucepan. Cook on a medium heat, stirring frequently until thickened to a good oatmeal / porridge consistency. Be careful not to over cook as the egg will go all scrambled – I tend to err on the runnier side remembering it will still thicken after you take it off the heat.
3. Scoop into a bowl and serve topped with extra pecans and cream.

Porridge is the Australian name for oatmeal and it used to be one of my favourite Winter breakfasts.

For a long time I reserved it as a Saturday morning treat because it wasn't great for my blood sugar.

Then recently I had the brain wave to try low carb ingredients to make a porridge-style bowl of comfort. I'm so glad I did.

This nut based version is just as soothingly warming and blood sugar friendly. Yay!

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**different nuts** – pecans are my favourite for their sweet creamy flavour, but feel free to use whatever nuts you have.

**seedy** – feel free to play around with the whole and ground seeds. Sesame seeds, chia seeds, linseeds (flaxseeds), sunflower seeds and/or pumpkin seeds (pepitas) all make lovely additions.

**spiced** – add a pinch of cinnamon, nutmeg or pumpkin spice. A little vanilla extract is also great.

# PECAN 'PORRIDGE'

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**sweeter** – I like it with just the sweetness from the milk but if you need more, add a pinch of stevia or serve with your favourite sweetener. It's amazing with maple syrup for an occasional treat.

**dairy-free** – use your favourite dairy-free milk.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Best when freshly made.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**whole pecans** – keep them in the pantry.

**milk** – best to use for another meal.

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

**cream** – unopened cartons will generally keep in the fridge for 1-2 weeks. If you need to store for longer, just pop in the freezer in a sealed container. Or freeze in icecube trays so you can easily defrost just what you need.



*poached eggs with mayo*

# POACHED EGGS WITH MAYO

MAKES 1 serves  
TAKES 10 minutes

3-4 tablespoons white vinegar  
2 fresh eggs  
2-3 tablespoons mayonnaise  
salad leaves or other veg,  
to serve

1. Bring a small saucepan of water and the vinegar to the boil on a very high heat.
2. Break an egg into a small cup and slide gently into the boiling water. Repeat with the other egg. Or if you're more confident just crack your eggs directly into the pot.
3. Reduce the heat to keep the eggs at a gentle simmer and cook for 3 minutes or until the eggs feel firm but not hard.
4. Drain eggs with a slotted spoon and pat dry with a clean tea towel. Serve eggs on a bed of salad with mayo slathered over.

There are 2 secrets to perfect poached eggs. Using the freshest eggs you can and using lots of vinegar in the poaching water.

And if I had to offer a third secret, it's practice! The best way to get great at poaching eggs is to poach them every day for a week like I did. It's amazing what a difference doing something on a regular basis makes.

Every now and then, even with fresh eggs from my chooks, I get a 'dud' that goes all wispy in the water. So don't be discouraged - it happens to the best of us.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**carnivore** – serve with crispy bacon or a few slices of finely sliced prosciutto draped over. I also love black pudding or sausages.

**different veg** – a handful of baby spinach or baby kale, raw finely sliced zucchini, shaved white cabbage, grated raw cauliflower, raw snow peas or any cooked veg.

**decadent** – serve with some hollandaise sauce instead of the mayo.

**more flavour** – sprinkle over some nutritional yeast, schichimi togarashi (japanese spice blend) or shaved parmesan cheese.

# POACHED EGGS WITH MAYO

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**more substantial (low carb)** – serve with smashed avocado, roast nuts, a decent pat of butter or extra mayo.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

You can but I prefer my eggs freshly poached. If you do have leftovers they'll keep in the fridge for a week or so. I haven't thought to freeze poached eggs but they should be fine.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**white vinegar** – keep it in the pantry.

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

**mayonnaise** – unopened in pantry or once opened will keep for months in the fridge.

**salad leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.



*fried eggs with smashed avo & togarashi*

# FRIED EGGS WITH SMASHED AVO AND TOGARASHI

MAKES 1 serves  
TAKES 10 minutes

2 tablespoons oil

2-3 eggs

1/2 large or 1 small avocado

1-2 tsp shichimi togarashi

large handful salad leaves

1. Heat a small frying pan over a high heat for a minute or so.
2. Add oil and allow to warm. Crack eggs into the pan and fry for about 2 minutes or until the white is just set. I find it helps to spoon some hot oil over the whites to help them cook more quickly. If the eggs are browning on the bottom too quickly, remove from the heat for a little while and reduce the heat.
3. Slide the eggs onto your plate. Add avocado on the side and smash with a fork. Season with salt & pepper.
4. Add salad on the side and sprinkle over togarashi. Serve with salt and pepper and extra togarashi.

I love a good fried egg. It's hard to beat the combination of the crunchy, fluffy white and a soft melting yolk.

If you haven't tried the Japanese spice blend shichimi togarashi, you're in for a real treat!

But if you can't find it, don't worry, I've got you covered in the Variations.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**no shichimi togarashi** - you could try making your own by mixing some chilli powder with sesame seeds and a little orange zest. But chilli powder or flakes on their own with a little sea salt will do. It just won't have the fragrance and depth of flavour. If all that sounds too hard just go with good old salt and pepper and maybe a squeeze of lime for the avocado.

**other oils** - I use regular olive oil (not extra virgin) which doesn't have a strong flavour. Other options for cooking your eggs are ghee (clarified butter) or coconut oil. I don't cook with extra virgin olive oil because it isn't stable at high temperatures.

**carnivore** - fry a few rashers of bacon in the pan before cooking the eggs in the bacon fat. Avocado becomes optional.

# FRIED EGGS WITH SMASHED AVO AND TOGARASHI

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**vegan/egg-free** – serve the avocado with a large field mushroom that has been pan fried on a high heat until tender. Serve with a dollop of mayo to make it more substantial.

**irish breakfast** – slice some black and/or white pudding and pan fry in a little butter. Keep warm while you fry the eggs in the same pan. Avocado optional.

**more substantial/higher fat** – drizzle the cooking oil over the eggs/serve with a dollop of mayo or a drizzle of chilli oil, or scatter over some roast macadamias for extra crunch. I also like it with a smear of good quality pate for an extra boost of iron.

**carb-lovers** - serve with hot buttered toast.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

No. Best when freshly cooked.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**oil /shichimi togarashi** – keep it in the pantry.

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

**avocado** – use for another meal. Doesn't freeze well.

**salad leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.



*harissa scrambled eggs*



# HARISSA SCRAMBLED EGGS

MAKES 1 serves  
TAKES 15 minutes

3 eggs  
1-2 tablespoons harissa  
2 tablespoons cream  
1 tablespoon butter  
toasted almonds, to serve  
salad leaves, to serve

1. Heat a small frying pan on a medium heat. Combine eggs, harissa, cream and a pinch of salt in a small bowl. Stir with a fork until just mixed.
2. Add butter to the warm pan. When it starts to foam and sizzle, add eggs. Leave to cook for 30 seconds to 1 minute or until you can see the egg around the edges of the pan starting to set. Stir gently to scoop all the cooked egg into the middle and allow the runny egg to ooze down onto the bottom of the hot pan.
3. Cook for another 30 seconds to 1 minute until most of the egg is set but there's still a little runny egg on top (it will continue to cook after you remove it from the heat).
4. Spoon harissa eggs onto a plate. Top with almonds and salad leaves. Serve immediately.

Now that I have lovely chooks laying an abundance of eggs (5-6 a day!), I'm always on the lookout for ideas for egg-based dinners. I had some harissa eggs in a restaurant recently and couldn't wait to experiment at home.

Normally when we have an omelette or frittata for dinner, my Irishman makes some joke about 'where's the meat'. But with these eggs the fact that it was meatless went without comment.

I've written this recipe to serve one because I like to cook each serve individually but you could use a larger pan and double it if you prefer.

I've just used a commercial harissa in a tube I get from my local supermarket. If you can't find harissa see the variations for alternatives.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**no harissa** – [make your own](#) or use your favourite hot sauce (adjust quantities according to taste) or use 1 tablespoon tomato paste and some chopped fresh red chilli or dried chilli powder. Finely chopped Chipotle chillies in adobo sauce would be lovely too

**vegan** – try adding 1-2 tablespoons harissa to this [scrambled tofu](#). And use oil instead of butter.

**dairy-free** – use oil instead of butter and water or your favourite non-dairy milk instead of the cream. You could also skip the cream.

video

--- BREAKFAST ---

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# HARISSA SCRAMBLED EGGS

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – warm pita bread, tortillas, hot buttered toast or even couscous or quinoa.

**more substantial (low carb)** – extra almonds and eggs, crumble over some feta or goats cheese, serve with more substantial low carb veg like [these greens](#) or some [roast spiced cauliflower](#).

**Low FODMAP** – replace almonds with macadamias.

**carnivore** – serve with crispy bacon, spicy sausage or spanish chorizo.

**extra intensity** – serve with these [harissa almonds](#).

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Best when freshly made! Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks and eaten cold. Don't freeze.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

**harissa / almonds** – keep it in the pantry.

**cream** – unopened cartons will generally keep in the fridge for a few weeks. If you need to store for longer, just pop in the freezer in a sealed container. Or freeze in icecube trays so you can easily defrost just what you need.

**butter** – will keep in the fridge for weeks.

**salad leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.



*goats cheese & basil omelette*

# GOATS CHEESE AND BASIL OMELETTE

MAKES 1 serves  
TAKES 15 minutes

3 eggs

50g (2oz) goats cheese

5-6 basil leaves

large handful salad leaves to  
serve, optional

1. Preheat a small frying pan or omelette pan on a medium high heat.
2. Lightly whisk eggs in a bowl. Season.
3. Add a few glugs of oil or butter to the pan. Add eggs and cook for about 30 seconds. If they're sizzling too rapidly, turn the heat down.
4. After 30 seconds gently stir with a spatula bringing the cooked edges of the egg into the centre and let the raw egg flow out to the edges.
5. Top with goats cheese. When the egg is mostly cooked and set (about 1 minute or a little longer), slide the omelette onto your plate. Sprinkle over basil.
6. Serve with salad on the side.

It's hard to go past an omelette when you feel like a super quick, healthy meal.

The possibilities are endless when it comes to additions and flavours but this goats cheese and basil combo is one of my all time favourites.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**different cheese** – finely grated parmesan, cheddar, ricotta, cottage cheese, crumbled feta, blue cheese.

**vegetables / dairy-free** – replace goats cheese with halved cherry tomatoes, sun dried tomatoes, cooked mushrooms, artichoke hearts in oil, finely shaved asparagus, shaved fennel, cooked zucchini or leftover roast potatoes.

**carnivore** - drape prosciutto over the omelette, or finely sliced salami, diced cooked bacon, or shredded cooked chicken.

**fishy** – replace cheese with smoked salmon, smoked trout, salmon roe, caviar, canned sardines, smoked oysters, cooked crab meat, lobster, canned tuna, canned salmon.

**different herbs** – lemony sorrel, thyme, basil, parsley, mint.

**vegan** – try scrambled tofu served with dairy-free pesto

video

--- BREAKFAST ---

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# GOATS CHEESE AND BASIL OMELETTE

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**different accompaniments** – baby spinach, salad leaves, shaved fennel, shaved zucchini, shredded kale, wilted kale, wilted spinach, a glass of wine!

**richer** – use butter instead of the oil and add a few tablespoons of cream or sour cream as you whisk the eggs.

**carb lovers / more substantial** – serve with hot buttered toast.

**more substantial (low carb)** – add more eggs and some roast walnuts or almonds.

**paleo (grain, legume & dairy-free)** – replace goats cheese with halved cherry tomatoes, sun dried tomatoes, cooked mushrooms or some roast almonds.

**more veg** – add mushrooms or tomatoes to omelette.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Best when freshly made! But leftovers are still edible. Store in the fridge for up to a week. Don't freeze.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for a month or so. Or use for another meal.

**goats cheese** – keeps for months unopened in its packet. Or can be frozen.

**basil** – make basil oil by packing washed and dried leaves in a clean jar and covering with olive oil.

**olive oil** – keep in the pantry.

**salad leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.



*the 'next day' shakshuka*

# THE 'NEXT DAY' SHAKSHUKA

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 15 minutes

400g (14oz) cooked veg  
or legumes

1/2 jar tomato passata (puree)  
(1.5 cups)

1 tablespoon harissa  
(optional) or see variations  
for alternatives

4 eggs

handful labneh, feta, soft  
cheese or roast nuts (optional)

small bunch coriander  
(cilantro) or other herbs  
(optional)

**1.** Heat a little olive oil on a medium heat in a large frying pan. Add cooked veg and saute until warmed through.

**2.** Add tomato passata and harissa (if using). Bring to a simmer. Taste and season with salt and more harissa if you prefer it hotter.

**3.** Use a spoon to make 4 little nests or holes. Break an egg into each hole in the sauce. Cover with a lid and gently simmer for 3-4 minutes or until the egg whites are set and the yolks still runny. OR the eggs are cooked how you like them best.

**4.** Divide shakshuka between two bowls. Serve with cheese / nuts (if using) and herbs (if using) scattered over.

Shakshuka is a North African dish of eggs cooked in a tomatoey sauce. While it's commonly served for breakfast, it also make a fab meat-free dinner.

It's also a brilliant way to turn leftover cooked legumes or veg into a brand new meal. Which is where the 'next day' part comes in.

Don't feel like you need to have leftovers to make a delicious shakshuka. Just cook some fresh veg (onion and capsicum / bell peppers are a good place to start) and you're good to go!

Harissa is a Moroccan / Tunisian chilli paste that's packed with heat and flavour. I generally use a commercial one that comes in a tube. But I also [make my own](#) from time to time. If you don't have harissa, either leave it out or checkout the variations below for alternatives.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**types of veg** – any cooked veg or legumes can be used. I've used my [beautiful boiled broccoli](#) in the photo above. Roast veg are especially great - think [roast cauliflower](#) or root veg. Cooked [leafy greens](#) are also fab. If you have any grilled veg like zucchini, eggplant or capsicum (bell peppers), you'll really be on a winner!

**no harissa** – harissa is a Tunisian chilli paste that is lovely and hot. Feel free to use other chilli paste, your favourite hot sauce or some fresh or dried chilli peppers. Or just leave it out for a milder vibe.

**different herbs** – any leafy herb like parsley, basil, oregano or mint will work.

**Low FODMAP** – use low fodmap veg / nuts.

# THE 'NEXT DAY' SHAKSHUKA

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**tomato passata alternatives** – a can of tomatoes or small jar of your fave tomato pasta sauce will work. Or for a different vibe use stock. I've also used pesto to make a [green shakshuka](#) like [this one over here](#).

**extra spice!** – add 1-2 teaspoons smoked paprika, ground cumin, ground coriander or baharat with the tomato.

**vegan** – replace eggs with cooked legumes (I love it with chickpeas), crumbled tofu or tempeh or extra veg. Use nuts instead of the cheese.

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – serve with pita, other flat bread or warm tortillas.

**more substantial (low carb)** – use extra low carb veg or serve with nuts and cheese

**family-friendly** – serve the harissa or hot sauce at the table for everyone to add their own heat. Or not. And see the carb-lovers option.

**carnivore** – include some bacon, chorizo or other sausages with the cooked veg.

--- BREAKFAST ---

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Best when freshly made. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for up to 1 week. Don't freeze.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**cooked veg or legumes** – freeze them.

**tomato passata / harissa / nuts** – keep it in the pantry.

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

**handful labneh, feta, soft cheese** – if unopened it usually has a shelf life of a few weeks in the fridge. If it is opened, will only keep for a few days so use for another meal or freeze.

**coriander (cilantro) or other herbs** – best to use for another meal. Can be frozen but will wilt when defrosted.



*cumulus spiced eggs*

# CUMULUS SPICED EGGS

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 15 minutes

1 jar tomato pasta sauce  
(about 1 1/2 cups)  
1-2 teaspoons ground  
coriander  
1 bag baby spinach leaves  
4 eggs  
small handful soft  
goats cheese

1. Heat a little oil in a large frying pan. Add sauce and spice and bring to a simmer.
2. Add baby spinach and stir for about a minute, until the sauce has come back up to a simmer.
3. Make 4 indents in the sauce. Crack an egg into each indent.
4. Cover with a lid and gently simmer for 3-4 minutes or until the egg whites are set and the yolks still runny.
5. Season. Crumble over the goats cheese and serve.

These eggs are a simplified version of a dish served at one of my favourite Melbourne restaurants, Cumulus Inc.

They bake the eggs in individual cast iron pots but I've found cooking on the stove top with a lid on so the top of the eggs steam gives just as good results.

I like to use an 'arriabata' tomato sauce which has in-built chilli spice. But you could just add your own fresh chilli.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**dairy-free** – serve sprinkled with roast sliced almonds or pine nuts. Or be like Cumulus Inc and serve with [dukkah](#).

**different spices** – try ground cumin, smoked paprika, dried chilli or a mixture. Curry powder would work for a more Indian vibe.

**egg-free** – you could cook chicken thigh fillets. Simmer in the sauce for about 10 minutes, depending on the size.

**vegan** – wilt the spinach into the sauce with the spices and some tempeh or tofu. Divide sauce between two plates. Top with chunks of cold avocado and sprinkle over dukkah or roast sliced almonds.

video

--- BREAKFAST ---

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# CUMULUS SPICED EGGS

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**carnivore** – serve eggs with prosciutto draped over or brown some sliced chorizo in the pan before adding the tomato.

**carb lovers / more substantial** – serve with sourdough toast or warm tortillas.

**more substantial (low carb)** - extra eggs, nuts or [zucchini tortillas](#).

**more veg** – brown an onion before adding the sauce. Add your fave salad veg like sliced radish or fennel to the green salad.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Best when freshly made. But leftover will keep in the fridge for up to a week.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**jarred tomato pasta sauce & ground coriander** – will keep in the pantry.

**baby spinach leaves** – use for something else or you could freeze them, they'll wilt when they defrost but it won't be the end of the world ☐

**eggs** – keep in the fridge for weeks or even months. To keep for even longer you can freeze in a container or boil them in their shells.

**goats cheese** – pre-packaged goats cheese can have a shelf life of months. If your packet is opened, though, best to freeze.



# PORTABLE LUNCHEs



# PORTABLE LUNCHESES

BEST EVER BROCCOLI SALAD

SPICED ROAST CAULIFLOWER WITH LABNEH

PESTO, OLIVE + FETA FRITTATA

LIME + TAHINI KALE SALAD

THE PLOUGHMAN'S 'PIE'

SANDWICHES ON BROCCOLI BREAD

NOTE: UNLESS IT'S THE MIDDLE OF SUMMER, MOST OF THESE ARE FINE WITHOUT REFRIGERATION FOR A FEW HOURS.

--- LUNCH ---

*best ever broccoli salad*



# BEST EVER BROCCOLI SALAD

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 20 minutes

2 heads broccoli

3 tablespoons red wine  
vinegar

1 tablespoon miso paste  
or dijon mustard

6 tablespoons extra virgin  
olive oil

4 slices bacon, chopped

1 bunch flat leaf parsley or  
salad leaves

shaved parmesan, to serve

1. Bring 1cm (1/2in) salted water to the boil in a medium saucepan. Chop the broccoli into bite sized florettes and finely slice the stems. Simmer broccoli, covered in the pot for 4 minutes or until no longer crunchy. Drain.

2. Return the pot to the stove and cook bacon on a medium high heat until crispy.

3. While the bacon is cooking make the dressing. Combine vinegar, miso or mustard and olive oil in a small jar or the base of your salad bowl. Whisk / shake until smooth and creamy. Taste and season remembering you'll get salt from the bacon and broccoli.

4. Toss warm broccoli in the dressing and stand for a few minutes. When the bacon is cooked, toss into the salad along with the parsley (stems finely chopped and leaves coarsely chopped) or salad leaves. Taste and adjust seasoning as needed.

5. Serve with shaved parmesan on top.

For years this [raw broccoli salad](#) with avocado and almond was my favourite. Although it was quite labour intensive to chew. And I was finding that it was getting difficult to digest as well.

So I forgot about broccoli salads for years. And then after prepping a batch of my [beautiful boiled broccoli](#) one day I had the inspiration to turn it into a salad. With bacon. And parmesan.

As I said in the title, 'best ever'. And I don't make such claims lightly.

While you can make this with pre-cooked broccoli, I think it's slightly better when the hot broccoli gets tossed in the dressing and left to marinate for a few minutes.

And this is one of the rare occasions where red wine vinegar really is best.

Don't worry vegetarian friends, I've got you covered in the variations below! And there are 7 ingredients but I don't count olive oil ☐

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**short on time** – cook broccoli and bacon in separate pans at the same time. Using defrosted frozen broccoli will save on chopping time ( no need to boil it – just saute in the pan with the bacon to warm).

**vegetarian** – replace bacon with smoked or toasted almonds, sunflower seeds or any other nuts (except peanuts – wrong flavour profile). Or smoked tofu.

**vegan / dairy-free** – as per vegetarian and also replace cheese with chunks of avocado, roast almonds or sun dried tomatoes.

**Low FODMAP** – skip the broccoli stems.

video

--- LUNCH - PORTABLE ---

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# BEST EVER BROCCOLI SALAD

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – toss in torn sourdough bread chunks, croutons, steamed grains like quinoa or brown rice, steamed sliced potatoes or cooked pasta.

**more substantial (low carb)** – serve with [poached eggs](#) or [pulled chicken](#), canned salmon, sardines or canned tuna. Or add roasted almonds, walnuts, brazil nuts or sunflower seeds.

**keto / ultra low carb** – replace 1 head broccoli with salad leaves.

**different herbs / greenery** – basil is nice in summer. Or use oregano or chopped chives. Baby kale leaves or any salad leaves are also great.

**parmesan alternatives** – it's hard to go past parmesan but crumbled feta or blue cheese also works really well.

**different vinegar** – red wine vinegar is the best here. My next choice would be sherry vinegar or apple cider vinegar. And then white wine vinegar.

**creamy salad** – replace dressing with [miso mayo](#). Will feel a bit more like a caesar salad.

--- LUNCH - PORTABLE ---

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook as per the recipe but keep the parsley and parmesan separately. Can be left at room temp for an hour or so but any longer pop in the fridge. Will still be delicious after a week in the fridge but if serving for company best to serve within 24 hours because the broccoli loses its beautiful green colour over time. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, toss in the parsley and shave over the parmesan.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**broccoli** – will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for 1-2 weeks. Can be frozen (if you have time chop before freezing so it will defrost quickly in the pan).

**red wine vinegar / extra virgin olive oil / dijon mustard** – keep them in the pantry.

**miso paste** – unopened paste can be kept in the pantry, once open needs to be refrigerated.

**bacon** – freeze it.

**parsley** – will keep in the fridge wrapped in a plastic bag for a few weeks. Can be frozen or make a parsley oil by packing the leaves into a clean jar and covering with extra virgin olive oil.

**salad leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.

**parmesan** – wrap in waxed paper or baking paper and store in the fridge in a sealed paper bag or airtight container. Will keep for months. Can be frozen if you're going away.

*spiced roast cauliflower salad with labneh*



# SPICED ROAST CAULIFLOWER SALAD

MAKES 2 serves as a side  
or light lunch  
TAKES 30 minutes

*1/2 cauliflower, chopped into  
bite sized pieces*

*1 onion, halved and  
finely sliced*

*2 tablespoons curry powder*

*2 tablespoons rice  
or wine vinegar*

*1 bag baby spinach*

*2 handfuls labneh or  
thick yoghurt*

**1.** Turn your oven to 250C (480F). Toss cauli, onion, curry powder and about 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil in a roasting pan.

**2.** Roast spiced cauli for 15-20 minutes or until well browned and tender.

**3.** Allow cauli to cool a little while you make the dressing. Mix vinegar with another 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil. Season well.

**4.** Toss dressing and baby spinach in the pan with the cauli. Serve with dollops of labneh on top.

Inspired by the brilliant Mike McEarnehy, chef at Kitchen by Mike. Love his fresh produce-driven approach to food.

And I should mention I've made this three times in the last two weeks. Something unheard of around these parts. Definitely one for you to try!

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**main meal / more substantial** – Serve as a side to BBQ lamb cutlets, roast chicken or pan fried fish. Or add poached or fried eggs or roast nuts.

**different greens** – replace baby spinach with cooked kale, flat leaf parsley, mint, coriander (cilantro), salad leaves or a combo of any of the above.

**dairy-free / vegan** – replace labneh with roasted hazelnuts, almonds or chunks of avocado.

**paleo** – avocado + lime, roast brazil nuts, coconut yoghurt or poached eggs instead of labneh.

**vegetarian** – serve salad with poached eggs.

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# SPICED ROAST CAULIFLOWER SALAD

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**carnivore** – serve as a side to BBQ lamb cutlets, pork chops, sausages or BBQ or roast chicken. Or toss some raw chopped chicken thighs to roast with the cauli (make sure it's cooked through – might take a little longer).

**more substantial / carb lovers** – toss in cooked brown rice, quinoa or pasta. Might need a little more olive oil. You could also serve on warm flat bread.

**more substantial (low carb)** – serve as a side to some chicken and add some cashews, almonds or macadamias.

**different spices** – try mixing it up with other spice blends. Garam masala is great or try a Moroccan spice blend like ras el hanout or the Lebanese blend baharat.

**to make your own labneh** – just line a sieve with clean cheesecloth or a tea towel. Place yoghurt in the lined sieve and leave it over a bowl or jug in the fridge for the water to drain off. As little as an hour can make a difference but some people leave it for two days. The longer the thicker.

--- LUNCH - PORTABLE ---

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Absolutely! Just keep the labneh and salad leaves separately. Will keep in the fridge for 1-2 weeks. Cooked cauli can be frozen but not the rest. To serve warm in a pan with a little oil.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**cauli (whole)** – will keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for weeks. To keep for longer, chop into florettes and pop in the freezer.

**onion** – will keep in the pantry for months. Best if in a dark corner in a brown paper bag.

**curry powder / rice or wine vinegar** – keep them in the pantry.

**baby spinach** – best to use for another meal. Can be frozen but will wilt when defrosted.

**labneh or yoghurt** – use for another meal like breakfast! Don't freeze.

*pesto, olive & feta frittata*



# PESTO, OLIVE + FETA FRITTATA

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 30 minutes

6 eggs

120g pesto (4 heaped  
tablespoons) + extra

100g (3.5oz) feta, crumbled

2 handfuls black olives, pitted  
(100g / 3.5oz)

salad, to serve

**1.** Turn your oven on to 200C (400F). Grease and line a rectangular oven proof dish (mine was 20x25cm / 8x10in dimensions) or a round 20cm (8in) springform pan or a 20cm (8in) oven proof frying pan. If using a non stick pan, no need to line it with paper.

**2.** Mix eggs and pesto a big pinch of salt in a bowl. Pour egg mixture into your prepared pan. Scatter over olives and feta.

**3.** Bake frittata for 15-20 minutes or until the egg is set and the frittata feels firm and springy. Serve hot or at room temp with salad and extra pesto if desired.

The idea to combine these three powerful flavours came from a lunch I had at [Highroad](#) - a fave local cafe. They served it in the form of poached eggs with pesto, broccolini and dried olive crumbs.

And while that was amazing, I like my frittata better because it feels more substantial and dinnerish.

I've baked it in a rectangular pyrex dish because I like how it looks, but you could easily use a round 20cm (8in) springform pan or a 20cm (8in) oven proof frying pan instead.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**dairy-free** - replace feta with roast walnuts, cashews or other nut. And use [dairy-free pesto](#).

**more substantial (carb lovers)** - serve with crusty bread, toast or boiled or roast potatoes.

**more substantial (low carb)** - extra pesto, feta, avocado, or add roast nuts. Serve with more substantial low carb veg.

**herby** - a little chopped chives or thyme are lovely with the eggs.

video

--- LUNCH - PORTABLE ---

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# PESTO, OLIVE + FETA FRITTATA

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**no olives** – just skip them or replace with sun dried tomatoes, grilled red peppers, walnuts or extra feta.

**different cheese** – parmesan, brie, camembert or cheddar.

**no pesto** – replace with a 250g (9oz) pack of frozen spinach that has been defrosted and squeezed dry.

**carnivore** – cooked sausages or chicken.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

You can but I prefer my frittata warm from the oven!  
Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 1-2 weeks. Don't freeze.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

**pesto** – commercial jars of pesto will keep for months in the pantry. Fresh pesto will keep in the fridge for a few weeks. Cover with olive oil to prevent exposure to air and browning reactions.

**feta** – keeps for months unopened in its packet. Or can be frozen. Or you could make a marinated feta by putting it in a super clean jar from the dishwasher and covering with oil and then keeping it in the fridge. Sometimes I like to add flavourings like bay leaves, lemon zest and pepper corns or chilli.

**olives** – store in the pantry.

**salad leaves** – store sealed bag in the fridge. If buying loose leaves, wash and spin dry in a salad spinner then wrap loosely in paper towel and place inside plastic bag. Push out most of the air and seal. Store in the fridge.



*lime & tahini kale salad*

# LIME + TAHINI KALE SALAD

MAKES 1 to 2 serves

TAKES 10 minutes

1 large bunch kale

2 limes

4 tablespoons tahini

2 tablespoons soy sauce

2 large handfuls roast  
almonds or walnuts

**1.** Remove tough stems from the kale and slice or tear into bite sized strips. Place kale in a large bowl.

**2.** Squeeze over lime juice and drizzle with tahini and soy sauce. Toss salad with your hands massaging the kale as you go.

**3.** Serve with almonds on top.

Inspired by the lovely Ella Woodward from her first book '[Deliciously Ella](#)' which is filled with plant based recipes.

When I first made this I was completely obsessed I think I had it three times in one week. I adore how the lime and tahini come together to make a super flavoursome dressing.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**no tahini** – use almond or cashew butter instead. Or replace tahini with extra virgin olive oil for a less creamy salad. You could sprinkle in some toasted sesame seeds for flavour.

**carb lovers / more substantial** – toss in torn flat bread or tortillas OR some cooked quinoa or rice and an extra squeeze of lime to make sure the salad doesn't dry out.

**more substantial (low carb)** – add cooked chicken or eggs.

**carnivore** – toss in some sliced cooked steak, spicy sausage or chicken – I love this steak version!

# LIME + TAHINI KALE SALAD

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**no lime** – use lemon instead.

**soy-free** – replace soy sauce with coconut aminos or use salt to season instead.

**nut-free / different protein** – serve with [poached eggs](#), [pulled chicken](#), cooked chickpeas or canned tuna instead.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! This is a rare salad that is fine for a day or two in the fridge. It's still edible for longer than that (up to a week or so), but won't be quite as nice as the first few days. Don't freeze.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**kale** – will keep in the fridge in a plastic bag uncooked for 1-2 weeks. Once cooked like this it will keep for a month or so in the fridge. Can be frozen both cooked or raw.

**lime** – will keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.

**tahini** – I keep mine in the pantry but will keep longer in the fridge if open.

**soy sauce** – keep it in the pantry.



*the ploughman's 'pie'*

# THE PLOUGHMAN'S 'PIE'

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 30 minutes

100g (3.5oz) almond meal  
or almond flour

6 eggs

100g (3.5oz) cheddar or other  
cheese, grated

100g (3.5oz) ham

salad, to serve

mustard, to serve

**1.** Turn your oven to 200C (400F). Line the base and sides of a 24cm (9in) spring form pan with baking paper. If you can't be bothered you can just grease but the eggs do like to stick!

**2.** Spread almond meal over the base of your prepared pan. Mix eggs, cheese and a pinch of salt in a bowl. Pour egg mixture over the almond meal.

**3.** Bake for 12-15 minutes or until the eggs are set and the pie is puffing up and slightly golden.

**4.** Serve wedges with ham, mustard and salad leaves.

So I got the idea to turn a baked frittata into a pie from someone on [Instagram](#). Wish I could remember who it was so I could give credit where it is due!

Anyway I love how the almond crust transforms this baked eggs and cheese into something more decadent and pie-like. Although since it doesn't have a lid I guess technically it's a tart!

If you're not familiar, a ploughman's lunch is normally a plate of cheese, ham, mustard and pickles served with crusty bread.

Love using these hearty flavours in a more low carb-friendly way.

If you don't mind an extra ingredient, mixing wholegrain mustard with an equal part of mayonnaise makes a killer sauce.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**nut-free** – use ground sunflower seeds or a mix of ground sunflower and flax seeds (linseeds). Or if you don't mind the carbs soft bread crumbs will be OK. Or you can skip the base and turn it into a frittata instead.

**dressed salad** – toss your leaves in a quick dressing of 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil and 1 tablespoon of your fave vinegar.

**keto / ultra low carb** – for a lower carb option reduce the almond meal and replace cheddar with Parmesan. And use mayo instead of mustard.

**vegetarian** – skip the ham or replace with sun dried tomatoes or roast / grilled veg. Mushrooms are especially good!

video

--- LUNCH - PORTABLE ---

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# THE PLOUGHMAN'S 'PIE'

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**dairy-free** – replace cheese with extra ham or roast or grilled veg or halved cherry tomatoes and serve with [dairy-free pesto](#).

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – it's pretty substantial as is. Serve with hot buttered toast, or crusty bread + butter. Or use the pie as a sandwich filling.

**more substantial (low carb)** – make a mustard mayo (equal parts wholegrain mustard and mayonnaise). Or more ham. Or serve with pickles or sauerkraut.

**low FODMAP** – skip the almond meal and turn it into a frittata.

**more vegetables** – add in any cooked veg you have. Or halved cherry tomatoes. Especially delicious with grilled peppers or cooked artichokes. Or serve with pickles, sauerkraut or other fermented veg.

**different protein** – you really need the eggs here but the cheese can be changed as per the variations above. Smoked salmon, salami, cooked bacon, cooked chorizo, prosciutto or hot smoked trout make a lovely alternative to the ham.

--- LUNCH - PORTABLE ---

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook as per the recipe but keep the ham, mustard and salad separately. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks. Don't freeze. Serve chilled or at room temp. I like to dice up leftovers and pan fry them in a little butter to use in salads or on soups.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**almond meal or almond flour / mustard** – keep them in the pantry.

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

**cheese** – most hard and melting cheeses will keep for weeks wrapped in waxed paper or baking paper and stored in an airtight container (or sealed ziplock bag) in the fridge. If you need to store for longer cheese can be frozen.

**ham** – freeze it.

**salad leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.



# ASSEMBLE-AT-WORK LUNCHESES

# ASSEMBLE-AT-WORK LUNCHESES

FOR THOSE WHO HAVE ACCESS TO SOME SORT OF KITCHENETTE.

CRUNCHY BOK CHOY + AVOCADO SALAD

WASHING UP-FREE SALAD

YOGHURT + VEGGIES

COS LETTUCE WRAPS

BBQ CHICKEN SALAD

*crunchy bok choy & avocado salad*



# CRUNCHY BOK CHOY + AVOCADO SALAD

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 10 minutes

- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 bunch bok choy, washed
- 1 avocado
- 2 handfuls toasted almonds

1. Combine mustard, lemon juice, 2 tablespoons olive oil and some salt and pepper in a medium sized bowl.
2. Slice bok choy into bite sized pieces and toss in the dressing.
3. Cut avocado in half lengthwise. Then use a spoon to scoop out the flesh into chunks. Add to the salad.
4. Divide between 2 bowls and top with almonds.

Bok choy used to be one of those veg I'd buy because it looked so fresh and lovely and then I would struggle to figure out what to do with it apart from adding to a stir fry.

Then I had the brainwave to chop it up and use it as a salad green.

And I haven't looked back!

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**carnivore / more substantial (low carb)** – fry some chopped bacon until crispy and toss in at the end. Shredded cooked chicken is also good here.

**nut-free** – replace the almonds with a few tablespoons of finely diced raw red onion or red capsicum (bell pepper) or crumbled feta or other cheese.

**different veg** – play around with other Asian greens. Kale is also good here but be sure to slice it super finely. Raw broccoli or asparagus are also favourites.

video

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# CRUNCHY BOK CHOY + AVOCADO SALAD

## PREPARE AHEAD?

This is one of the few salads that is OK after a night in the fridge. Although the avocado may start to brown so best to add it and the almonds at the last minute.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**dijon mustard / almonds** – keep in the pantry.

**lemon** – will keep for months in a plastic bag in the fridge.

**bok choy** – best to use for another meal. Can be frozen.

**avocado** – use for another meal. Doesn't freeze well.



*washing up free salad*

# WASHING UP FREE SALAD

MAKES 1 serve  
TAKES 5 minutes

*1 can sardines,  
preferably in olive oil*  
*1 bag washed salad leaves*  
*1 lemon*  
*small handful pinenuts,  
optional*

1. Drain some of the oil from the fish, leaving a little to help dress the leaves.
2. Open salad bag, add fish and a generous squeeze of lemon to the bag.
3. Toss in pinenuts, if using. Season with a little pepper if you have any. Eat from the bag.

This is a great work lunch if you have access to a supermarket - just duck in for a bag of washed lettuce, some canned fish and a lemon and do a bit of make-your-own back at the office.

I also have been known to make this in hotel rooms for dinner when I've been travelling for work and am sick of eating out and room service. Just the thing to soothe a weary worker.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**different protein** - any cooked or canned fish such as mackerel, tuna, smoked salmon, smoked trout, smoked oysters or smoked kippers. Boiled eggs or cooked chicken are easy fish-free alternatives. Or try prosciutto or salami.

**vegetarian** - boiled eggs, salty feta, blue cheese, shaved parmesan, goats cheese or avocado.

**different nuts** - any roast nuts will work. I especially love walnuts, macadamias and almonds.

**more veg** - feel free to add any cooked veg.

video

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# WASHING UP FREE SALAD

**nut-free** - just skip the nuts or replace with extra protein.

**more substantial (carb lovers)** - toss in cooked grains or torn chunks of sour dough. Or wrap your salad in pita bread.

**more substantial (low carb)** - extra protein, extra nuts, avocado. All of the above.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Best when freshly made.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**sardines / pinenuts- keep them in the pantry.**

**salad leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.

**lemon** – whole lemon will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.

*yoghurt & veggies*



# YOGHURT + VEGGIES

MAKES 1 serve  
TAKES 10 minutes

1 small tub Greek yoghurt  
pinch dried chilli, optional  
1/2 head broccoli,  
chopped into florettes  
small handful snowpeas,  
trimmed  
handful almonds

1. Season yoghurt with salt, pepper and chilli, if using.
2. Serve yoghurt on a plate and top with the veg and almonds.

Yoghurt is something that comes to mind when thinking of healthy breakfasts and snacks, but not so much for lunches.

The thing is, Greek yoghurt is lovely served as a savoury meal. Just add some fresh veg and a little salt & pepper and you're away.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**warm lunch**– quickly blitz the veg in the microwave to warm and cook a little, still retaining some crunch.

**vegan / dairy-free** – use coconut yoghurt or hummus.

**different veg** – feel free to experiment. Ideas include asparagus, bok choy, red capsicum (bell peppers), carrot, celery, cauliflower, sliced kale.

**nut-free** – replace the almonds with some cooked chicken or drained canned chickpeas.

**more substantial** - extra nuts, poached or boiled eggs, avocado chunks, replace 1/2 the yoghurt with mayonnaise, drizzle with extra virgin olive oil.

video

# YOGHURT + VEGGIES

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Wonderful. The veg can be prepped and kept in a separate container to the yoghurt.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**dried chilli / almonds** – keep them in the pantry.

**yoghurt** – usually has a shelf life of a month or so. Otherwise, have it for another meal like breakfast! Don't freeze.

**broccoli** – will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for about 2 weeks or sometimes a little longer. Can be frozen (if you have time chop before freezing so it will defrost quickly in the pan).

**snow peas** – can be frozen but best to use for another meal.

*coj lettuce wraps*



# COS LETTUCE WRAPS

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 10 minutes

1 can red salmon  
(200g / 7oz), drained

1 tub cottage cheese  
(250g / 9oz)

1 lemon

1 cos or other lettuce

**1.** Mash salmon with a fork and combine with cottage cheese. Add lemon juice to taste, around 2-3 tablespoons.

**2.** Serve salmon with lettuce leaves to scoop and wrap around your filling.

These wraps are a brilliant way to transition from sandwiches. All you need to do is replace your bread with lettuce and increase the amount of 'filling' so you don't go hungry.

This example with salmon and cottage cheese is one of my favourites but please don't let that limit your imagination!

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**dairy-free** – replace the cottage cheese with 1/2 drained can of white beans such as cannellini.

**vegan** – try a combo of avocado, chickpeas & lemon. A touch of chilli will be nice too.

**vegetarian** – replace salmon with 2-3 hard boiled eggs. A little curry powder is good too.

**carnivore** – cooked shredded chicken, mayo and parsley.

**your favourite sandwich filling** – let your imagination go wild!

**budget** – replace salmon with canned tuna.

video

# COS LETTUCE WRAPS

## PREPARE AHEAD?

The salmon cottage cheese mixture can be made up to 3-4 days ahead. Just give it a good stir before using. Store the lettuce separately.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**salmon** - keep it in the pantry.

**cottage cheese** – in a sealed tub it usually has a shelf life of a few weeks in the fridge. If in an opened container, will only keep for a few days so use for another meal or freeze.

**lemon** – whole lemon will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.

**cos lettuce** – will keep in the fridge for a few weeks in a plastic bag. Otherwise use for another meal as it's not great once frozen.



*BBQ chicken salad*

# BBQ CHICKEN SALAD

MAKES 1 serve  
TAKES 10 minutes

1. Serve chicken with leaves. Squeeze over lemon as you like. Too easy.

1/4 BBQ chicken  
1 small bag washed  
salad leaves  
1/2 lemon

video

--- LUNCH - ASSEMBLE AT WORK ---

Sometimes convenience food is the only option. But that doesn't mean you necessarily have to settle for all junk.

I've included this 'recipe' to give you ideas for putting a healthy spin on takeaway food. Something as small as skipping the chips and picking up some salad leaves can make all the difference.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**home made chicken** – prefer to cook your chicken at home? Try the [simple roast chook](#) or [BBQ chicken recipes](#).

**pescetarian** – get a lovely piece of fish from your favourite fish & chip joint and hold the chips. You may need more lemon with this.

**vegan / vegetarian** – buy a commercial 'veggie burger' and eat with salad instead of the burger bun.

**more substantial** – serve with some good quality mayo, avocado or roast nuts.

**veg** – serve the chicken with raw veg instead of the leaves.

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# BBQ CHICKEN SALAD

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**need a proper dressing?** – either make your own by combining 1 tablespoon lemon juice with 1-2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil in a small jar. Or use a commercial salad dressing – just choose one that doesn't have added sugar and preferable using olive oil instead of cheap vegetable oil.

**hot!** – serve with your favourite chilli sauce or chilli oil.

## PREPARE AHEAD?


There are loads of possibilities. It might be you have a bag of salad leaves and a lemon in your work fridge then just pop out to pickup the hot chicken at lunch. Or you could buy everything ahead of time and keep in the fridge. Or if you have a supermarket close by maybe you can pick everything up at once.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**BBQ chicken** - use for another meal or freeze.

**salad leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.

**lemon** – whole lemon will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.



COOK OR REHEAT  
AT WORK LUNCHES

# COOK OR REHEAT AT WORK LUNCHES

FOR THOSE WHO HAVE ACCESS TO A MICROWAVE / SANDWICH PRESS OR TOASTER OVEN.

ROAST MUSHROOM 'TOASTS'

HALLOUMI + CABBAGE HASH

CHEESEY BROCCOLI

BACHELORETTE EGGS

TUSCAN GREENS SOUP

LEFTOVER DINNERS

--- LUNCH - TO COOK OR REHEAT AT WORK ---



*roast mushroom 'toasts'*

# ROAST MUSHROOM 'TOASTS'

MAKES 3 to 4 serves

TAKES 10 minutes

6-8 medium portabello  
or flat mushrooms

1 - 2 cloves garlic,  
finely sliced

1/2 bunch thyme (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 400F (200C).
2. Trim mushroom stalks and place in a baking dish stem side up. Scatter with garlic, thyme (if using), salt & pepper. Drizzle generously with olive oil.
3. Bake 20-25 minutes or until mushrooms are browned and tender.

I love roasting mushrooms because it's super easy AND you end up with the most delicious, intense, almost 'meaty' morsels. They're my new favourite diabetic-friendly replacement for toast. I adore them spread with iron-rich pate as in the photo above but they're pretty much good with any of your favourite savoury toast toppings. Think grilled cheese, tuna melts, hummus or even smashed avocado with lashings of salt and pepper.

They keep well in the fridge so I usually roast a whole batch, then warm them in a frying pan or the oven as I need them for breakfasts or lunches.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**dairy-lovers** – use butter instead of oil.

**sliced** – feel free to slice the mushies first. Expect the cooking time to be slightly less. And they'll be much trickier to use as 'toast'.

**small mushrooms** – button mushrooms, swiss brown or shiitake can all be used. Expect the cooking time to be slightly less.

**exotic mushrooms** – if using oyster, enoki or other exotic mushrooms, follow the same method but check much earlier.

**different herbs** – thyme is my go-to for mushrooms but sage or rosemary are also lovely.

# ROAST MUSHROOM 'TOASTS'

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Absolutely! Will keep in the fridge for 1-2 weeks. Or can be frozen.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**mushrooms** – keep in the fridge in a brown paper bag. Once cooked will keep for weeks. And can be frozen raw or cooked.

**garlic** - in a dark pantry.

**thyme** – keeps for ages in a plastic bag in the fridge or even longer in the freezer.



*halloumi + cabbage hash*

# HALLOUMI + CABBAGE HASH

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 20 minutes

*1/4 large cabbage  
(500g / 1lb)*  
*2 tablespoons soy sauce*  
*1 tablespoon sherry  
or wine vinegar*  
*250g (9oz) halloumi*  
*2 eggs*  
*small bunch parsley,  
leaves picked*

1. Slice cabbage (the finer you slice it the quicker it will cook). Add to a large saucepan with a drizzle of oil and about 4 tablespoons water. Cover and cook on a medium high heat, stirring once or twice until the cabbage is soft and lightly browned. If it starts to dry out and burn on the bottom before the cabbage is soft, add a few more tablespoons water and reduce the heat.
2. Season cabbage with soy and vinegar. Taste and add more soy / vinegar if needed.
3. Dice the halloumi and brown on all sides with a little oil in a small frying pan. Use a medium high heat. When the halloumi is brown, toss it in with the cabbage.
4. Quickly fry eggs in a little oil on a medium high heat. Or poach them if you prefer.
5. To serve, toss parsley in with the cabbage and divide between two bowls or plates. Top with fried egg and serve immediately.

OK so full credit. This idea for this delicious combo came from David at [Green Kitchen Stories](#). He posted his version on [Instagram](#), I made an instant mental note to create my own more simple recipe.

So glad I did.

My Irishman and I couldn't get enough of it when we had it for bunch one Sunday.

But it's equally fab as a quick mid-week dinner.

Or lunch. I could happily eat this all day every day.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**short on time** – instead of frying the eggs just add raw egg to the pot with the cooked cabbage and halloumi and stir over a medium heat until eggs are just set and scrambled.

**dairy-free** – replace halloumi with a handful of pitted olives or roast nuts. And serve with 2 eggs per person.

**soy-free** – use coconut aminos or 1 tablespoon fish sauce or just season with salt instead.

**hot!** – serve with chilli oil or your fave hot sauce.

# HALLOUMI + CABBAGE HASH

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – toast, pita, tortillas.

**more substantial (low carb)** – walnuts, extra eggs, mayo.

**spicy!** – add 1 teaspoon each smoked paprika, ground coriander and ground cumin to the cabbage. OR 2-3 teaspoons of your fave curry powder.

**different vegetables** – soften a sliced onion before cooking the cabbage. Kale or collard greens would make a lovely green version. Or sliced zucchini or brussels sprouts. Or serve the halloumi and eggs and parsley with any roast veg. Especially [this roast cauliflower](#) or [this ratatouille](#). Or try [beautiful broccoli](#).

**different protein** – chickpeas, lentils, canned tuna, sardines, smoked salmon, cooked chicken, walnuts, macadamias, almonds will all work in place of the eggs.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook the cabbage as per the recipe but keep the parsley separately and save the halloumi and egg for cooking at the last minute. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for up to 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, warm in a pan with a little oil.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**cabbage** – will keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for weeks, even months. Can be frozen but will have a wilted texture once defrosted.

**soy sauce / sherry or wine vinegar** – keep them in the pantry.

**halloumi** – keeps in the fridge in its packaging for months. Can be frozen.

**parsley** – will keep in the fridge wrapped in a plastic bag for a few weeks. Can be frozen or make a parsley oil by packing the leaves into a clean jar and covering with extra virgin olive oil.



*cheesy broccoli*

# CHEESY BROCCOLI

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 15 minutes

*4-5 tablespoons coconut oil,  
olive oil or butter*

*2 heads broccoli*

*2-6 small red chills chopped,  
optional*

*4 large handfuls grated cheese*

**1.** Heat oil in a frying pan or skillet over a medium heat.

**2.** Rinse broccoli and don't dry as the water will help the broccoli to steam. Slice broccoli stems finely then chop the top into bite sized chunks. I just hack through it with a knife but you're welcome to chop into individual 'trees' if you like.

**3.** Add broccoli and chilli to the oil. Cook, covered for about 5 minutes or until the broccoli is tender. You'll need to stir a few times. If it starts to burn add a little water.

**4.** Add cheese and stir until well combined and just melted. Serve hot.

I made this the other night for a 'batchelorette' dinner because my Irishman was out. I was craving something healthy but also cheesy and comforting. Talk about hitting the spot!

If you have coconut oil, I really recommend using it because it add a lovely subtle coconutty sweetness which sounds weird but actually works really well. Of course if you don't have any butter or olive oil are just as good.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**different veg** – also great with cauliflower or broccolini.

**vegan** – replace cheese with chopped nuts such as cashews.

**carb lovers / more substantial** – toss in cooked pasta and some toasted pine nuts, or a little cooked quinoa, couscous or a poached egg or toss in a drained can of chickpeas and add a little more cheese.

**more substantial (low carb)** – add some roast almonds.

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# CHEESY BROCCOLI

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**carnivore / more substantial** – add bacon. Or serve as a side to a well grilled juicy steak, sausages or chicken breast.

**different cheese** – I used a combo of parmesan and emmental but any melting cheese is good here. Try raclette, gruyere, cheddar or even some blue. It's a good way to use up little scraps of cheese floating around the fridge.

**paleo (grain, legume & dairy-free)** – replace cheese with smashed avocado and lime.

**more veg** – serve with cauliflower 'rice' or soften an onion first. Serve with soft herbs.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Will keep in the fridge for up to a week. Can be frozen. To serve, warm in a pan with a little oil.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**broccoli** – will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for 1-2 weeks or sometimes a little longer. Can be frozen (if you have time chop before freezing so it will defrost quickly in the pan).

**red chills** – will keep for months in the fridge. Can be frozen or left unwrapped in the fridge they will slowly turn into dried chillies and still be edible.

**cheese** – most hard cheese will keep for weeks or even months if wrapped in baking paper and stored in an airtight container or plastic bag in the fridge. For longer storage pop in the freezer.

*bachelorette eggs*



# BACHELORETTE EGGS

MAKES 1 serve  
TAKES 10 minutes

3 eggs

small handful baby spinach  
or parsley leaves, optional

1. Break eggs into a small bowl. Season.
2. Microwave for about 90 seconds, stirring every 15-30 seconds until the eggs are almost cooked.
3. Serve with leaves on top.

My dear friend, the lovely Mel, was a big fan of microwaved scrambled eggs as a quick single girl meal, especially after a big night out on the town.

It's also a brilliant quick, healthy lunch. Eggs will keep in your work fridge for weeks so are a great backup lunch plan, especially in winter when you're craving something warm and filling that won't leave you bloated.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**cheesy eggs** – toss in a handful of grated parmesan, ricotta or cheddar with the raw egg.

**green eggs** – serve with pesto on top.

**vegan** – warm a drained can of chickpeas in the microwave with a little extra virgin olive oil.

**pescetarian** – add a little smoked salmon in with the eggs.

**carnivore** – serve with finely sliced prosciutto.

video

SEE MORE VARIATIONS »

--- LUNCH - TO COOK OR REHEAT AT WORK ---

# BACHELORETTE EGGS

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Best when freshly made, but you could break the eggs into a container to take with you.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

**baby spinach** – either freeze or wilt down in a pan with a little oil and then keep in the fridge for weeks.

**parsley** – will keep in the fridge wrapped in a plastic bag for a few weeks. Can be frozen or make a parsley oil by packing the leaves into a clean jar and covering with extra virgin olive oil.



*tuscan greens soup*

# TUSCAN GREENS SOUP

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 15 minutes

2 cups chicken or veg stock  
500g (1lb) frozen spinach or  
kale  
4-6 eggs  
100g (3.5oz) grated  
parmesan  
100g (3.5oz) roast walnuts  
or almonds

1. Bring stock and greens to the boil in a medium saucepan with the lid on.
2. Meanwhile stir eggs in a small bowl with 2 tablespoons of the grated parmesan and a pinch of salt.
3. When the broth is simmering, pour in the eggs. Turn off the heat and jam on the lid.
4. Stand for 1 minute or until egg has just cooked. Taste and season with salt as needed, remembering you're going to be adding more parmesan.
5. Divide soup between two bowls. Top with parmesan, extra nuts and a nice drizzle of extra virgin olive oil (channelling your inner Italian).

video

--- LUNCH - TO COOK OR REHEAT AT WORK ---

The idea of this soup came as a mash up of two classic Italian soups...

Ribolitta - the famous Tuscan soup of kale and white beans.

And stracciatella - a simple Roman soup of eggs, parmesan and broth.

I love how the eggs cook down into little creamy bursts in among the dark mossy green soup. So good!

I've used frozen spinach in the photo which is brilliant because it's so quick. No chopping required.

But if you do have the time, fresh kale really takes the soup to a new level.

And because this soup is so simple, it really needs an excellent quality stock. If you're using commercial stock, softening an onion before you cook the soup will help add depth of flavour.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**keto / ultra low carb** – use the spinach. Use macadamias or skip the nuts and use a bigger drizzle of olive oil.

**dairy-free** – try this [Brazil Nut Parmesan](#). Or just skip mixing the parmesan with the eggs. And use extra nuts (maybe both almonds and walnuts for added variety). Be generous with the seasoning – adding a splash of soy sauce or a few teaspoons of miso paste will help add the umami you'll be missing from the cheese.

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – short pasta, sourdough chunks, white beans or roast root veg.

**low FODMAP** – use the walnuts and spinach.

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# TUSCAN GREENS SOUP

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**more substantial (low carb)** – extra nuts. Extra cheese. More stock. Or olive oil.

**different vegetables** – fresh kale (my fave is cavolo nero or dinosaur kale) – just finely slice a large bunch (about 500g) and simmer covered in the stock until tender (about 15 minutes) – you may need a little more stock if it ends up too thick. Any fresh or frozen greens will work. And feel free to add your favourite soup veggies – an onion or two doesn't go astray. Zucchini, broccoli, cauliflower, bell peppers (capsicum), eggplant, any roast veg – it's all good. And I love it served with a pile of sauerkraut for extra crunch and freshness.

**different protein** – replace eggs with chickpeas, white beans (cannellini), lentils, crumbled sausages, bacon or ham.

**nut-free** – extra parmesan or extra eggs or toasted sunflower seeds.

**extra flavour** – soften an onion before adding the stock. Garlic is good. A splash of soy sauce or miso paste will help if your stock is a little bland.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook as per the recipe but keep the nuts and extra parmesan separately. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, bring to a simmer and serve as per the recipe.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**chicken or veg stock** – prepared stock or homemade can be frozen. Otherwise unopened commercial stock can be kept in the pantry.

**frozen spinach or kale** – keep it frozen.

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

**parmesan** – keeps for longer in a chunk so only grate when you're cooking. I wrap in waxed paper or baking paper and then keep in an airtight container or a sealed ziplock bag. I prefer this over just wrapping in cling wrap because the air in the container allows the cheese to breathe and not sweat but the container / plastic bag prevents from drying out in the dry fridge air. Either way will keep for months.

**roast walnuts or almonds** – keep them in the pantry.

# LEFTOVER DINNERS FOR LUNCH

GORGEOUS GREENS TART  
BLOODY DELICIOUS KALE BOWLS  
CREAMY CABBAGE + ALMOND SOUP  
SPICED CABBAGE + FETA  
MUSHROOM + ROSEMARY FRITTATA  
ZUCCHINI PARMIGIANA  
BUY NOTHING NEW CURRY  
OKONOMIYAKI  
PESTO CABBAGE  
QUICK TUNA CURRY BOWLS  
BEAUTIFUL BROCCOLI WITH CREAMY TUNA SAUCE  
SALMON WITH SPICED BUTTER + BROCCOLI

QUICK TUNA RAGU  
SPICED CHICKEN + ONIONS WITH HUMMUS  
ROAST PESTO CHICKEN + BROCCOLI  
SAUSAGE, CHILLI + BROCCOLI BOWLS  
TACO TUESDAY BOWLS  
FAST FRIDAY CHEESEBURGER BOWLS  
SAUSAGES + PEPPERS  
SICHUAN PORK + GREENS  
QUICK PIG + OLIVE RAGU  
QUICK BEEF TACOS



# VEGETARIAN DINNERS

# VEGETARIAN DINNERS

GORGEOUS GREENS TART

CREAMY CABBAGE + ALMOND SOUP

WALNUT + BROWN BUTTER OMELETTE

COMFORTING CAULIFLOWER 'COLCANNON'

SPICED CABBAGE + FETA

MUSHROOM + ROSEMARY FRITTATA

COMFORTING TOMATOY GREENS

MOROCCAN EGG + OLIVE TAJINE

ZUCCHINI PARMIGIANA

BUY NOTHING NEW CURRY

INDIAN SPICED OMELETTE

OKONOMIYAKI



*gorgeous greens tart*

# GORGEOUS GREENS TART

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 30 minutes

100g (3.5oz) almond meal

200g (7oz) blue cheese,  
crumbled

4 eggs

1 bag frozen kale or spinach  
(250g / 9oz) squeezed dry

handful sage leaves, optional

salad or sauerkraut, to serve

**1.** Turn your oven to 200C (400F). Line the base and sides of a 24cm (9in) spring form pan with baking paper. If you can't be bothered, you can just grease but the eggs do like to stick!

**2.** Spread almond meal over the base of your prepared pan. Mix cheese, eggs, kale / spinach and a pinch of salt in a bowl. Pour egg mixture over the almond meal.

**3.** If using sage, scatter leaves over the top and drizzle with some extra virgin olive oil to help the sage leaves crisp up.

**4.** Bake for 20-25 minutes or until the eggs are set and the tart is puffing up and slightly golden. Allow to cool for a few minutes (or hours) and serve wedges with the salad / kraut on the side.

This is seriously my new favourite thing to make when I'm having a friend over for lunch.

It's super quick and looks impressive.

And tastes like you've gone to the trouble of making pastry for a tart.

Which of course you haven't.

Plus it's Low Carb. So a winner all round!

I adore this version with blue cheese and sage, but if you're not a blue cheese fan, check the variations for other ideas.

It makes 2 very large serves (or 3 small ones). Or you could halve the cheese for a lighter meal.

And I love the convenience of using frozen kale. But you could always cook your own if you prefer.

If you are using frozen kale / spinach, make sure you squeeze it dry before using or you'll end up with a soggy tart. No one likes a soggy tart.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**dairy-free** – replace cheese with 2 extra eggs and a few handfuls roasted walnuts or macadamias. Pitted olives or sun dried tomatoes are also delicious.

**different cheese** – feta, goats cheese, cheddar, parmesan. A mix of what you have in the house.

**less substantial** – This is quite filling for 2 people. Halve the cheese for a lighter meal.

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – crusty bread and butter. Serve as a sandwich filling. Serve with roast sweet potato or other roast veg.

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

video

--- DINNER- VEGETARIAN ---

# GORGEOUS GREENS TART

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**more substantial (low carb)** – these are pretty big serves. But you could always add a handful of walnuts or almonds.

**Low FODMAP** – use the spinach. And replace almond meal with ground walnuts or macadamias (just blitz them in your food processor).

**nut-free** – skip the almond meal and make it into a frittata instead. You may like to add an extra 2 eggs to make up for the missing nuts.

**family-friendly** – if your family aren't into greens, try [this ham and cheese version](#).

**different vegetables** – use any home cooked greens. You'll need about 150g (5oz) cooked veg. Roast or grilled veg are lovely as well. I can't wait to make a Spring time version with asparagus.

**different protein** – I'm afraid you really need the egg for this one.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook as per the recipe. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for up to 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, warm to room temp or warm in the oven.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**almond meal** – keep it in the pantry.

**blue cheese** – if unopened it usually has a shelf life of a few weeks in the fridge. If it is opened, will only keep for a few days so use for another meal or freeze.

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

**frozen kale or spinach** – will keep frozen for months.

**sage leaves** – best to use for another meal.

**salad leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.

**sauerkraut** – will keep in the fridge for 3 months or so in the fridge. You can freeze but it will change in texture.



*creamy cabbage & almond soup*

# CREAMY CABBAGE + ALMOND SOUP

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 30 minutes

500g (1lb) cabbage about  
1/4 large  
3 cups chicken or veg stock  
4 sprigs thyme (optional),  
leaves picked  
100g (3.5oz) almond meal  
1 tablespoon rice wine or other  
wine vinegar  
100g (3.5oz) roast almonds

1. Finely slice cabbage and place in a largeish saucepan with the stock, thyme and almond meal. Cover and bring to the boil.
2. Reduce heat to medium and simmer rapidly covered for 10-15 minutes or until the cabbage is lovely and soft.
3. Taste and season with salt and vinegar as needed. If the soup is dry, add some water.
4. Divide between 2 deep bowls and serve topped with roast almonds.

video

--- DINNER- VEGETARIAN ---

Cabbage soup has a bad reputation.

My first experience of it was when I was living in England. My flat mate decided she was going on a diet and made a big pot of cabbage soup.

Needless to say the diet didn't end well.

And I was a little hesitant to try cabbage soup again.

But I'm really loving everything cabbage right now. And it's Winter here. So I thought it was worth a shot.

And was it ever worth it?! Adding the almond meal to the broth makes for a rich, creamy soup.

And the crunchy almonds on top add the extra texture and substance that all good soups need.

I promise, the word 'diet' won't even cross your mind.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**different vinegar** – apple cider, sherry or any wine vinegar is good.

**Keto / ultra low carb** – try [this spinach soup](#).

**nut-free** – skip the almond meal and replace 1/2 cup of the stock with cream. Serve with lashings of grated parmesan instead of the roast almonds.

**hot!** – serve with chilli salt or [chilli oil](#).

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# CREAMY CABBAGE + ALMOND SOUP

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – add in cooked pasta, cooked brown rice, quinoa or other grains. Or serve with crusty bread and butter.

**more substantial (low carb)** – more nuts! Stir in a few lightly whisked eggs at the end and simmer for an extra minute or until the egg is just set. Serve with grated parmesan and a good drizzle of extra virgin olive oil.

**Low FODMAP** – use macadamias or walnuts instead of the almonds. And skip the almond meal. Use white cabbage not savoy.

**different vegetables** – soften an onion in oil before adding the cabbage and stock. Cauliflower is lovely with the creamy almond. Or broccoli would also work. Feel free to add carrot, celery or any root veg that need using up. And I can imagine kale, chard or spinach would make a delicious more vibrantly coloured soup.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook as per the recipe but keep the roast nuts separately. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for up to 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, bring back to a simmer and top with the nuts. If the soup is too thick, add a little water.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**cabbage (white)** – will keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for weeks, even months. Can be frozen but will have a wilted texture once defrosted.

**chicken or veg stock / almond meal / rice wine or other wine vinegar / roast almonds** – keep them in the pantry.

**thyme** – keeps for ages in a plastic bag in the fridge or even longer in the freezer.



walnut + brown butter omelette

# WALNUT + BROWN BUTTER OMELETTE

MAKES 1 serve  
TAKES 15 minutes

3 tablespoons butter (45g)

3 eggs

1 bag baby spinach  
(120g / 4oz)

1 handful walnuts, roasted  
(50g / 2oz)

1 tablespoon apple cider  
vinegar

1. Heat a medium frying pan on a medium high heat. Mix eggs with a pinch of salt in a small bowl.

2. Add 1 TABLESPOON of the butter to the warm pan. Allow it to melt and coat the bottom. Add the eggs and reduce heat to medium. Cook gently until the eggs are just set and no longer runny.

3. Tip omelette out onto a plate. I try and roll or halve it as I tip it out. But don't get too caught up about it.

4. Return the pan to the heat and increase the temp to high. Add spinach and cook, stirring for a few minutes or until spinach has wilted slightly but there are still some whole leaves. Pile spinach onto the plate next to the omelette.

5. Return the pan to the heat again. Add remaining 2 TABLESPOONS butter and allow it to melt and simmer. Cook until the butter has gone deeply golden brown. Listen for when it stops sizzling (when all the moisture has cooked out). It can be hard to see the colour so scoop some butter up into a spoon to check. Continued>>

Brown butter is one of those cheffy things that sounds fancy. But is actually really simple to make. And it tastes amazing. Even better than it sounds. All you need to do is cook some butter so the milk protein and sugar caramelize and go all biscuity and nutty.

That's it. I've used it here on a simple omelette for the ultimate luxe weeknight dinner. But it's wonderful with any protein or veggies. Or if you don't mind the carbs, potatoes.

When I think it's brown enough I always cook it for a little longer just to be sure. The darker the more flavour.

6. When the butter smells amazing and looks deeply browned, remove pan from the heat. Add walnuts and apple cider vinegar to the hot pan. Stir well and then pour the butter mixture over your omelette and spinach. Eat ASAP.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**raw walnuts** – if your walnuts aren't roasted, add them to the pan when you add the second batch of butter so they can toast in the butter as it browns.

**nut-free** – just skip the walnuts or replace with sourdough bread crumbs. Or some crumbled feta or goats cheese.

[SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>](#)

video

# WALNUT + BROWN BUTTER OMELETTE

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**dairy-free** – make a walnut salsa by combining roasted walnuts, vinegar and extra virgin olive oil.

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – toast or flat breads.

**more substantial (low carb)** – extra walnuts, extra egg, extra low carb veggies.

**different vegetables** – serve with any cooked veg or a green salad. The brown butter is amazing with [beautiful broccoli](#). And in spring time remember the asparagus!

**different protein / egg-free** – lovely with chicken, sausages, steak, a pork chop or pan fried fish. Also amazing with lentils or chickpeas.

**different nuts** – also fab with almonds, hazelnuts or macadamias.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Best when freshly made. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for up to 2 weeks. If you keep the walnuts separately they will stay crunchy. Don't freeze.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**butter** – will keep in the fridge for weeks.

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

**baby spinach** – either pop them in the freezer or wilt down in a covered pot with a little olive oil. This way they'll keep in the fridge for a few weeks.

**walnuts / apple cider vinegar** – keep them in the pantry.



*comforting cauliflower 'colcannon'*

# COMFORTING CAULIFLOWER 'COLCANNON'

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 20 minutes

1/2 medium cauliflower  
(approx 500g / 1lb)

100g (3.5oz) roast cashews

60g (2oz) salted butter

small bunch kale (200g /  
7oz), shredded

2-4 fried eggs or other protein,  
to serve

**1.** Bring 1cm salted water to the boil in a medium saucepan. Chop cauli into bite sized chunks. Add cauli and cashews to the boiling water. Cover and boil for 10 minutes or until cauli is tender.

**2.** Drain cauli and cashews. If you like you can save the cooking water to drink or use as a veg stock. Return cauli and cashews to the pot (without the water). Add butter and puree with a stick blender. If it's too thick, add a little reserved water to thin.

**3.** Stir through shredded kale. Taste and season with salt as needed. Serve with fried eggs on top (or your preferred protein).

If you're not familiar with Colcannon, you are in for a treat!

Colcannon is a traditional Irish dish of mashed potato combined with shredded cabbage.

It takes mash to a new level.

And this Low Carb version does the same. You get all the creamy goodness with a texture and flavour boost courtesy of the cabbage.

I've also seen Colcannon recipes using shredded kale. I'm not sure how traditional that is but I went with kale here because, hey I love kale. And the kale adds some lovely green colour.

I've served it here with fried eggs for a quick mid-week dinner.

But it's absolutely incredible with any slow cooked dishes. We had it with [Osso Buco](#) on the weekend. And I'm dying to try it with [these Lamb Shanks](#).

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**Keto / ultra low carb** – skip the cashews and replace with extra butter. Will reduce the carb content to 12g/serve.

**dairy-free** – add some coconut cream instead of the butter. Extra virgin olive oil will work too.

**different nuts** – you could add almond meal when you puree instead of the cashews. Macadamias would work as well. Both of these are significantly lower carb than the cashews. But I do love cashews.

**nut-free** – replace cashews with extra butter. If you want a richer result you could add a few egg yolks or some grated parmesan.

video

--- DINNER- VEGETARIAN ---

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# COMFORTING CAULIFLOWER 'COLCANNON'

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – serve with crusty bread OR replace some of all of the cauli with potatoes (steam potatoes until tender and mash with a potato masher or potato ricer instead of using the stick blender – blending spuds makes them gluey).

**more substantial (low carb)** – more cashews. More butter. Or serve with a larger serving of protein.

**Low FODMAP** – sorry cashews and cauli are high FODMAP. You'll need to use potatoes instead of cauli (see carb lovers note).

**different vegetables** – celeriac (celery root), potatoes, turnip, swede, rutabaga will all work for the cauli and take longer to cook. Cabbage, collard greens, mustard greens, baby spinach or green onions are good substitutes for the kale.

**different protein** – sausages, roast chicken, canned tuna and black olives, pan fried fish, slow cooked meat (see head note for ideas). Lovely with cooked lentils or chickpeas.

--- DINNER- VEGETARIAN ---

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook as per the recipe but keep the eggs to fry at the last minute. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for up to 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, warm in a pan with a little extra butter. If too thick, thin with water or milk.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**cauli (whole)** – will keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for weeks. To keep for longer, chop into florets and pop in the freezer.

**roast cashews** – keep them in the pantry.

**butter** – will keep in the fridge for weeks.

**kale** – will keep in the fridge in a plastic bag uncooked for at least 2 weeks. Once cooked like this it will keep for a month or so in the fridge. Can be frozen both cooked or raw.

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**soup!** - don't bother straining the cooking water. Add water if needed to thin it out after pureeing. Serve with extra roast cashews and some melted butter and sage leaves. OMG or golden chunks of pan fried halloumi.



*spiced cabbage & feta*

# SPICED CABBAGE + FETA

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 30 minutes

1/2 small (1/4 large) cabbage  
(about 800g / 28oz)

3-4 teaspoon curry powder

1-2 teaspoons soy sauce

200g (7oz) feta, crumbled

100g (3.5oz) roast almonds  
or other nuts

1 bunch parsley or coriander  
(cilantro), optional

**1.** Slice cabbage into ribbons about 1cm (1/2in) thick. Heat a large saucepan on a medium high heat. Add a generous glug of oil and pile the cabbage into the pot. Add a splash of water and cover with a lid.

**2.** Cook with the lid on for 5-10 minutes stirring every now and then. If it starts to burn add another few tablespoons water and reduce the heat to medium.

**3.** When the cabbage is no longer crunchy and like cooked pasta, add the curry powder and stir well. Cook for another minute or so until you can smell the curry aromas.

**4.** Remove from the heat and stir in soy sauce. Add crumbled feta. Taste and season with more soy or some salt if needed.

**5.** Divide warm cabbage between two bowls. Top with nuts and fresh herbs (if using). Enjoy the comforting goodness.

I can't tell you how much I adore cabbage these days. It's seriously one of my favourite things to eat.

And while it's amazing raw in salads and coleslaw, it's hard to go past a big bowl of soft spiced cabbage spiked with salty feta. Beats pasta any day.

And it's much quicker than good old spaghetti or penne too! Plus cabbage lasts in the fridge for weeks and weeks. So this is practically a pantry recipe.

I always have a cabbage in the fridge so now I can pull together a comforting dinner whenever I need a backup plan.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**keto / ultra low carb** – replace half the cabbage with baby spinach leaves (just stir in at the end) OR replace all the cabbage with chard / spinach / other leafy greens. And use macadamias as your nuts.

**dairy-free** – replace feta with bacon, cooked chicken, cooked chickpeas or eggs. If using eggs just cook for an extra minute, stirring until the egg is just set and looks like little cheesy curds.

**different cheese** – golden pan fried cubes of halloumi are worth getting another pot dirty! Or use soft goats cheese, labneh or shaved parmesan.

**low FODMAP** – use macadamias instead of the almonds. And replace 1/2 the cabbage with baby spinach.

video

--- DINNER- VEGETARIAN ---

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# SPICED CABBAGE + FETA

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – cooked pasta, roast veg (sweet potato is fab) or serve with warm pita.

**more substantial (low carb)** – add some eggs, extra nuts, chunks of avocado or serve with some mayo.

**family-friendly / different spice** – use a mild curry powder or try a mix of ground cumin, coriander and smoked paprika.

**different vegetables** – kale, spinach, silverbeet, chard or collard greens are all great. Roast veg are lovely with the curry and feta. If you want to use cauliflower or broccoli best to boil them until tender and drain before sauteing in the oil and curry powder. If you have time, soften an onion before you cook the cabbage for extra depth of flavour.

**different protein** – eggs cooked into the cabbage are amazing! Also see the different cheese ideas. Crumbled sausages or minced meat (chicken would work well) can also work (be prepared to add more soy and curry powder though).

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook as per the recipe but keep the herbs and nuts separately. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, warm in a pan with a little oil then finish with the herbs and nuts.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**cabbage** – will keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for weeks, even months. Can be frozen but will have a wilted texture once defrosted.

**curry powder / soy sauce / roast almonds or other nuts** – keep them in the pantry.

**feta** – keeps for months unopened in its packet. Or can be frozen. Or you could make a marinated feta by putting it in a super clean jar from the dishwasher and covering with oil and then keeping it in the fridge. Sometimes I like to add flavourings like bay leaves, lemon zest and pepper corns or chilli.

**parsley or coriander (cilantro)** – best to use for another meal. Can be frozen but will wilt when defrosted.



*mushroom & rosemary frittata*

# MUSHROOM + ROSEMARY FRITTATA

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 30 minutes

2-4 tablespoons butter

500g (1lb) mushrooms,  
sliced if large

1 stalk rosemary,  
leaves picked

6 eggs

50g (2oz) grated parmesan +  
shaved parmesan

green salad or veg to serve

**1.** Preheat your oven to 200C (400F). Line a 20cm (8in) springform pan with baking paper. I line the sides as well because egg likes to stick!

**2.** Melt butter in a frying pan on a medium high heat. Add mushrooms and rosemary and cook, stirring every now and then. You want the mushrooms to brown and soften. Will take 5-10 minutes.

**3.** Lightly whisk eggs in a medium bowl. Add a little salt and then the cooked mushrooms and grated parmesan. Pour everything into the prepared pan and top with shaved parmesan if you want.

**4.** Bake for 15-20 minutes or until the frittata is golden and puffed up a little like a souffle.

**5.** Slice and serve warm or at room temp with salad on the side.

Our chooks have been laying so many eggs! So I've been making a frittata for dinner most weeks. Such a brilliant quick and easy meal with endless possibilities. I don't think I'll ever get bored.

This mushroom and rosemary version is my new favourite combo. Just love the earthy flavour and almost meaty texture of the mushrooms. It's really one of those vegetarian dinners where you don't (or at least I don't) even think about missing meat.

Normally I use thyme with mushrooms. But since my thyme isn't doing so well in the garden with the drought I've been using rosemary instead. So good!

And any mushrooms are great here. I generally just use whatever is cheapest, however feel free to play around with different types.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**short on time / too hot for the oven** – cook the frittata on the stove top on a medium high heat in a small frying pan / skillet (about 20cm 8in diameter). When almost cooked, slide onto a plate then toss and pop back in the pan top side down for the other side to set.

**other veg** – replace the mushrooms with defrosted frozen spinach, cooked chickpeas or roast veggies like sweet potato, eggplant, capsicum (bell peppers) or zucchini. Any pre cooked veggie is good.

**egg-free** – sorry! Even I can't think of an alternative here.

video

# MUSHROOM + ROSEMARY FRITTATA

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**different cheese** – most cheese will work here. Ricotta, cheddar, goats cheese, gruyere, parmesan or even blue. Or try a mixture of cheese.

**dairy-free / paleo** – just skip the cheese or replace cheese with cooked bacon, pine nuts, sliced almonds, roast walnuts or sun dried tomatoes.

**smaller serve** – this is quite generous. Consider reducing the eggs to 4 if you're not super hungry.

**carnivore** – add bacon or sausages (either crumbled or sliced).

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – serve with buttered bread or toss in some cooked pasta or potato or sweet potato with the eggs.

**more substantial (low carb)** – serve with roast nuts or a substantial side dish like some roast veggies.

**Low FODMAP** – replace mushroom with cooked pasta, potato or try this [spinach and feta frittata](#).

--- DINNER- VEGETARIAN ---

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Best when freshly made. Although I've been eating the leftovers from my photo shoot cold from the fridge and they made a lovely lunch. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for up to 2 weeks. Don't freeze.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**butter** – will keep in the fridge for weeks.

**mushrooms** – keep in the fridge in a brown paper bag. Once cooked will keep for weeks. And can be frozen raw or cooked.

**rosemary** – will keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for weeks. Also freezes well.

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

**parmesan** – keeps for longer in a chunk so only grate when you're cooking. I wrap in waxed paper or baking paper and then keep in an airtight container or a sealed ziplock bag. I prefer this over just wrapping in cling wrap because the air in the container allows the cheese to breathe and not sweat but the container / plastic bag prevents from drying out in the dry fridge air. Either way will keep for months.

**salad leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.



*comforting tomatoey greens*

# COMFORTING TOMATOEY GREENS

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 30 minutes

*lots extra virgin olive oil (like  
1/4 cup or more)  
1-2 cloves garlic  
3 tablespoons tomato paste  
1 bunch chard / silverbeet  
(stems and leaves chopped  
separately)  
+ cooked protein, to serve  
(see variations for ideas)  
shaved parmesan, to serve*

1. Heat oil in a large saucepan on a medium heat. Add garlic and cook for a minute or until it smells good. Add the chard stems and cook, covered for about 5 minutes.
2. When the stems are starting to soften. Stir well. Add the chard leaves, tomato paste and 3 tablespoons water. Cook covered for another 5 minutes or until the leaves are tender and wilted.
3. Taste and season greens with salt as needed. Divide greens and the tomatoey sauce between two plates. Top with your protein and serve with parmesan shaved over. And possibly another drizzle of your best peppery extra virgin olive oil.

It's funny the prejudices we can have around food. Like my 'idea' that greens and tomatoes don't go well together. I'm not sure why I had this belief but I'm happy to say it's all gone!

Ever since the guys from [Grown & Gathered](#) were talking about their tomatoey greens, I figured they must be onto something so challenged myself to try it. I mean I was either going to love it. Or I was going to prove my tomatoes + greens don't mix theory right. Either way I'd win.

Given that you're sitting here reading this, no prizes for guessing the winner. Yes tomato and greens = match made in heaven.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**protein options** – I've used sunflower seeds in the picture. Any cooked legume or roast nut works (especially almonds). Or poached eggs, fried eggs, [quick pulled chicken](#) or [poached sausages](#). Or serve as a side to [roast or BBQ chicken](#) or a [good steak](#). Great with bacon (add it with the garlic)

**vegan** – use a vegan protein option and replace parmesan with sliced almonds or [brazil nut 'parmesan'](#).

**more substantial (carb lovers) / family-friendly** – serve greens with lots of hot cooked pasta.

# COMFORTING TOMATOEY GREENS

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**more substantial (low carb)** – extra protein, extra parmesan, more olive oil!

**Low FODMAP** – skip the garlic or use a garlic oil instead.

**different greens** – use spinach, kale or collard greens – just slice these stems and all (no need to cook stems separately). Also great with green beans or broccoli (I've really come along way to getting over my green veg + tomato phobia!).

**different tomato** – use 3-4 chopped fresh ripe tomatoes or 2 handfuls halved cherry tomatoes and skip the water. Canned tomatoes or tomato passata will work too.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook as per the recipe but keep the protein and parmesan separately. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, warm in a pan with a little olive oil and serve with protein and cheese on top.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**extra virgin olive oil / tomato paste** – keep them in the pantry.

**garlic**– will keep for weeks in a dark pantry. I keep mine in a brown paper bag to avoid sprouting.

**chard /silverbeet** – will keep in the fridge in a plastic bag for at least 2 weeks. Can be frozen both cooked or raw.

**cooked protein** – most meats can be frozen. Eggs will keep in the fridge for weeks.

**parmesan** – keeps for longer in a chunk so only grate when you're cooking. I wrap in waxed paper or baking paper and then keep in an airtight container or a sealed ziplock bag. I prefer this over just wrapping in cling wrap because the air in the container allows the cheese to breathe and not sweat but the container / plastic bag prevents from drying out in the dry fridge air. Either way will keep for months.

*moroccan egg & olive tajine*



# MOROCCAN EGG + OLIVE TAJINE

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 15 minutes

2 teaspoons ground cumin

1 teaspoon smoked paprika

1 cup passata / puree /  
pasta sauce

4-6 eggs

large handful (50g / 2oz)  
pitted olives, halved

baby spinach or greens,  
to serve

**1.** Heat a large frying pan on a medium high heat. Add a super generous glug of extra virgin olive oil and spices. Cook spices in oil for 20 seconds or until you can just smell them. Be careful not to burn.

**2.** Add tomato passata / puree / pasta sauce and bring to a simmer. Crack eggs into the sauce and simmer, covered for 2-3 minutes or until the egg white has set and the yolks are still runny.

**3.** Divide baby spinach / greens between two bowls. Top with eggs and sauce and finish with olives. Finish with a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil.

My Irishman gave me Paula Wolfert's Moroccan cookery book for Christmas.

I love love love the flavours of Morocco and have had lots of fun expanding my repertoire.

There's a classic tajine (Moroccan stew) of kefta (meatballs) eggs and olives. I've been on a mission to have more eggs for dinner so I thought I'd try it without the meat. Definitely a winner!

Love how the olives provide that salty flavour explosion and meaty texture. Who needs meatballs?

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – couscous, rice, pita bread or cooked pasta.

**more substantial (low carb)** – more eggs, serve with [cauliflower 'couscous'](#), [zucchini tortillas](#) or serve with roast almonds, avocado, goats cheese or crumbled feta.

**more veg** – add grilled peppers, grilled zucchini, grilled eggplant, cooked mushrooms or other cooked veg to the sauce.

**different tomatoes** – a can of crushed tomatoes will work as well.

[SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>](#)

video

--- DINNER- VEGETARIAN ---

# MOROCCAN EGG + OLIVE TAJINE

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**carnivore / egg-free** – chicken thigh or breast fillets (brown in pan before toasting spices and simmer until cooked through) or spicy sausage, salami or try this [Moroccan Meatball Tajine](#) instead.

**keto / ultra low carb** – replace 1/2 tomato with stock or water.

**tomato-free** – try this [green Shakshuka](#) instead.

**no olives** – serve with roast almonds, pine nuts, goats cheese or crumbled feta.

**herby** – serve with basil, mint or parsley leaves.

**different spices** – love it with my [Stonesoup secret spice](#). Or try ras el hanout or even curry powder.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

I prefer the eggs when freshly cooked so you get the runny yolks! Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks. Don't freeze.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**ground cumin / smoked paprika / passata / puree / pasta sauce / olives** – keep them in the pantry.

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

**baby spinach** – best to use for another meal. Can be frozen but will wilt when defrosted.



*zucchini parmigiana*

# ZUCCHINI PARMIGIANA

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 30 minutes

*4 medium zucchini  
(800g / 28oz)*  
*100g (3.5oz) almond meal*  
*1/2 cup tomato passata  
or puree*  
*200g (7oz) bocconcini  
or mozzarella*  
*50g (2oz) grated Parmesan  
and extra to serve*  
*salad, to serve*

- 1.** Turn your oven to 250C (480F). Slice zucchini into rounds about 1cm (1/2in) thick. Place in a baking dish, drizzle with a little oil, sprinkle over a little salt and roast for 20 minutes.
- 2.** Stir and add almond meal. Stir again so some of the almond meal gets mixed in but most stays on top.
- 3.** Pour over the tomato. Top with torn chunks of bocconcini. Sprinkle over Parmesan.
- 4.** Bake for another 5-10 minutes or until cheese is melted and golden. Serve with salad.

Another idea inspired by me playing around with the weekly Simple Meal Plans recipes.

My Irishman isn't eating eggplant at the moment because of the FODMAPS situation. But I really felt like the [eggplant parmigiana](#) in the meal plan.

Hey presto zucchini parm!

Don't tell the purists, but I actually like this zucchini version more because the zucchini goes all buttery when it cooks down.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**keto / ultra low carb** – replace 1/2 the zucchini with baby spinach (toss in before adding cheese). Use half the almond meal. Replace bocconcini with extra grated Parmesan.

**no bocconcini** – any good melting cheese like cheddar, emmental, gruyere. Or Parmesan.

**dairy-free** – serve roast zucchini and tomato with hummus, cauliflower hummus or broccoli hummus. And roast nuts like almonds, walnuts or macadamias.

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – serve over cooked pasta, couscous or quinoa, flat bread, pita or tortillas.

video

# ZUCCHINI PARMIGIANA

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**more substantial (low carb)** – serve with ham, prosciutto, roast nuts, chunks of avocado, [almond bread](#) or fried eggs.

**low FODMAP / nut-free** – use ground sunflower seeds or soft bread crumbs.

**different vegetables** – eggplant, bell peppers (capsicum), cherry tomatoes would be my first choices. But any roast veg will work. I think I'll try a cauliflower parm' this winter. And cabbage... mmmmmm cabbage!

**different protein / carnivore** – see the dairy-free ideas. You could add crumbled sausages or boneless chicken with the zucchini. It's also brilliant with ham, prosciutto, bacon or a fried egg.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook as per the recipe but keep the salad separately. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, warm in the oven 250C / 480C for 15 minutes or until everything is hot.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**zucchini** – will keep for 2 weeks or longer in a plastic bag in the fridge. To keep it even longer, cook sliced zucchini in a little butter until just soft then store in an airtight container in the fridge.

**almond meal / tomato passata or puree** – keep them in the pantry.

**bocconcini or mozzarella** – freeze them.

**Parmesan** – keeps for longer in a chunk so only grate when you're cooking. I wrap in waxed paper or baking paper and then keep in an airtight container or a sealed ziplock bag. I prefer this over just wrapping in cling wrap because the air in the container allows the cheese to breathe and not sweat but the container / plastic bag prevents from drying out in the dry fridge air. Either way will keep for months.

**salad leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.



*buy nothing new curry*

# BUY NOTHING NEW CURRY

MAKES 2 to 3 serves

TAKES 15 minutes

1-2 tablespoons curry powder  
(or 3-4 tablespoons curry  
paste)

1/2 bottle tomato passata (1.5  
cups) or 1 can tomatoes

1 can coconut milk  
(400mL / 14oz)

450g (1lb) cooked vegetables

200-400g (7-14oz) cooked  
protein (see below for ideas)

small bunch herbs or handful  
roast nuts, to serve

**1.** Heat a medium saucepan on a medium high heat. Add a little oil and then stir fry the curry powder for about 30 seconds.

**2.** Add tomato passata / tomatoes, coconut milk, veggies and protein. Bring to a simmer and cook for 5-10 minutes uncovered.

**3.** When the curry is hot. taste and season with salt and more curry powder if needed. Serve with herbs or nuts on top.

So full confession, I stole the name of my recipe from my friend Alexx's brilliant book [Low Tox Life](#). However this actual recipe is all my own doing.

The idea is if you have a can of coconut milk and some passata or canned tomatoes and some curry powder or paste, you can make a meal.

I've written the recipe for using leftover cooked meat and vegetables, but you can also use raw. Just simmer in the curry sauce until everything is cooked through.

Feel free to play around with the quantities of protein and veg depending on what you have at home.

And if you do decide to run to the store and buy something to make this curry you can just change the name to 'super simple curry'. Easy.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**protein ideas** – any cooked legumes, meat, fish or poultry will work. You can also simmer some eggs in the sauce – they actually work really well in a curry. And feel free to use raw meat / fish / poultry, just simmer until they're all cooked through.

**veg ideas** – any veg will work. I used cooked chard but feel free to use up whatever you have in the house. Frozen peas or spinach are a great addition. As with the protein, raw veg can be used, you'll just need to simmer until they're cooked through. Softening an onion or two before you fry the curry powder adds extra depth of flavour.

**herb ideas** – I love it with coriander (cilantro), basil or mint.

**Low FODMAP** – just use low FODMAP veg and protein.

# BUY NOTHING NEW CURRY

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**nut ideas** – roast cashews or peanuts are my faves but any roast nuts or seeds will work – you just want something to make it look pretty and like it's more than just leftovers.

**no tomato passata / canned tomatoes** – you could use tomato paste (about 3 tablespoons + 4 tablespoons water), a punnet of cherry tomatoes or replace with chicken or veg stock.

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – serve with steamed rice. Or add cooked noodles.

**more substantial (low carb)** – extra protein, extra nuts or serve on a bed of [cauliflower 'rice'](#).

**richer** – the coconut milk makes it nice and creamy but I also love it with a few tablespoons of peanut butter or cashew butter stirred in at the end.

**no coconut milk / cream** – either replace with chicken or veg stock. Or skip it and serve your curry with a big dollop of Greek yoghurt for the creamy factor.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Absolutely! Just cook as per the recipe but keep the herbs / nuts separately. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for up to 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, bring back to a simmer and top with herbs / nuts.

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**family-friendly** – use a very mild curry powder or try garam masala. And serve with [chilli oil](#) for the heat-seekers.

**pantry meal** – use canned chickpeas or beans as your protein and frozen spinach, cauliflower or broccoli as your veg.



*indian spiced omelette*

# INDIAN SPICED OMELETTE

MAKES 1 serve  
TAKES 15 minutes

1 small onion, thinly sliced  
1 tablespoon grated ginger  
3 eggs  
1 teaspoon garam masala or  
curry powder  
1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric  
(optional)  
small bunch coriander  
(cilantro), leaves and stems  
chopped

1. Preheat a small frying pan or omelette pan on a medium heat. Add some oil and cook onion, stirring every now and then until onion is soft. About 7 minutes. Add ginger and cook for a minute. Remove from the heat.
2. Lightly whisk eggs in a bowl. Add cooked onion and ginger, spices, a pinch of salt and most of the coriander – saving some leaves for serving to make it pretty!
3. Add another few glugs of oil to the pan. Add the egg mixture and gently cook for a few minutes. If the omelette is sizzling too rapidly, turn the heat down. Slowly is the best approach here.
4. When the egg is mostly cooked and set but there is still a little runny egg on the very top, slide the omelette onto your plate, folding in half as you go. The last bit of egg will cook from the residual heat.
5. Serve with reserved coriander leaves scattered over.

Now that I am lucky enough to have chickens who are laying in abundance, we're having eggs for dinner at least once a week. Which means I need to keep coming up with new ideas!

This Indian omelette was initially going to be a Moroccan inspired dish. And then I cleaned out my spice box and realized I had lots of Garam Masala which needed using up.

Sometimes the best inspiration comes from asking 'what do I need to use up?' rather than what do I feel like...

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**short on time** – skip the onion.

**different spicing** – for a Moroccan vibe skip the turmeric and replace the garam masala / curry powder with 1 teaspoon each ground cumin and ground coriander.

**different herbs** – mint, chives or basil are also great

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – serve with warm roti, tortillas, naan bread, toast, pita bread or fried rice.

**more substantial (low carb)** – serve with roast cashews, macadamias or peanuts. Or some cooked low carb veg – grilled peppers, eggplant and zucchini in Summer or [roast cauliflower](#) or [cooked greens](#) in winter.

# INDIAN SPICED OMELETTE

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**hot!** – serve with [chilli oil](#) or [chilli salt](#).

**low FODMAP** – skip the onion and add chopped chives or sliced green onion (scallion) with the coriander.

**cheesy** – add some crumbled feta, goats cheese or paneer with the eggs.

**carnivore** – serve with bacon, salami or prosciutto.

**keto / ultra low carb** – skip the onion.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

No best when freshly made! Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks. Don't freeze. Eat leftovers cold or at room temp because you don't want to get rubbery overcooked eggs.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**onion** – will keep in the pantry for months. Best if in a dark corner in a brown paper bag.

**ginger** – freeze it.

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

**garam masala / curry powder / ground turmeric** – keep them in the pantry.

**coriander** – best to use for another meal. Can be frozen but will wilt when defrosted.



*okonomiyaki (japanese cabbage 'pancake')*

# OKONOMIYAKI (JAPANESE CABBAGE 'PANCAKE')

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 30 minutes

500g (1lb) cabbage (1/2  
small or 1/4 large)

4 eggs

2 tablespoons soy sauce

100g (3.5oz) almond meal

1 tablespoon sesame seeds  
(optional)

4 tablespoons mayonnaise

1. Grease and line a 24cm (9in) spring form pan. Preheat your oven to 200C (400F).

2. Finely slice cabbage using a sharp knife. Place cabbage in a bowl with the eggs, soy sauce and almond meal. Stir to combine then pack the cabbage mixture into your prepared tin, flattening down to make the top smooth.

3. Sprinkle with sesame seeds (if using) and bake for 15-20 minutes or until well browned on top and the egg looks set when you cut into the middle. And the cabbage is no longer hard and crunchy.

4. Stand for a few minutes to cool slightly before cutting and serving with mayo on top. Either dollop the mayo on or place it in a small ziplock bag and snip off one corner to use as a piping bag to drizzle over the mayo.

The first time I went to Japan, I remember going to this Okonomiyaki restaurant that my guide book said was like the Japanese version of pizza. Talk about not meeting expectations.

To be honest it's not really a pancake either. BUT it is delicious!

And it does involve cabbage, one of my favourite vegetables. And it's one of those brilliant, pop everything in the oven and let dinner cook itself meals.

Please don't feel like you need to get all 'cheffy' and pipe the mayonnaise on top. I just wanted it to look really pretty for my photo shoot. Couldn't help myself!

Oh and... If you're wondering about the blue colour, it's because I made it with red cabbage in advance which turns blue when exposed to alkaline conditions. It still tastes the same - just a bit more 'smurf-like' on the appearance.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**short on time** – use pre-shredded cabbage.

**5-ingredients / über simple** – skip the sesame seeds.

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – serve with steamed rice.

**more substantial (low carb)** – serve with roasted nuts like cashews, extra mayo or smashed avocado drizzled with a little more soy sauce.

# OKONOMIYAKI (JAPANESE CABBAGE 'PANCAKE')

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**Low FODMAP** – replace almond meal with ground sunflower seeds or low FODMAP flour.

**nut free** – ground sunflower seeds or use flour or soft bread crumbs instead.

**more Japanese** – serve with 1-2 finely sliced nori sheets (seaweed used for sushi rolls). Or sprinkle over some [schichimi togarashi](#).

**more veg** – add in or replace some of the cabbage with grated veg like carrots, beets, cauliflower or broccoli. A few sliced green onions (scallions) can also be nice. OR serve with steamed Asian greens on the side. Or just sprinkle over some baby spinach after its cooked.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook as per the recipe but keep the mayo separately. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, warm in the oven for 10 minutes or less and finish with the mayo.

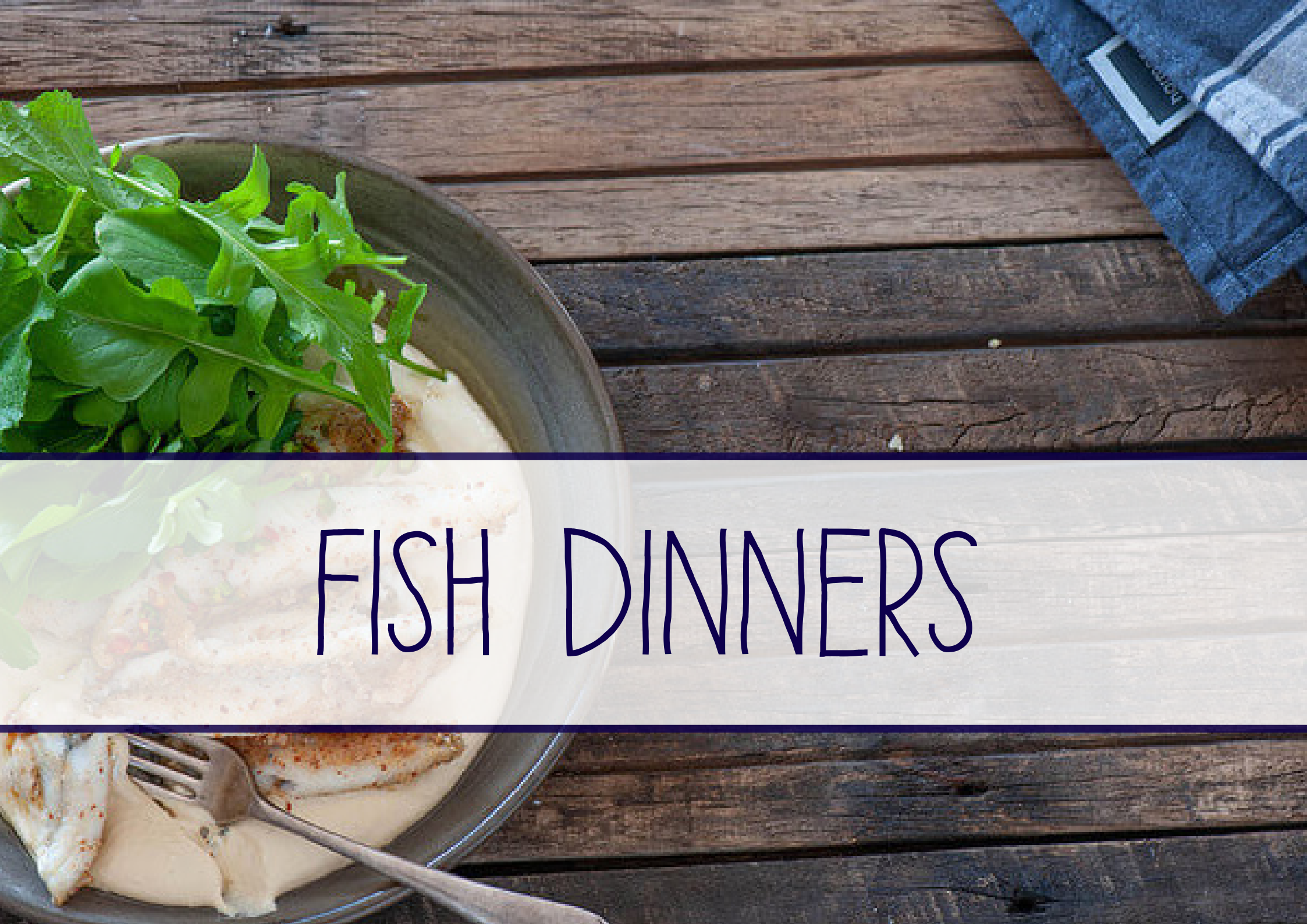
## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**cabbage (white)** – will keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for weeks, even months. Can be frozen but will have a wilted texture once defrosted.

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

**soy sauce / almond meal / sesame seeds** – keep them in the pantry.

**mayonnaise** – unopened in pantry or once opened will keep for months in the fridge.



# FISH DINNERS

# FISH DINNERS

PESTO CABBAGE

SPICED SALMON WITH ALMOND 'HUMMUS'

QUICK TUNA CURRY BOWLS

ROSEMARY MACADAMIA SALSA SALMON

FISH 'TACOS' WITH EASY CORIANDER HOT SAUCE

BEAUTIFUL BROCCOLI WITH CREAMY TUNA SAUCE

FISH WITH LIME + MISO BUTTER

ALMOND CRUSTED FISH WITH HUMMUS + GREEN CHILLI OIL

SALMON WITH SPICED BUTTER + BROCCOLI

FISH WITH OLIVE LEMON SALSA

QUICK TUNA RAGU

PARISIAN FISH WITH ALMOND SAUCE

--- DINNER - FISH ---



*pesto cabbage*

# PESTO CABBAGE

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 15 minutes

*1/2 small cabbage or 1/4  
large (about 500g / 1lb)*

*2 medium cans tuna (200g /  
7oz each), drained*

*6-8 heaped tablespoons pesto  
a good glug extra virgin  
olive oil*

*shaved parmesan, to serve  
(optional)*

**1.** Bring about 2cm (1in) salted water to the boil in a large saucepan.

**2.** Slice cabbage, leaving as chunky or fine as you like. Simmer cabbage, covered for 3-4 minutes or until cabbage is softened but still has some bite. You want it to be 'al dente' like cooked pasta. Drain.

**3.** Return cabbage to the pan and stir in tuna, pesto and a good glug of extra virgin olive oil. Taste and season with salt and more pesto as needed. Serve in big bowls with or without the shaved parmesan.

This Winter steamed cabbage has become my favourite favourite go-to when I'm looking for an alternative to a big bowl of pasta. It ticks all the same boxes of deliciousness, ease and comfort. But it's even quicker to cook than most pastas. AND so much better for you. No bloat or heavy feeling after you've eaten.

This combo of tuna and pesto is so so delicious. I could eat it every day. I have been using my stash of frozen pesto I made back in the Summer when my basil was abundant, however it's great with store bought pesto as well.

And if you're not into tuna - of course I've got you covered in the variations below.

If you have some cabbage in the fridge and a jar of pesto and a can of tuna in the pantry, this dinner is literally only 10-15 minutes away. No excuses for dialling a pizza!

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**short on time** – use pre-sliced cabbage.

**different veg** – also wonderful with broccoli or cauliflower. Just simmer these for a little longer – usually 5 minutes is enough. Pesto and tuna also work really well tossed through cooked greens like chard / collards / kale / spinach.

**different protein** – see vegetarian options or replace tuna with roast macadamias, walnuts or hazelnuts.

**carnivore** – replace tuna with cooked sausages or chicken.

video

---DINNER- VEGETARIAN ---

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# PESTO CABBAGE

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**vegetarian** – replace tuna with crumbled tofu, ricotta, cooked chickpeas, cooked lentils, walnuts, macadamias, avocado (not technically a protein but you get the idea). Or serve the pesto cabbage with a fried or poached egg or two.

**fresh fish** – if you're not a canned tuna fan, serve the pesto cabbage as a side to pan fried fish or toss in some cooked peeled prawns (shrimp).

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – hello cooked pasta!

**more substantial (low carb)** – use more cabbage and be generous with the pesto and oil. More tuna is another option. Add roast almonds and shaved parmesan.

**Low FODMAP** – a little cabbage (as long as it's not savoy / Napa cabbage) is OK. But a whole meal of cabbage like this might be too much! Best to replace half the cabbage with some cooked rice or steamed potatoes or other low FODMAP veg like kale or spinach.

**dairy-free** – skip the parmesan and use a [dairy-free pesto](#) or replace with roast almonds.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook as per the recipe but keep the extra parmesan separately. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or can be frozen. Either serve cold from the fridge or warm in a pan with a little olive oil.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**cabbage** – will keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for weeks, even months. Can be frozen but will have a wilted texture once defrosted.

**cans tuna / extra virgin olive oil** – keep them in the pantry.

**pesto** – commercial jars of pesto will keep for months in the pantry. Fresh pesto will keep in the fridge for a few weeks. Cover with olive oil to prevent exposure to air and browning reactions.

**parmesan** – keeps for longer in a chunk so only grate when you're cooking. I wrap in waxed paper or baking paper and then keep in an airtight container or a sealed ziplock bag. I prefer this over just wrapping in cling wrap because the air in the container allows the cheese to breathe and not sweat but the container / plastic bag prevents from drying out in the dry fridge air. Either way will keep for months.



*spiced salmon with almond 'hummus'*

# SPICED SALMON WITH ALMOND 'HUMMUS'

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 30 minutes  
NET CARBS: 22g/serve

100g (3.5oz) almond meal

1 clove garlic, peeled and  
smashed (optional)

2 tablespoons lemon juice

1 tablespoon Stonesoup spice\*

2 salmon fillets

handful flaked almonds  
(50g / 2oz)

salad leaves or green veg,  
to serve

1. Place almond meal, 100g (3.5oz) water, garlic (if using) and 2 tablespoons lemon juice in a tall jar or jug.

2. Using your stick blender puree until creamy and well combined.

3. Stir in extra virgin olive oil and a pinch of salt. Taste and season with more salt or lemon juice as needed.

4. Combine spice and 1 tablespoon more of olive oil in a small bowl with a pinch of salt. Toss in salmon to coat with the spiced oil.

5. Heat a medium frying pan on a medium high heat. Add salmon and cook for 3-5 minutes on each side or until cooked to your liking.

6. Divide hummus between two plates. Top with hot salmon. Wipe out the pan and toast the almonds in the pan for a minute or until starting to brown. Scatter almonds over the fish. Finish with salad on the side.

This is one of my favourite types of dinners. Beautifully spiced fish, creamy sauce and salad leaves. Simple and so good.

I've been buying frozen wild Alaskan salmon from the guys at [Fish & Co](#) in Sydney. It's expensive but worth it.

Love how it has so much more flavour than farmed salmon.

And I should mention the spice mix.

I call it the 'Stonesoup spice' because it's my favourite go-to blend.

I used to call it my 'secret' spice. But since I'm sharing the recipe with you here I had to change the name.

It's just equal parts ground cumin, coriander and smoked paprika. I'm happy to share. It can be your secret blend too.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**\*Stonesoup spice** – make your own by adding 1 teaspoon each ground cumin, coriander and smoked paprika.

**nut-free** – make regular [hummus](#) instead.

**Low FODMAP** – skip the garlic and use macadamias instead of the almond meal. Puree in a food processor.

**different nuts** – you can use any nut you like. If using whole nuts you'll need to puree in a food processor instead of using your stick blender.

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

video

--- DINNER - FISH ---

# SPICED SALMON WITH ALMOND 'HUMMUS'

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**keto / ultra low carb** – replace the almond hummus with mayo or smashed avocado.

**vegetarian** – spiced mushrooms or eggplant steaks, fried eggs, tempeh, halloumi.

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – steamed potatoes, pita bread, couscous.

**more substantial (low carb)** – more almonds, a big drizzle extra virgin olive oil.

**different vegetables** – serve with any cooked green veg. Like broccoli, green beans, kale, spinach, chard, silverbeet, asparagus. Will also work with cooked or raw cabbage or [mashed cauliflower](#).

**different protein** – chicken, pork chops, lamb cutlets, fried eggs (just drizzle the spiced oil over before serving), halloumi.

--- DINNER - FISH ---

## PREPARE AHEAD?

You can make the hummus up to a week ahead. And marinate the salmon a day ahead. But best when the fish is freshly cooked. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for up to a week or can be frozen.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**almond meal / spices / almonds** – keep them in the pantry.

**garlic** – will keep in the pantry for months. Best if in a dark corner in a brown paper bag.

**lemon** – whole lemon will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.

**salmon fillets** – freeze them.

**salad leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.

**green veg** – most will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for about 2 weeks or sometimes a little longer. Most can be frozen (if you have time, chop before freezing so it will defrost quickly in the pan).



*quick tuna curry bowls*



# TUNA QUICK CURRY BOWLS

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 30 minutes  
NET CARBS 19g per serve

3-6 teaspoons curry powder

1 can coconut milk  
(400mL / 14oz)

1 large can tuna  
(400g / 14oz)

4 medium zucchini  
(800g / 28oz), sliced

1 bunch coriander (cilantro),  
mint or basil

50g (2oz) roasted cashews

video

1. Place medium saucepan on a medium high heat. Add a glug of oil and fry curry powder for about 30 seconds.

2. Quickly add the coconut milk, tuna (with the juices) and sliced zucchini.

3. Cover and simmer until the zucchini is tender and no longer crunchy – about 10 minutes.

4. Taste and season with salt or more curry powder as needed.

5. Divide between two bowls. Top with herbs and cashews.

This recipe came about because of a mistake... Like most good recipes!

I had planned on making an [Easy Fish Curry](#) from one of [my meal plans](#) with some frozen fish I thought I had in the freezer. But when I looked the freezer was bare...

Luckily my pantry came through with a can of tuna!

I've used zucchini but feel free to use different veg - loads of ideas in the variations below.

BTW if you want to make this a real pantry backup recipe, just use frozen spinach or peas and skip the coriander.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**keto / ultra low carb** – skip the cashews and replace zucchini with baby spinach.

**vegetarian** – chickpeas, feta, paneer, tofu, tempeh or eggs.

**no coconut milk** – you could use a can of tomatoes or 1.5 cups stock. If you want a creamy curry add some fresh cream.

**satay** – stir in a few tablespoons peanut butter. Cashew butter is delicious too!

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – steamed rice or noodles. Or simmer potatoes in the sauce.

# TUNA QUICK CURRY BOWLS

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**more substantial (low carb)** – more cashews, more tuna or different nuts, peanut butter, coconut cream instead of milk, cauliflower 'rice'.

**nut-free** – just skip the cashews or replace with extra veg. Sunflower seeds are another option.

**family-friendly / no curry powder** – use a mild curry powder, garam masala or ground cumin.

**different vegetables** – broccoli, broccolini, cauliflower, cabbage, spinach, sweet potato, eggplant, capsicum (bell peppers) or kale are all good. Just simmer covered until veg are tender.

**different protein** – fresh fish, chicken thigh fillets or breast fillets, steak, eggs, chickpeas, tofu, tempeh, feta.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook as per the recipe but keep the herbs and nuts separately. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, bring back to a simmer and top with cashews and herbs.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**curry powder / coconut milk / can tuna / roasted cashews** – keep them in the pantry.

**zucchini** – will keep for 2 weeks or longer in a plastic bag in the fridge. To keep it even longer, cook sliced zucchini in a little butter until just soft then store in an airtight container in the fridge.

**green herbs** – best to use for another meal. Can be frozen but will wilt when defrosted.



*rosemary macadamia salsa salmon*

# ROSEMARY MACADAMIA SALSA SALMON

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 15 minutes  
NET CARBS 12g per serve

2 salmon fillets  
2 stalks rosemary,  
finely chopped  
4 tablespoons extra virgin  
olive oil  
2 handfuls (100g / 3.5oz)  
chopped macadamias  
3 tablespoons lemon juice  
baby spinach, salad  
or green veg, to serve

**1.** Heat a medium frying pan on a medium high heat. Season salmon with salt and rub with a little oil. Pan fry for 3-5 minutes on each side or until salmon is cooked to your liking.

**2.** While the salmon is cooking mix rosemary, olive oil, macadamias and lemon juice in a small bowl with a pinch of salt. Taste and adjust with more salt and lemon if you think you need it.

**3.** To serve divide cooked salmon between 2 plates. Pop spinach / salad / greens on the side. Spoon over salsa.

Rosemary and fish may not be a common flavour pairing. But trust me, it's seriously delicious.

Especially when you add in some zesty lemon juice and rich crunchy macadamias.

So good!

Actually if you're not a fish fan, this simple salsa has loads more fish-free uses in the variations below.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**different nuts** – I adore macadamias but almonds or walnuts are also fab.

**no rosemary** – skip it or use thyme or oregano.

**vegetarian** – serve salsa and salad with roast eggplant, mushrooms or pan fried halloumi. Or use it to jazz up a simple [omelette](#).

**nut-free** – toasted sunflower seeds or pumpkin seeds are lovely. If you don't mind the carbs, use toasted sourdough crumbs. Or replace with a bunch of finely chopped parsley to make a Rosemary Salsa Verde (green sauce).

# ROSEMARY MACADAMIA SALSA SALMON

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – any kind of potatoes (I think mash would be especially nice with the crunchy salsa). Or other roast root veg or cooked quinoa or couscous.

**more substantial (low carb)** – more macadamias and salmon! Or mayo (do love a twice-sauced dish).

**different vegetables** – any cooked greens like [Beautiful Broccoli](#), asparagus, green beans, broccolini, spinach, kale. Or your fave roast veg!

**carnivore / different protein** – amazing with steak or chicken! Or a good lamb chop. Also thinking the salsa would make a deluxe sauce for burger patties.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

No. Best when freshly made because the macadamias will go soggy over time. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or can be frozen. But remember the salsa is best when fresh.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**salmon fillets** – freeze them.

**rosemary, finely chopped / extra virgin olive oil / macadamias** – keep them in the pantry.

**lemon** – whole lemon will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.

**baby spinach / salad** – best to use for another meal. Can be frozen but will wilt when defrosted.

**green veg** – most will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for about 2 weeks or sometimes a little longer.



*fish tacos with easy coriander hot sauce*

# FISH 'TACOS' WITH EASY CORIANDER HOT SAUCE

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 20 minutes

- 1 bunch coriander (cilantro)
- 1-2 red chilli peppers
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 2 fish fillets, each sliced into  
3 long fingers
- 2 medium zucchini, grated
- 6 cos lettuce leaves or  
zucchini tortillas, to serve

**1.** For the sauce, chop coriander (cilantro) leaves and stems coarsely. Place in a tall jug or wide mouthed jar large enough to fit your stick blender. Add chilli, 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil and lime juice. Blitz using your stick blender until you have a pureed vibrant green sauce. If you don't have a stick blender, use a food processor, regular blender or chop everything by hand.

**2.** Heat a medium frying pan on a medium high heat. Season fish with a pinch of salt. Add a splash of oil to the pan and cook fish for 2-4 minutes on each side or until browned and cooked through.

**3.** Fill 6 lettuce leaves or zucchini tortillas with the grated zucchini. Top with 1 piece of fish for each leaf / tortilla. Serve with hot sauce drizzled over.

I'm calling these 'tacos' because I've used lettuce leaves instead of tortillas. But don't let that put you off.

They're super delicious and with the fresh zesty hot sauce your taste buds will be happy!

If you're using the lettuce leaves it's a pretty light meal. So see the more substantial options below if you're feeling hungry.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**taco bowls** – serve shredded lettuce and grated zucchini in two bowls then top with hot fish and the green sauce.

**short on time** – use a commercial hot sauce instead.

**vegetarian** – fish = pan fried halloumi cheese, tempeh or fried eggs.

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – warm tortillas or flat bread.

**more substantial (low carb)** – serve with mayo, sour cream, avocado, peanuts, almonds or roast cashews. Using the [zucchini tortillas](#) makes it much more filling than the lettuce leaves.

video

# FISH 'TACOS' WITH EASY CORIANDER HOT SAUCE

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**family friendly** – skip the chilli pepper.

**different herbs** – basil or parsley.

**carnivore** – pork fillet, pork sausages, chicken thigh fillets are all lovely with the sauce.

**no lime** – use lemon juice.

**crispy fish** – dust fish with almond meal or another flour before pan frying.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

No. Everything is best when freshly made! Leftovers will keep in the fridge for up to a week. Don't freeze.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**coriander** – best to use for another meal. Can be frozen but will wilt when defrosted.

**red chillies** – will keep for months in the fridge. Can be frozen or left unwrapped in the fridge they will slowly turn into dried chillies and still be edible.

**lime** – will keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.

**fish fillets** – freeze the fillets alone or you could make fish cakes and freeze the mixture ready to defrost and cook.

**zucchini** – will keep for 2 weeks or longer in a plastic bag in the fridge. To keep it even longer, cook sliced zucchini in a little butter until just soft, then store in an airtight container in the fridge.

**lettuce** – will keep in the fridge for a few weeks in a plastic bag. Otherwise use for another meal as it's not great once frozen.

**zucchini tortillas** – freeze them.



*beautiful broccoli with creamy tuna sauce*

# BEAUTIFUL BROCCOLI + CREAMY TUNA SAUCE

MAKES 1 serve  
TAKES 15 minutes

1 medium can tuna  
(200g / 7oz)  
1 tablespoon capers,  
rinsed if in salt  
3-4 tablespoons cream  
1 head broccoli  
1 small bunch parsley or  
chives, chopped (optional)  
squeeze lemon

1. Bring about 1cm (1/2 in) salted water to the boil in a medium saucepan. Meanwhile, chop your broccoli into bite sized little trees and slice the stems. When the water is boiling add the broccoli to the pot and cover. Simmer for 4 minutes or until the broccoli is no longer crunchy, drain.
2. Return the pot to a medium heat. Add tuna and the oil from the can. Or if your tuna comes in water or brine drain it first and add a few tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil to the pan. Add the capers and cook for a minute, stirring to break up the tuna. When the tuna is hot, add the cream and bring to a simmer.
3. Add the drained broccoli and stir to coat in the sauce. Remove from the heat and stir through parsley or chives (if using). Serve with lemon squeezed over as you like.

For years and years this tuna sauce was my favourite go-to for a quick weeknight pasta. And then I stopped eating pasta. Which meant I forgot about the sauce.

A few weeks ago I was thinking about ways to use capers. And I remembered the sauce. And I remembered my new philosophy of using veggies like cabbage, cauliflower or broccoli as an alternative to pasta.

Hello!

I can't tell you how much I love this dish.

And you know the best part? The broccoli only takes a fraction of the time you'd normally spend boiling your pasta.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**short on time** – use a pack of frozen broccoli.

**vegetarian** – replace tuna with 2-3 eggs. Just mix eggs and capers and cream then add to the pan with the drained cooked broccoli – cook over a low heat, stirring until the eggs are almost set and no longer runny. No need for lemon.

**vegan** – replace tuna with a generous handful of roasted sunflower seeds. Skip the cream and serve the steamed broccoli, capers and seeds in a big bowl topped with lashings of hummus or this [cashew sauce](#).

**dairy-free** – replace with extra virgin olive oil or serve tuna, capers and broccoli in a big bowl topped with lashings of hummus or this [cashew sauce](#).

# BEAUTIFUL BROCCOLI + CREAMY TUNA SAUCE

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – cooked pasta!

**more substantial (low carb)** – extra tuna, extra broccoli, extra cream, extra everything! Roast nuts / seeds (sunflower seeds, pine nuts or macadamias are especially good) or serve with chunks of avocado or eggs.

**Low FODMAP** – compost the broccoli stems or feed to your chickens!

**different veg** – [roast cauliflower](#) or [surprise steamed cabbage](#) are excellent substitutes. The sauce is also amazing on grilled asparagus.

**no capers / different flavours** – just skip them or replace with a few anchovy fillets or some chopped black olives. Or a finely chopped clove of garlic.

**different fish** – also lovely with canned mackerel, salmon, sardines or any smoked fish like trout or hot smoked salmon.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook as per the recipe but keep the herbs separately (if using). Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, either cold from the fridge or warm in a pan with a little oil before sprinkling with the herbs.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**tuna / capers** – keep them in the pantry.

**cream** – unopened cartons will generally keep in the fridge for a few weeks. If you need to store for longer, just pop in the freezer in a sealed container. Or freeze in ice cube trays so you can easily defrost just what you need.

**broccoli** – will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for about 2 weeks or sometimes a little longer. Can be frozen (if you have time, chop before freezing so it will defrost quickly in the pan).

**parsley or chives** – will keep in the fridge wrapped in a plastic bag for a few weeks.

**lemon** – whole lemon will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.



*fish with lime & miso butter*

# FISH WITH LIME + MISO BUTTER

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 15 minutes

80g (3oz) unsalted butter

2 tablespoons miso paste

2 teaspoon lime juice  
+ lime halves to serve

2 tuna steaks or other fish

1 bag baby spinach  
or salad leaves

**1.** Place butter in a small bowl with the miso and lime juice. Smash with a fork to mix thoroughly. Taste and season with more miso if needed (but you probably won't!).

**2.** Heat a frying pan or BBQ on a medium high heat. Rub fish with oil and sprinkle with a little salt, remembering the miso butter is pretty salty. Sear fish for 3-5 minutes on each side or until cooked to your liking.

**3.** Divide spinach / salad between two plates. Top with fish and smear the butter over your fish so that it melts to form an incredible sauce.

Ever since I realised that you don't need to make them in advance, I've been getting more and more into flavoured butters.

I mean it's butter with extra flavours. And it only takes a few minutes to make the most amazing sauce.

What's not to love about that?

The only trick here is you need to have your butter at room temperature before starting. However, you can always give it a zap in the microwave if you forget. Apart from the middle of summer I keep some butter in the pantry so it's always ready to go.

I've used shiro or white miso here. It has the mildest flavour of the miso pastes. If using a darker miso, start with less and add to taste. And if you don't have any miso, you should get some ([see here for other miso ideas](#)) or see the variations below for a miso-free option.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**short on time** – make the butter while the fish is cooking.

**no miso paste** – just make a lime butter using salt and butter and the zest of 1 lime.

**vegetarian** – serve the lime & miso butter on grilled veg (like eggplant, zucchini and capsicum). Or stir the butter through cooked lentils (yum!). Flavoured butters are great with fried eggs and wilted greens too. So many options!

# FISH WITH LIME + MISO BUTTER

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**dairy-free** – make a lime and miso oil by replacing butter with 3-4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil.

**carnivore** – replace fish with steaks or pork chops.

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – serve with steamed rice or cooked noodles.

**more substantial (low carb)** – serve with more low carb veg, extra butter (yes!) or roast seeds or nuts. (Sunflower seeds are lovely) or sesame seeds for keeping it more Japanese in vibe.

**different protein** – the miso butter is fab with chicken as well.

**no lime** – lemon juice will work too.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

You can make the butter ahead and keep in the fridge. Just remember to get it out a few hours before serving so it will be nice and soft. I prefer to cook the fish as needed! Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 1-2 weeks or can be frozen. Either serve cold from the fridge or warm in a pan with a little oil.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**butter** – will keep in the fridge for weeks.

**miso paste** – unopened paste can be kept in the pantry, once open needs to be refrigerated.

**lime** – whole limes will keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.

**tuna steaks or other fish** – freeze them.

**baby spinach or salad leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.



*almond crusted fish with hummus & green chilli oil*

# ALMOND CRUSTED FISH WITH HUMMUS + GREEN CHILLI OIL

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 10 minutes

1 fresh green chilli  
3 tablespoons extra virgin  
olive oil  
2 fish fillets  
(about 400g / 14oz)  
4 tablespoons almond meal  
or any flour  
1 cup hummus  
green salad or veg, to serve

1. For the chilli oil, finely chop the green chilli, discarding the seeds if you want it milder. Stir chopped chilli into the oil. Leave to infuse while you cook the fish.

2. Season almond meal / flour with lots of salt and pepper and place on a shallow plate. Toss fish fillets in the seasoned meal / flour to coat them well.

3. Heat enough oil to cover the base of your frying pan by about 1cm (1/3in) on a medium high heat. When the oil is hot, test with your first fillet. If it sizzles vigorously, add all the fish.

4. Fry for 1-2 minutes (for very small fish) or 3-4 minutes (for more normal sized fillets) on each side. Or until the fish is cooked. You want the flesh to look opaque and for it to flake easily when you prod it with a fork. And you want the crust to look golden brown (don't worry some of the flour / almond meal will come off into the oil – that's just what happens). Drain fish on paper towel to remove any excess oil.

5. Divide hummus between two plates. Top with the hot fish. Drizzle over chilli oil and serve salad leaves on the side.

I love eating fish. But it can be a challenge to get my Irishman to enjoy it as much as I do.

Luckily I've found if I pan fry mild flavoured white fish and serve it with lashings of hummus spiked with chilli oil, I don't get any complaints!

I like to dust my fish in a little almond meal (flour works too) before frying so you get a lovely crust. This adds a beautiful textural contrast to the softness of the fish itself. It's really worth the extra minute of two.

You can use any fish fillets here. I've used garfish in the photo. They're super small so you need about 4 fillets per person.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**short on time** – skip the chilli oil and just drizzle with your best peppery extra virgin olive oil.

**vegetarian** – serve the hummus and chilli oil with [falafels](#) or pan fry large flat mushrooms with the flour / almond crust or pan fry some chickpeas instead of the fish.

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – serve with potato chips! Or pita bread.

**more substantial (low carb)** – serve with roasted almonds or extra veggies – steamed broccoli goes really well. Or if it's spring try with some asparagus.

# ALMOND CRUSTED FISH WITH HUMMUS + GREEN CHILLI OIL

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**lower carb / no hummus** – replace hummus with tahini yoghurt (50:50 blend of greek yoghurt and tahini), [almond hummus](#) or try my [broccoli hummus](#).

**Low FODMAP** – skip the almond / flour crust. Replace hummus with mashed potato (and really make an Irishman happy!) or mashed sweet potato.

**different protein** – lovely with chicken breast or thigh fillets, lamb chops or even pork chops.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

You can but I prefer the fish when freshly cooked. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for a week or can be frozen.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**green chillies** – will keep for months in the fridge. Can be frozen or left unwrapped in the fridge they will slowly turn into dried chillies and still be edible.

**extra virgin olive oil / almond meal or any flour** – keep it in the pantry.

**fish fillets** – freeze it.

**hummus** – will keep in the fridge for a few weeks. Can be frozen.

**salad leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.



*salmon with spiced butter & broccoli*

# SALMON WITH SPICED BUTTER + BROCCOLI

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 30 minutes

80g (3oz) salted butter  
4 teaspoons [Stonesoup secret spice](#) or 1 teaspoon each  
cumin, coriander and smoked  
paprika  
2 teaspoon lemon juice  
+ extra to serve  
2 fish fillets  
2 small heads broccoli,  
chopped into florettes  
1/2 cup roast walnuts,  
macadamias, almonds or  
other nuts

1. Bring 1cm (1/2in) salted water to the boil in a medium pot. Add broccoli and cover. Boil for 5 minutes. Drain and keep warm.
2. While the broccoli is cooking make the butter. In a small bowl, mash butter with the spice and lemon. Taste and season as needed. (It may not need any seasoning.)
3. Heat a small frying pan on a medium high heat. Season fish with salt. Add a splash of oil to the hot pan and cook fish for 3-5 minutes on each side or until cooked to your liking.
4. Divide broccoli between two plates or bowls. Top with cooked fish. Smear butter over the fish and finish with the roast nuts.

Spiced butters are a super easy way to make an instant flavour packed sauce for meat or fish.

The French have been onto this forever but I've only recently begun to appreciate the possibilities.

Especially once I realized you don't need to make the butter in advance and refrigerate it.

Most times starting with soft butter and flavouring it as you cook the protein means you don't need to be super organized.

AND the butter is ready to melt and mingle with the pan juices much more readily than flavoured butter from the fridge.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**vegetarian** – serve the spiced butter with pan fried eggplant 'steaks', mushrooms or fried eggs.

**dairy-free** – use extra virgin olive oil or this [cashew sauce](#) instead of the butter.

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – serve with steamed rice, brown rice, quinoa or couscous.

**more substantial (low carb)** – extra nuts, extra fish, more butter!

**Low FODMAP** – use the walnuts or macadamias. And go easy on the serving size of the broccoli.

video

# SALMON WITH SPICED BUTTER + BROCCOLI

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**different flavoured butters** – lime & miso is amazing, or [Quick Chive Butter](#) or try curry powder for a curried butter. I'm also thinking ground fennel seeds would be lovely.

**different veg** – asparagus, broccolini are both good cooked this way. Or serve with a salad, baby spinach or cooked greens.

**different protein** – this spiced butter is also really lovely with lamb or chicken. And it takes a simple omelette to a whole new level.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

The broccoli can be cooked ahead and then reheated in the pan after you cook the fish. The butter can be made any time – will keep in the fridge or freezer for months – just make sure you allow it to come to room temperature before using – you don't want to wrestle with a hard pat of butter. Fish is best when freshly cooked! Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 1-2 weeks or can be frozen.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**spices / nuts** – keep them in the pantry.

**lemon** – whole lemon will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.

**fish fillets** – freeze them.

**broccoli** – will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for 1-2 weeks or sometimes a little longer. Can be frozen (if you have time chop before freezing so it will defrost quickly in the pan).



*fish with olive lemon salsa*

# FISH WITH OLIVE LEMON SALSA

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 20 minutes

2 handfuls pitted black olives  
(100g / 3.5oz)

1 large lemon

1 small clove garlic, minced

small bunch oregano,  
leaves picked

2 fish fillets or steaks

cucumber or salad leaves,  
to serve

**1.** For the salsa, chop olives. Peel and chop lemon into small dice, discarding any seeds as you go. Combine olives, diced lemon, minced garlic and oregano leaves in a small bowl. Moisten with 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil. Leave to stand for the flavours to mingle while you cook the fish.

**2.** Heat a frying pan on a medium high heat. Season fish with salt on both sides. Add a splash of oil to the hot pan and cook fish for 3-5 minutes or until browned on the outside and cooked to your liking.

**3.** Divide fish between two plates. Spoon over the olive lemon salsa. Serve with cucumber or green salad on the side.

I can't remember where I got the idea to dice the flesh of a lemon and use it in a sauce.

But I'm very glad I did.

Love how using an everyday ingredient like the humble lemon in a slightly different way makes it feel like a completely new ingredient!

The flavours in this salsa are big, bold and fresh so best suited to your more meaty fish steaks or oily fish like salmon. But it's also amazing with pork chops or some good quality sausages. And of course you could always serve it with good old chicken.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**different veg** – any green veg will work. Try [beautiful broccoli](#), green beans, asparagus, winter greens. Roast veg are lovely too – I especially love roast zucchini or cauliflower!

**vegetarian** – serve salsa with pan fried halloumi or roast eggplant and goats cheese.

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – serve with roast or steamed potatoes, crusty bread, quinoa or rice.

# FISH WITH OLIVE LEMON SALSA

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**more substantial (low carb)** – larger fish fillets. Roast almonds or macadamias. A big dollop of [mayonnaise](#) and some avocado.

**Low FODMAP** – soak garlic in the extra virgin olive oil for 10-15 minutes then remove and discard garlic before stirring the flavoured oil into the salsa. Or just skip it. Or replace with a few tablespoons chopped garlic chives.

**different herbs** – replace oregano with flat leaf parsley, marjoram or basil.

**no olives** – use capers instead. Or just skip them and make a lemon herb salsa.

**carnivore** – serve salsa with pork chops, good quality pork sausages or chicken breasts.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

You can make the salsa a day or two ahead and just add the oregano before serving. Fish and salad are best when freshly made. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 1-2 weeks or can be frozen. Salad leaves won't freeze well though.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**olives** – keep them in the pantry.

**lemon** – whole lemon will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.

**onion** – will keep in the pantry for months. Best if in a dark corner in a brown paper bag.

**oregano** – will keep in the fridge wrapped in a plastic bag for a week. Can be frozen or make a parsley oil by packing the leaves into a clean jar and covering with extra virgin olive oil.

**fish fillets or steaks** – freeze them.

**cucumber** – use for another meal. Will keep in the fridge in a plastic bag for 2 weeks or so.

**salad leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.



*quick Tuna ragu*

# QUICK TUNA RAGU

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 20 minutes

*1/2 head white cabbage, sliced  
into 5mm (1/4in) ribbons Or  
cooked pasta*

*2 tablespoons capers (rinsed if  
packed in salt)*

*1 can tuna in oil (400g /  
14oz), not drained*

*1/2 jar tomato passata / puree  
(1.5 cups)*

*2-4 tablespoons butter*

*shaved parmesan, to serve*

**1.** If using the cabbage, bring 1cm (1/2in) salted water to the boil in a large saucepan. Add cabbage and cook, covered for 4 minutes or until cabbage is no longer crunchy (think al dente like cooked pasta). Drain well and divide between two bowls.

**2.** Return the pan to the heat and reduce the burner to medium-high. Add a very generous glug of extra virgin olive oil and add capers. Fry for a minute or two until capers are crisping up. Remove capers from the pan and drain on paper towel.

**3.** Add tuna and the liquid from the can, passata and butter to the pot. Simmer for 5-10 minutes or until the sauce is reduced a little. Taste and season if needed but it probably will be fine with the salt from the tuna can. If it tastes too acidic or 'not quite right' melt some more butter in (more butter fixes everything!)

**4.** If using cabbage, spoon the sauce over the cabbage in the bowls. If using pasta, toss the cooked pasta in the pot to heat through in the sauce then divide between two bowls.

**5.** Scatter over cooked capers and shaved parmesan.

For years I thought tuna and tomato didn't go together. And then I traveled to Italy and had the most delicious tuna and tomato pasta (which I ordered by accident) in a little restaurant just outside Florence.

Ever since then I've been a big fan because it's easy to keep a can of tuna and a jar of passata (or canned tomatoes) in the pantry for a backup meal. I always have a head of cabbage in the fridge to use for things like this but of course pasta will also work if you want a true pantry meal.

This version I've served with boiled sliced cabbage. I know it sounds pretty boring but it's one of my favourite low carb pasta alternatives. In my opinion it's even better than zucchini 'noodles'. And don't get me started on how much I hate silly names like 'zoodles'.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**vegetarian / vegan** – replace the tuna with cooked lentils, white beans or chickpeas and replace parmesan with shaved brazil nuts.

**dairy-free** – replace parmesan with shaved brazil nuts or almonds or just skip it. Or my [brazil nut 'parmesan'](#).

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – use pasta!

**more substantial (low carb)** – use more cabbage! And serve with extra cheese, mayo, sour cream or extra tuna.

video

# QUICK TUNA RAGU

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**Low FODMAP** – don't use savoy cabbage and consider using a mix of cabbage and pasta.

**keto / ultra low carb** – serve tuna ragu on a bed of baby spinach or with other leafy greens. Use less tomato (1/2 cup).

**family-friendly** – pasta!

**no capers** – just skip them and use more parmesan. They do add a lovely depth of flavour. Actually pitted olives or anchovies cooked into the sauce will be good alternatives.

**different veg** – use zucchini noodles (spiralized zucchini) or carrot noodles. The sauce is also brilliant on broccoli or just a big bowl of baby spinach leaves.

**carnivore** – replace tuna with ground (minced) beef or sausages.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook as per the recipe but keep the parmesan separately. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for up to 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, bring back to a simmer in a saucepan.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**cabbage (white)** – will keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for weeks, even months. Can be frozen but will have a wilted texture once defrosted.

**pasta / capers / tuna / tomato passata** – keep them in the pantry.

**butter** – will keep in the fridge for weeks.

**parmesan** – keeps for longer in a chunk so only shave when you're cooking. I wrap in waxed paper or baking paper and then keep in an airtight container or a sealed ziplock bag. I prefer this over just wrapping in cling wrap because the air in the container allows the cheese to breathe and not sweat but the container / plastic bag prevents from drying out in the dry fridge air. Either way will keep for months.



*parisian fish with almond sauce*

# PARISIAN FISH WITH ALMOND SAUCE

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 15 minutes

100g (4 heaped tablespoons)  
almond butter  
4 tablespoons water  
1 clove garlic, minced  
2 tablespoon lemon juice +  
halves to serve  
2 fish fillets  
salad leaves or  
green veg to serve  
roast almonds or other nuts

1. For the sauce mix almond butter, water, garlic and lemon juice in a small bowl until it is smooth and creamy. Season with a pinch of salt. Taste and add more salt or lemon if needed.
2. Heat a medium frying pan on a medium high heat. If the fish has skin, score the skin 3-4 times to help prevent it curling up. When the pan is hot add a little glug of oil and cook fish skin side down for 3-4 minutes. Turn and cook for another 2-4 minutes or until the fish is cooked to your liking (thicker fillets may take longer unless you like them quite rare in the middle).
3. Smear sauce over the base of two plates in off centered circles. Top with hot fish (skin side up). Place salad or veg on the side and scatter over almonds and finish with lemon halves.

Another brilliant simple dinner inspired by my lovely friend Clotilde's book [Tasting Paris](#). If you're a Francophile like me you really should treat yourself to a copy. It's wonderful insight into the Paris food scene through the eyes of a local.

Anyway back to this dinner!

By using almond butter (or other nut butters) we make a delicious creamy sauce that's the perfect accompaniment to crispy pan fried fish. While I've used bream (a white fish) in the photo, I did enjoy it slightly (only very slightly) more the first time I made it with ocean trout.

Oh and the photo has macadamias because I was out of almonds. But roast almonds would be a better compliment for the flavours in the sauce.

If you want to take the green veg serving option, steamed green beans, asparagus or grilled zucchini would be my picks.

And as always, the water doesn't count in my 6-ingredient limit.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**vegetarian / vegan** – serve the almond sauce with grilled or roast eggplant slices or halves. Add extra nuts to make it more substantial.

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – roast or steamed potatoes or quinoa.

**more substantial (low carb)** – extra fish, extra nuts or extra low carb veg ([Beautiful Boiled Broccoli](#) or grilled zucchini is excellent!).

video

# PARISIAN FISH WITH ALMOND SAUCE

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**Low FODMAP** – make a peanut & lime sauce instead of the lemon and almond. This is one of those rare occasions where smooth peanut butter will work better. And skip the garlic or add a few tablespoons of garlic oil to the sauce.

**nut-free** – use tahini (sesame seed paste) or sun butter (sunflower seed butter). And replace almonds with croutons or torn chunks of sourdough bread.

**carnivore** – sauce is also good with grilled or pan fried chicken or pork chops.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

I like it best when freshly made but you could make the sauce up to a week ahead and keep it in the fridge. Allow to come to room temp before serving. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 1-2 weeks or can be frozen.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**almond butter / roast almonds or other nuts** – keep them in the pantry.

**garlic** – will keep in the pantry for months. Best if in a dark corner in a brown paper bag.

**lemon** – whole lemon will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.

**fish fillets** – freeze them.

**salad leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.

**green veg** – most will keep for a week or longer in a plastic bag in the fridge.



# CHICKEN DINNERS

# CHICKEN DINNERS

CHEESY CHICKEN

MINUTE CHICKEN WITH GREEN OLIVE CHIMMICHURRI

SPICED CHICKEN + ONIONS WITH HUMMUS

ROAST PESTO CHICKEN + BROCCOLI



*cheesy chicken*



# CHEESY CHICKEN

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 30 minutes  
NET CARBS 15g per serve

4 medium zucchini  
(800g / 28oz)

4 chicken thigh fillets  
(450g / 1lb)

1/2 cup tomato passata  
or puree

1 teaspoon smoked paprika  
(optional)

150g (5oz) grated cheese

1 bunch coriander (cilantro)  
or parsley

video

**1.** Turn your oven on to 250C (480F). Slice zucchini into rounds about 1cm (1/2in) thick and place in a baking tray.

**2.** Chop chicken thighs into 2 pieces and place on top of the zucchini. Mix tomato and paprika (if using) and pour sauce over the chicken. Sprinkle with a pinch of salt and pop in the oven for 15 minutes.

**3.** When the timer goes, scatter the cheese over the top of the chicken and return to the oven for another 5-10 minutes or until the cheese is melted.

**4.** Serve with coriander / parsley leaves sprinkled over.

The first time I made this I just piled everything into a baking dish. Popped it in the oven and set the timer so dinner cooked itself while the boys and I went for a walk to the dam.

So easy!

The only trick was I didn't take the timer with me so we had to guess when we needed to be home. Luckily we made it! But next time I'll use the timer on my phone.

As always just use the recipe as a starting place. Make it your own with inspiration from the variations below.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**no smoked paprika** – it's lovely without. Or you can replace with ground cumin or coriander.

**hot!** – add a little dried chilli powder or fresh chopped chilli to the tomato. If you have some chipotle chilli in adobo sauce, definitely use them! Or serve with your fave hot sauce.

**keto / ultra low carb** – skip the tomato. replace 1/2 the zucchini with baby spinach leaves added at the end. Reduce the cheese. Serve with mayo or aioli.

**vegetarian** – replace chicken with cooked mushrooms, chickpeas, black beans or lentils. Tempeh or tofu is another option.

# CHEESY CHICKEN

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**dairy-free** – skip the cheese and serve roast chicken and veg with a tasty sauce like mayo or smashed avocado & lime. Or cashew sour cream.

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – roast sweet potato or other root veg separately. Or serve with corn chips, warm tortillas, rice or pita.

**more substantial (low carb)** – serve with sour cream or avocado smashed with lime and salt. Or these [zucchini tortillas](#). Or roast nuts.

**different vegetables** – bell peppers (capsicum), eggplant, cherry tomatoes, mushrooms, cauliflower, broccoli or finely sliced onion are all great! If you want to use root veg, cook them separately or add them to the pan and roast for 15-20 minutes to give them a head start before adding the zucchini. Leafy greens (cooked separately) or salad leaves can give a nice boost. I usually add a big scoop of home made sauerkraut for a little probiotic crunch.

**different protein** – sausages, chicken breast fillets, ham, cooked chickpeas, cooked black beans, lentils, tofu or tempeh.

--- DINNER - CHICKEN ---

## PREPARE AHEAD?

You can but I prefer the chicken freshly cooked.

Leftovers will keep in the fridge for a week or can be frozen. To serve, warm in the oven or in a frying pan with a little oil – will look messy but still delicious!

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**zucchini** – will keep for 2 weeks or longer in a plastic bag in the fridge. To keep it even longer, cook sliced zucchini in a little butter until just soft then store in an airtight container in the fridge.

**chicken thigh fillets** – freeze them.

**tomato passata or puree / smoked paprika** – keep them in the pantry.

**cheese** – most hard and melting cheeses will keep for weeks wrapped in waxed paper or baking paper and stored in an airtight container (or sealed ziplock bag) in the fridge. If you need to store for longer cheese can be frozen.

**coriander** – best to use for another meal. Can be frozen but will wilt when defrosted.



*minute chicken with green olive chimichurri*

# MINUTE CHICKEN WITH GREEN OLIVE CHIMMICHURRI

MAKES 2 serves

TAKES 30 minutes

200g (7oz) green olives,  
pitted

1 bunch flat leaf parsley,  
chopped

1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil

1 clove garlic

3 tablespoon lemon juice

4 chicken thigh fillets

2 large handfuls green beans  
or green salad, to serve

**1.** For the chimichurri, place the olives, parsley, oil, garlic, lemon juice and 5 tablespoons water in a small bowl or jug. Using your stick blender, puree to a chunky paste. OR puree in your food processor or regular blender. Taste and season with salt if needed (you might not, depending on how salty your olives are). Set aside. If using beans, trim to remove stalks but leave the tails intact.

**2.** Cut chicken thighs into 2-3 pieces then using your fist, a meat mallet, small saucepan or potato ricer (as I do) bash the chicken until each piece is about 1cm (less than 1/2 inch) thick. Rub chicken with oil and season with salt.

**3.** Heat a frying pan or BBQ on a high heat. When the pan / BBQ is hot add chicken and cook for 1-2 minutes on each side or until well browned and no longer pink in the middle. Divide between two plates.

**4.** If using beans, return pan to the heat and add beans with a splash of water. Cover with a lid and cook for a few minutes, stirring every minute or so until the beans are bright green and no longer super crunchy.

**5.** Divide cooked beans or the salad leaves between plates and drizzle over chimichurri.

Chimmichurri is a super delicious Argentinian sauce of parsley and oregano normally served with steak.

Recently I was craving chimichurri but the pesky possums had eaten my oregano. I did have green olives though. So I made the connection. The first time we had it with steak and was thoroughly happy with the results. However it's just as good, if not better with the milder flavour of chicken.

Bashing out the chicken like this to make it 'minute' chicken only takes a few extra minutes on the prep front, but saves a good 5 minutes on the cooking time. And it tenderizes and makes it much easier to tell when it's done. Definitely worth it!

There are 7 ingredients listed here but one is olive oil which I don't count in my 6-ingredient limit.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**different protein** – chimichurri is a classic with steak but also lovely with a pork chop or sausages. Chicken breasts can also be used but tend to be much drier and less flavoursome than thigh fillets.

**vegetarian** – replace chicken with fried eggs, halloumi or cooked chickpeas. The chimichurri would also be excellent with avocado on toast.

**vegan** – replace chicken with cooked chickpeas, avocado and/or roast almonds or hazelnuts.

# MINUTE CHICKEN WITH GREEN OLIVE CHIMMICHURRI

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – serve with steamed potatoes or crusty bread.

**more substantial (low carb)** – serve with extra low carb veg, roasted almonds or hazelnuts or chunks of avocado. And consider an extra drizzle of olive oil.

**Low FODMAP** – skip the garlic or use garlic oil instead of the extra virgin olive oil.

**different olives** – black olives can be used but the sauce will look more like a tapenade.

**different veg** – asparagus in spring time! or steamed broccoli, snow peas, sugar snap peas, spinach or roast veggies are all good options.

--- DINNER - CHICKEN ---

## PREPARE AHEAD?

I prefer my chicken freshly cooked, however you could make the sauce ahead. Will keep in the fridge for 1-2 weeks but is nicest after the first day or so! Leftover chicken will keep in the fridge for up to a week or can be frozen.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**green olives** – will keep in the fridge for months.

**parsley** – will keep in the fridge wrapped in a plastic bag for a few weeks. Can be frozen or make a parsley oil by packing the leaves into a clean jar and covering with extra virgin olive oil.

**extra virgin olive oil** – keep it in the pantry.

**garlic** - keep in a dark pantry for weeks if not months. I keep mine in a brown paper bag to avoid sprouting.

**lemons** – will keep for a few weeks at room temp or for much longer in the fridge.

**chicken thigh fillets** – freeze them.

**green beans** – can be frozen but best to use for another meal.

**salad leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.



*spiced chicken & onions with hummus*

# SPICED CHICKEN + ONIONS WITH HUMMUS

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 30 minutes

4 medium onions  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 teaspoon ground coriander  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
4 chicken thigh fillets  
1 cup hummus, to serve  
1 bag salad, baby kale  
or baby spinach leaves

**1.** Preheat your oven to 250C (480F). Peel onion and chop in half lengthwise. Then slice each half finely into 1/2 moon shapes. Place onion in an oven proof casserole or cast iron pot. Drizzle with a little oil and cook covered for 10 minutes.

**2.** Meanwhile, combine olive oil, cumin, coriander and a little salt in a small bowl. Toss in chicken thighs to coat in the spicy oil.

**3.** After the onions have been cooking for 10 minutes, add chicken and oil to the pot and return to the oven covered for another 10 minutes.

**4.** Remove lid and cook for another 5 minutes or until chicken is well browned and cooked through (no longer pink when you cut into it).

**5.** To serve, divide hummus between two plates. Top with spiced chicken and onions and serve salad leaves on the side.

Onions are one of the most magical ingredients that I'm appreciating even more now my Irishman is on a low FODMAP plan which excludes alliums.

In fact most of the time when someone walks into the kitchen and says 'that smells amazing', it's just onions cooking.

They're also a brilliant source of inulin, a type of fibre called a 'pre-biotic' which is great for feeding your gut bacteria (unless you have IBS of course!).

There are 7 ingredients listed here but I don't count olive oil in my 6-ingredient limit.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**short on time / no oven** – cook onions in a large frying pan until soft and golden. Remove from the pan and keep warm while you pan fry the spiced chicken on a medium high heat until well browned and cooked through (about 4-5 minutes on each side).

**5-ingredients / über simple** – skip the spices or replace with 1-2 teaspoons of a spice blend like ras el hanout, baharat or curry powder.

**vegetarian** – replace chicken with cooked chickpeas or cauliflower.

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – warm pita bread, steamed brown rice or quinoa or roast sweet potato.

# SPICED CHICKEN + ONIONS WITH HUMMUS

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**lower carb** – use [cauliflower 'hummus'](#) , [almond 'hummus'](#) or [broccoli 'hummus'](#). Or replace with yoghurt tahini sauce (equal parts greek yogurt and tahini).

**more substantial (low carb)** – add roast nuts like hazelnuts, almonds or pine nuts. Or add some low carb veg like cauliflower or broccoli or zucchini to cook with the chicken.

**Low FODMAP** – replace onions with 2 sliced red capsicum (bell peppers). Make a low FODMAP hummus by replacing the garlic in this [hummus](#) with 1 teaspoon ground cumin. You may want to reduce the serving size of the hummus.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

You can but I prefer not to reheat chicken! If you do want to, just cook as per the recipe but keep the hummus and salad separately. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 1 week or can be frozen. To serve, warm chicken and onions in a pan with a little oil.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**onion** – will keep in the pantry for months. Best if in a dark corner in a brown paper bag.

**olive oil / ground coriander / ground cumin** – keep them in the pantry.

**chicken thigh fillets** – freeze them.

**hummus** – will keep in the fridge for a few weeks. Can be frozen.

**salad, baby kale or baby spinach leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.



*roast pesto chicken & broccoli*

# ROAST PESTO CHICKEN + BROCCOLI

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 30 minutes

2 heads broccoli

8 heaped tablespoons pesto  
(about 200g / 7oz)

4 chicken thighs on the bone  
or thigh fillets

8 heaped tablespoons ricotta

1 bag salad leaves

**1.** Preheat your oven to 250C (480F). Chop broccoli into bite sized little trees and slice the stems. Toss broccoli, chicken and pesto in a roasting pan until the chicken and broccoli are well coated with the pesto.

**2.** Roast for 20 minutes. Stir and cook for another 5-10 minutes or until chicken is cooked through and the broccoli is tender. If using thigh fillets they may only take the initial 20 minutes depending on how big they are.

**3.** Divide ricotta between two plates. Top with hot chicken and broccoli and finish with salad leaves.

This recipe has some of my favourite ingredients... broccoli and pesto. And uses one of my favourite simple cooking techniques... the fast roast.

Such as winning dinner. Love just tossing a few ingredients in a baking tray, setting my timer and doing other things while dinner literally cooks itself. Brilliant!

When I first had the idea for this recipe, I was a little worried how the pesto would taste after being in the oven. So was pleasantly surprised when I absolutely loved this dish and wanted to eat more. Love how the pesto forms a delicious crust on the chicken.

Also love how the cool, creamy ricotta provides a textural contrast and mixes in with the pesto roasting juices to make the most delicious sauce / dressing for the salad leaves. So good!

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**short on time** – poach chicken and broccoli instead. Chicken will take 8-10 minutes gently simmering. And the broccoli will take 4-5 minutes so simmer the chicken for 4 minutes then add the broccoli and keep simmering until the chicken is cooked through.

**vegetarian / different protein** – replace chicken with cooked chickpeas, lentils or cannellini beans. Or serve the roast pesto broccoli with poached or fried eggs. Some roast almonds or walnuts will also add extra plant protein and substance.

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – toss in cooked pasta before serving. Or add some steamed potatoes to roast with the broccoli.

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# ROAST PESTO CHICKEN + BROCCOLI

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**more substantial (low carb)** – use more chicken or serve with avocado or roast nuts (walnuts, pine nuts or almonds are all delicious)

**Low FODMAP** – replace broccoli with steamed potatoes. Serve with fresh parsley leaves or basil for extra greenery. And replace ricotta with a low FODMAP cheese like parmesan, shaved over the top.

**dairy-free** – use this [cashew ricotta](#) and use a [dairy free pesto](#). You could also skip the ricotta and serve with some roast nuts instead.

**more veg / different veg** – feel free to toss in other veg with the broccoli like cauliflower, asparagus, carrots, steamed potatoes, eggplant, capsicum (bell peppers), onion or mushrooms.

**no oven!** – stir fry the chicken and broccoli separately until just cooked through. Then toss both in with the pesto and serve.

--- DINNER - CHICKEN ---

## PREPARE AHEAD?

You can, however I prefer roast chicken when freshly cooked. If you are happy to reheat chicken, cook as per the recipe but keep the salad and ricotta separately. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 1 week or can be frozen. To serve, warm chicken and broccoli in the oven (200C / 400F) for 10 minutes and serve with salad and ricotta.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**broccoli** – will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for 1-2 weeks or sometimes a little longer. Can be frozen (if you have time chop before freezing so it will defrost quickly in the pan).

**pesto** – commercial jars of pesto will keep for months in the pantry. Fresh pesto will keep in the fridge for a few weeks. Cover with olive oil to prevent exposure to air and browning reactions. Can be frozen.

**chicken** – freeze it.

**ricotta** – unopened tubs of ricotta usually have a shelf life of a few weeks. Otherwise use for another meal. Great on toast with honey for a decadent breakfast or use instead of cream with desserts.

**salad leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.



# CARNIVORE DINNERS

# CARNIVORE DINNERS

SAUSAGE, CHILLI + BROCCOLI BOWLS

TACO TUESDAY BOWLS

FAST FRIDAY CHEESEBURGER BOWLS

SAUSAGES + PEPPERS

SICHUAN PORK + GREENS

QUICK CHEESE BURGERS WITH CHIPOTLE MAYO

QUICK PIG + OLIVE RAGU

EASY JAPANESE BURGERS

MINUTE STEAKS WITH QUICK CHIVE BUTTER

QUICK BEEF TACOS

BLOODY DELICIOUS KALE BOWLS

--- DINNER - CARNIVORE ---



*sausage chilli & broccoli bowls*

# SAUSAGE CHILLI + BROCCOLI BOWLS

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 15 minutes  
NET CARBS 26g/serve

**1.** Bring about 1cm (1/2in) salted water to the boil in a medium saucepan. Chop broccoli into bite sized pieces and add to the pot. Cover and simmer on medium high heat for 5 minutes.

**2.** When the broccoli is tender. Drain.

**3.** Return the pot to the heat and add a good glug of olive oil. Add crumbled sausage meat (skins removed), anchovies (if using) and chillies. Cook, stirring for a few minutes or until the sausage meat is well browned. Stir in drained broccoli.

**4.** Taste and season with salt as needed (you may not from the anchovies and sausage).

**5.** Divide sausage and broccoli mix between two bowls. Top with mayo and nuts.

2 small heads broccoli (approx  
600g / 1.3lb)

2-4 sausages

4 anchovies (optional)

4 serrano or thai birds eye  
chilli peppers

handful roast nuts  
(50g / 2oz)

2-4 tablespoons mayo

A few weeks ago my Irishman was telling Fergal about the time he had his first real Italian pizza. In Napoli.

I was surprised to hear him say that his favourite topping then (and now) was sausage and broccoli.

Which got me thinking. I love sausage and broccoli. But pizza not so much.

Why not make a broccoli bowl with sausages and chilli and some roast nuts for crunch? And here it is.

I've put the anchovies as optional but they really add amazing depth of flavour without tasting 'fishy'.

Try them (even if you're not a big anchovy on pizza fan). They cook into the sauce and are so so good. I promise.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**short on time** – cook sausage in a separate pan at the same time as the broccoli.

**Keto / ultra low carb** – replace broccoli with kale or spinach. Use macadamias as your nuts.

**vegetarian** – sausages = chickpeas or lentils.

**nut-free** – extra [mayo](#) or shaved parmesan.

# SAUSAGE CHILLI + BROCCOLI BOWLS

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – cooked pasta or warm flat bread.

**more substantial (low carb)** – more nuts. more sausage. more mayo. Sauerkraut.

**Low FODMAP** – don't use the broccoli stems. use macadamias as your nuts.

**family-friendly** – skip the chilli. Serve with pizza.

**different vegetables** – you can sub any cooked veg for the cooked broccoli. I'm thinking sauteed cabbage or roast cauliflower would be particularly amazing. But zucchini or asparagus are also fab.

**different protein** – lentils, chickpeas, poached egg, scrambled egg, cooked chicken, smoked fish, tuna, chorizo.

**no mayo** – try this [almond 'hummus'](#), [pesto](#) or just a big drizzle of extra virgin olive oil. A squeeze of lemon will work too.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook as per the recipe but keep the mayo and nuts separately. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for up to 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, warm in a pan with a little oil.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**broccoli** – will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for about 2 weeks or sometimes a little longer. Can be frozen (if you have time chop before freezing so it will defrost quickly in the pan).

**sausages** – freeze them.

**anchovies / roast nuts** – keep them in the pantry.

**chillies** – will keep for weeks in a plastic bag in the fridge. Or can be frozen.

**mayonnaise** – unopened in pantry or once opened will keep for months in the fridge.



*taco Tuesday bowls*

# TACO TUESDAY BOWLS

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 15 minutes

450g (1lb) minced (ground)  
pork, chicken or beef  
1 teaspoon to 2 tablespoons hot  
sauce + extra to serve  
2 limes  
1 bunch collard greens or kale  
1 avocado or sour cream  
2 handfuls roast cashews,  
almonds, macadamias or  
peanuts (optional)

1. Heat a large frying pan on a high heat. Add a splash of oil and the meat and cook, stirring often until the meat is well browned – about 5 minutes.
2. Remove meat from heat and gradually season with your hot sauce, 1-2 tablespoons lime juice and some salt. Tasting as you go and adding more of anything as needed.
3. Finely slice greens or kale and divide between two bowls. Top with the hot meat, avocado / sour cream, lime halves and nuts (if using).

Before I started following my own meal plans, we were having 'Taco Tuesday'. Every week.

The boys loved it. And I loved having an excuse to explore the wonderful world of Mexican flavours.

I first made these taco bowls with some leftover pulled pork that was amazing. However I'm just as happy with this simple weeknight option. Although it does all depend on the quality of your hot sauce.

My favourite is a smoky chipotle that has a bit of sweetness but you could go for tabasco or even sriracha. Just add a little at a time. It's easy to add more heat but difficult to subtract!

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**different greens** – baby spinach or any cooked greens will work. Shredded cabbage or grated zucchini are also lovely.

**different protein** – feel free to substitute any cooked protein for the meat. Pulled pork or my [quick pulled chicken](#) work really well and of course there are always the vegetarian options below!

**more veg** – add grilled peppers, zucchini, eggplant or cooked mushrooms to the cooked meat. And if you have time and can tolerate it, soften an onion in the pan before browning the meat.

video

# TACO TUESDAY BOWLS

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**vegetarian** – cooked beans, lentils or chickpeas.

**dairy-free** – use the avocado or this [cashew yoghurt](#).

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – warm tortillas or corn chips.

**more substantial (low carb)** – extra nuts, extra meat, sour cream AND avocado.

**Low FODMAP** – use sour cream instead of the avo. And use peanuts or macadamias.

**family-friendly** – I just serve plain cooked meat for the boys and then season the meat with the hot sauce after I've served up. But you could use tomato ketchup or your favourite BBQ sauce instead.

**no lime** – lemon juice is the next best thing.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook the meat and season as per the recipe but keep everything else separately. Cooked meat will keep in the fridge for 1-2 weeks or can be frozen. The fresh ingredients won't keep that long and shouldn't be frozen! To serve, warm meat in a pan with a little oil and possibly a splash more lime juice to freshen it up. Then serve as per the recipe.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**minced (ground) pork, chicken or beef** – freeze it.

**hot sauce / nuts** – keep them in the pantry.

**lime** – will keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.

**collard greens or kale** – will keep for a few weeks in a plastic bag in the fridge. Or for longer if cooked as per the recipe. Can be frozen.

**avocado** – use for another meal. Doesn't freeze well.

**sour cream** – keeps for weeks in the fridge.



fast friday ~ cheeseburger bowls

# FAST FRIDAY CHEESEBURGER BOWLS

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 30 minutes

500g (1lb) minced  
(ground) beef  
2 zucchiní (500g / 1lb),  
sliced  
250g (1/2lb) cherry  
tomatoes, halved  
100g (3.5oz) sliced cheddar  
salad leaves or parsley,  
to serve  
mayonnaise, to serve

1. Turn your oven to 250C (480F). Place zucchini and tomatoes in a large roasting tray. Drizzle with a little oil and a pinch of salt. Roast for 5 minutes.
2. Break meat into bite sized chunks and scatter over the zucchini and tomatoes. Roast for another 10 minutes.
3. Stir. Scatter over cheese and cook for another 5 minutes or until the meat is cooked through and the cheese has melted.
4. Divide between two bowls. Top with salad / parsley and a big dollop of mayo.

I'm really kicking myself for how this photo turned out during my video shoot...

I grated the cheese instead of slicing it so it over-melted. Which means you can't really see the cheesy, oozy goodness. But trust me. It's there.

These burger bowls are a big big favourite in our house on a Friday night.

I love them because they're so quick and it all just cooks in one pan - so minimal cleanup.

My Irishman loves the combo of the meaty beef and the buttery roast zucchini.

And the boys love them because I serve theirs in soft butter brioche burger buns. #everyonehappy

I must tell you - the roast zucchini with the cheese on it is so so good. Definitely my favourite part!

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**vegetarian** - replace meat with extra veggies like eggplant, mushrooms and peppers. Or use chickpeas or black beans. And consider adding more cheese.

**dairy-free** - just skip the cheese and serve extra mayo. Or add some chopped bacon to brown instead of the cheese. Or for a luxe version serve burger bowls with finely sliced prosciutto or salami.

**more substantial (carb lovers)** - burger buns! Or add torn sourdough chunks to roast with the meat.

**more substantial (low carb)** - extra mayo, roast nuts or [almond burger buns](#).

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

video

--- DINNER - CARNIVORE ---

# FAST FRIDAY CHEESEBURGER BOWLS

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**more veg** – see the vegetarian options.

**different accompaniments** – I've kept it simple just serving with mayo, but feel free to add any of your usual burger accompaniments. Pickles are lovely, or mustard and you could always go for some ketchup if you don't mind the sugar. Oh and for me [sauerkraut](#) is a must!

**different meat** – any ground meat will work. Or try sausages or chorizo for something different.

**old school burgers** – replace parsley / salad with finely sliced iceberg or cos (romaine) lettuce.

**different cheese** – I'm keen to try it with crumbled blue cheese added at the end. OR feta would be good too. Any melting cheese will work in place of the cheddar.

**different greenery** – I like the parsley leaves but you could serve it on a bed of any cooked greens. And make sure you see the old school burgers' option above. Shredded kale is a fave.

--- DINNER - CARNIVORE ---

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook as per the recipe but keep the parsley and mayo separately. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, warm in the oven (200C / 400F) for 10-15 minutes or pan fry everything until hot.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**minced (ground) beef** – freeze it.

**zucchini** – will keep for 2 weeks or longer in a plastic bag in the fridge. To keep it even longer, cook sliced zucchini in a little butter until just soft then store in an airtight container in the fridge.

**cherry tomatoes** – either halve and cook in the oven for about 30 minutes (180C / 350F) OR just cook in a pan with a little olive oil. In either case store in an airtight container in the fridge for a few weeks. Or freeze the cooked tomato for longer periods.

**cheese** – most hard and melting cheeses will keep for weeks wrapped in waxed paper or baking paper and stored in an airtight container (or sealed ziplock bag) in the fridge. If you need to store for longer, cheese can be frozen.

**salad leaves / parsley** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible, you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.

**mayonnaise** – unopened in pantry or once opened will keep for months in the fridge.



*Sausages & Peppers*



# SAUSAGES + PEPPERS

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 30 minutes

4 sausages

2 large red bell peppers  
(capsicum), sliced

1 tablespoon sherry  
or red wine vinegar

100g (3.5oz) feta, crumbled

1 bunch basil or parsley,  
leaves picked

salad or steamed veg, to serve

1. Turn your oven on to 250C (480F). Place peppers in a medium baking tray. Remove sausage casings and pinch meatball sized chunks of sausage meat onto the peppers. Add a little salt and drizzle with oil.
2. Bake for 15 minutes – no need to wait for oven to preheat before cooking.
3. Stir and bake for another 5-10 minutes or until the sausage balls are cooked through and the peppers are tender.
4. Add vinegar and stir in to season the sausage and peppers. Taste and season with salt and more vinegar if needed. Remember the feta is going to add a good dose of salt.
5. Divide sausages and peppers between two plates or bowls and top with feta and basil / parsley. Serve salad or veg on the side.

This recipe came about from following my meal plans!

The plan had included my classic insanely simple [Chicken & Peppers](#), but I wanted to do something different and a bit quicker.

And so sausages it was!

I've fancied it up a little by serving with basil and crumbled feta. But the cooked peppers are really still the star of the show.

Love their sweetness in contrast to the salty tangy feta.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**short on time** – pan fry the sausages and peppers until tender.

**vegetarian** – cooked chickpeas or beans. Or serve the cooked peppers, feta and basil with an omelette.

**vegan** – use cooked chickpeas or beans instead of the sausages. And replace feta with smoked salted almonds or olives.

**dairy-free** – replace feta with smoked salted almonds or olives.

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

video

--- DINNER - CARNIVORE ---

# SAUSAGES + PEPPERS

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – cooked pasta, potatoes or pita bread.

**more substantial (low carb)** – more sausages or roast nuts like almonds, walnuts, cashews or macadamias. Extra feta or sausages. Or serve with a big dollop of mayo.

**different flavours** – use spicy sausages such as chorizo or other flavoured sausages such as pork and fennel.

**more veg / different veg** – add sliced zucchini, diced eggplant or sliced mushrooms with the peppers. Finely sliced onion would work too.

**different herbs** – flat leaf parsley, oregano or mint.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook as per the recipe but keep the feta, basil and salad / greens separately. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, warm in the oven 200C (400F) for 10 minutes or until hot.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**sausages** – freeze them.

**red bell peppers (capsicum)** – keep in the fridge for a few weeks. For longer grill and store in an airtight jar under oil. Or freeze them.

**sherry or red wine vinegar** – keep it in the pantry.

**feta** – keeps for months unopened in its packet. Or can be frozen. Or you could make a marinated feta by putting it in a super clean jar from the dishwasher and covering with oil and then keeping it in the fridge. Sometimes I like to add flavouring like bay leaves, lemon zest and pepper corns or chilli.

**basil** – make basil oil by packing washed and dried leaves in a clean jar and covering with extra virgin olive oil. Or you can freeze the leaves, they'll wilt but will still be delicious.

**salad leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.

*sichuan pork & greens*



# SICHUAN PORK + GREENS

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 20 minutes

1 large bunch chard, silver  
beet, kale or other greens

450g (1lb) pork mince

3 tablespoons each soy sauce  
and water

2 teaspoons Sichuan  
peppercorns

large handful roasted cashews  
to serve

chilli oil or chilli salt, to serve

1. If using chard or silver beet, finely slice stems and coarsely chop the leaves, keeping the stems separate. If using kale, spinach or other greens just coarsely chop everything.

2. Heat a large pot on a medium high heat. Add a good glug of oil and chard / silverbeet stems and cook, covered until starting to soften – about 5 minutes. Skip this step if using other greens.

3. If using other greens, heat a large pot on a high heat and add a little oil and pork. If you're cooking the stems, increase the heat to high and add the pork.

4. Stir fry until pork is no longer pink and cooked through. Add soy sauce, water and sichuan peppercorns and then add the chopped green leaves. Cover and cook for 5-10 minutes, stirring every now and then. You're waiting until the greens are just cooked through.

5. Taste and season with a little more soy sauce, if needed. Divide between two bowls and top with cashews and serve chilli oil / chilli salt for everyone to add their own at the table.

This is the type of simple meal my Irishman and I love to have for weeknight dinners. It's simple. It's packed with flavour and there are loads of veggies and protein.

Plus it all cooks quickly in one pot so the clean up is speedy as well.

If you don't have Sichuan peppercorns, see the variations below for alternatives.

However they are a really unique ingredient and worth tracking down. I love how they give little tingly bursts of flavour on your tongue as you eat them.

A wake-up call for your taste buds!

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**no Sichuan peppercorns** – just use regular black pepper. It won't have the same tang but will still be delicious!

**short on time** – use frozen greens. Make sure you defrost them first and squeeze out the extra moisture.

**vegetarian / vegan** – replace pork with cooked lentils, chickpeas or eggs.

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – serve with steamed rice, rice noodles or spaghetti.

**more substantial (low carb)** – extra cashews or serve with cauliflower 'rice'.

# SICHUAN PORK + GREENS

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**more flavour** – feel free to add minced garlic and/or grated ginger with the pork.

**Low FODMAP** – use roast peanuts or other low FODMAP nuts instead of the cashews

**family-friendly** – For my green-phobic boys, I cook the pork in the soy sauce and Sichuan peppers, then keep it separately for them to have with rice and a very small amount of the greens.

**different veg** – the pork also works really well with broccoli or green beans – they'll just take a little longer to cook than the greens.

**different meat** – any minced (ground) meat will work. Chicken or turkey are the most similar but beef or lamb are also lovely with the Sichuan tang.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook as per the recipe but keep the cashews and chilli oil / chilli salt separately. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for up to 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, warm in a pan or wok with a little oil.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**chard, sliver beet, kale or other greens** – will keep in the fridge in a plastic bag for at least 2 weeks. Can be frozen both cooked or raw.

**pork mince** – freeze it.

**chilli-salt / roasted cashews / Sichuan peppercorns / soy sauce** – keep them in the pantry.



*quick cheese burgers with chipotle mayo*

# QUICK CHEESE BURGERS WITH CHIPOTLE MAYO

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 30 minutes

100g (3.5oz) chipotle chillies  
in adobo sauce

100g (3.5oz) mayo + 2-3  
tablespoons extra for slaw

450g (1lb) minced  
(ground) beef

50g (2oz) grated parmesan,  
plus extra

1/4 medium cabbage

small bunch coriander  
(cilantro)

1. First make the mayo by chopping chipotle chillies and mixing with the mayo. Taste and season with salt if needed.

2. Combine beef and parmesan and form into 4 burger patties. Heat a large frying pan on a medium high heat. Add a little oil. Reduce heat to medium and then cook the burger patties for 4-5 minutes on each side, or until well browned on the outside and no longer pink in the middle.

3. While the burgers are cooking, shave the cabbage using a mandoline or sharp knife. Finely chop coriander stems and coarsely chop the leaves. Toss shaved cabbage and chopped coriander in a bowl with the 2-3 tablespoons of extra mayo.

4. When the burgers are cooked, divide chipotle mayo between two plates smearing into an off centered circle. Top with cooked burger patties. Add slaw on the side and finish with an extra grating of parmesan.

I've always loved the idea of cheese burgers but generally don't bother to make them at home because it seems like a hassle to get the cheese melted 'just right' while you're cooking the burger patties.

Then a few weeks ago I had the idea to add parmesan to the meat. Cheese inside the burger! So you get all the lovely cheesy complex flavours without the pressure of melted cheese perfection. Win!

Oh and this chipotle mayo is seriously the business. I love it with these burgers but it's also brilliant with chicken or fish or for adding a flavour explosion to your tacos.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**no chipotle chillies in adobo sauce** – replace with 2 teaspoons tomato paste, 1-2 teaspoons smoked paprika and dried chilli powder to taste (1/2 to 1 teaspoon).

**short on time** – skip the slaw and serve with green salad instead.

**vegetarian** – use small mushrooms, chickpeas or cooked beans.

**more substantial (low carb)** – [almond burger buns](#). Or add some roast nuts to the slaw. I love it with roast walnuts

video

--- DINNER - CARNIVORE ---

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# QUICK CHEESE BURGERS WITH CHIPOTLE MAYO

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – burger buns and [fries](#) or roast sweet potato.

**Low FODMAP** – use the no chipotle option to flavour the mayo (the adobo sauce contains onions). And use low fodmap cabbage (white or red, not Savoy).

**family-friendly** – skip the chipotle mayo or serve tomato ketchup instead. And serve with burger buns.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

You can but I do think burgers are nicer when freshly cooked. Leftover burgers will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or can be frozen. Leftover mayo and slaw will keep in the fridge for up to a week for the salad and up to 2 weeks for the mayo but neither of these can be frozen. To serve, I would warm the patties in the oven so they don't over brown (200C / 400F for 10 minutes or so).

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**chipotle chillies in adobo sauce** – keep it in the pantry.

**mayonnaise** – unopened in pantry or once opened will keep for months in the fridge.

**minced (ground) beef** – freeze it.

**parmesan** – wrap in waxed paper or baking paper and store in the fridge in a sealed paper bag or airtight container. Will keep for months. Can be frozen if you're going away.

**cabbage (white)** – will keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for weeks, even months. Can be frozen but will have a wilted texture once defrosted.

**coriander (cilantro)** – best to use for another meal. Can be frozen but will wilt when defrosted.



*quick pig & olive ragu*

# PIG + QUICK OLIVE RAGU

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 15 minutes

500g (1lb) pork mince  
(ground pork)  
small bunch green  
onions, sliced  
100g (3.5oz) black olives,  
pitted and chopped  
4 tablespoons tomato paste  
cooked pasta, *cooked kale*,  
baby spinach, *steamed*  
*cabbage* or zucchini noodles,  
to serve  
parsley leaves or shaved  
parmesan, to serve

1. Heat an extremely generous glug of extra virgin olive oil in a large frying pan or skillet. Add pork and green onions and cook, stirring for a few minutes or until pork is no longer pink and starting to brown.
2. Add olives, tomato paste and 6 tablespoons (1/3 cup) water. Bring to a simmer and cook for a few more minutes or until the sauce is hot and the flavours have come together. Taste and season with salt if needed. If it tastes a little too sharp and acidic from the tomato either add more olive oil or a few tablespoons butter.
3. Serve hot ragu on top of your chosen accompaniment with parsley or parmesan to finish.

I love the idea of 'pig and olive'. It sounds like a cosy Irish pub. Don't you think?

Anyway it was the idea of this name which inspired this dish. I had olives. I had pork mince and I had the words 'pig and olive' rattling around in my head.

While it may look like a regular bolognese-style dish, the olives really do take it to a completely different place.

If you're feeding little ones, you can always serve theirs and then add the olives for the adults. In our house, the boys have this with pasta and I have it with veggies. Everyone happy.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**short on time** – use pitted olives. Cook the pasta / veg at the same time as the ragu.

**vegetarian / vegan** – cooked lentils and olives! Or chickpeas. For vegans use the parsley or see the dairy-free option below.

**dairy-free** – serve with parsley, ground almonds or *brazil nut 'parmesan'*.

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – lashings of pasta!

# PIG + QUICK OLIVE RAGU

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**small-person friendly** – skip the olives (or save them for the adults). And add a little butter to the sauce to soften the acidity.

**Low FODMAP** – only use the green tops of the onions.

**regular onion** – replace green onions with a normal onion but cook it in oil until soft (but not browned) before adding the pork.

**different meat** – any ground meat will work. Or leftover cooked meat. Sausages are also fab (especially pork and fennel), just remove the meat from the casings, then cook as per the recipe. OR for some spice, use mexican chorizo or sliced spanish chorizo.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook as per the recipe but keep the parsley / parmesan separate. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, bring back to a good simmer.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**pork mince (ground pork)** – freeze it.

**green onions** – will keep in the fridge in a plastic bag for weeks, use for another meal.

**black olives / tomato paste / pasta** – keep them in the pantry.

**baby spinach / kale / cabbage (white)** – either pop them in the freezer or wilt down in a covered pot with a little olive oil. This way they'll keep in the fridge for a few weeks.

**zucchini** – will keep for 2 weeks or longer in a plastic bag in the fridge. To keep it even longer, cook sliced zucchini in a little butter until just soft then store in an airtight container in the fridge.

**parsley** – will keep in the fridge wrapped in a plastic bag for a few weeks. Can be frozen or make a parsley oil by packing the leaves into a clean jar and covering with extra virgin olive oil.

**parmesan** – wrap in waxed paper or baking paper and store in the fridge in a sealed paper bag or airtight container. Will keep for months. Can be frozen if you're going away.



*easy japanese burgers*

# EASY JAPANESE BURGERS

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 30 minutes

500g (1lb) minced  
(ground) beef

2-4 green onions,  
finely sliced

2 teaspoons miso paste + 2  
teaspoons for the mayo

1/2 cup [mayonnaise](#)

large bag baby spinach  
or other greens

handful sunflower  
or sesame seeds

1. Combine beef, green onions and 2 teaspoons miso paste in a large bowl. Divide mixture into 4 and form each into a burger patty about 1/2 inch (1 1/2cm) thick. Rub each patty generously with oil.
2. Heat a BBQ or frying pan on a high heat. When the pan is very hot, sear burgers for 4-5 minutes on each side or well browned and cooked to your liking.
3. Meanwhile, combine extra 2 teaspoons miso with the mayonnaise. Divide miso mayo between two plates smearing in an off-center circle.
4. When the burgers are cooked place two burgers on each plate on top of your pool of mayo.
5. Return the pan to the heat and cook spinach or greens, stirring often until just wilted. Divide cooked greens between two plates. Top with seeds and enjoy!

My Irishman went through a Japanese phase for his Sunday night cooking experiments a few months ago. Which meant an influx of Japanese cookbooks and ingredients into the house. Not that I'm complaining..

The idea for these unusual bunless burgers actually came from one of his Japanese books.

I'm always on the lookout for new ways to use minced (ground) meat because it's one of my favourite cuts. I mean it's economical, readily available and always tender. What's not to love!

If you can't find miso paste, check out the variations for other ideas.

Oh and... If you're a mayo addict like me, the miso mayo is to die for. Use it anywhere you'd normally use mayonnaise for an extra depth of flavour. It's especially great with eggs and fish.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**no miso paste** – season the burgers with 1 tablespoon soy sauce instead. And make a garlicky mayo by adding 1 small finely crushed clove of garlic to the mayo in place of the miso. If you are buying miso you can order online or look in the Asian section of your supermarket. I like 'shiro' miso which is also called white miso because it has the mildest flavour. Feel free to use any miso, just adjust quantities to taste (you may not need as much).

**vegetarian** – use these flavours in my [chickpea burgers](#) or [zucchini burgers](#).

**hot** – add a little chilli powder or dried chilli flakes to the mayo.

[SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>](#)

video

--- DINNER - CARNIVORE ---

# EASY JAPANESE BURGERS

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – serve on burger buns or with steamed rice.

**more substantial (low carb)** – serve with more substantial low carb veggies like my [Beautiful Boiled Broccoli](#) or some steamed green beans or [cabbage](#). Or use more mayo or add some avocado chunks to the cooked greens. A handful of roast almonds, macadamias or hazelnuts will work too.

**different meat** – use any ground (minced meat) such as lamb, pork, chicken or turkey. Or use a tender cut of meat like steak, lamb cutlets, pork cutlets, chicken thigh or breast fillets or even sausages and just serve the green onions scattered on top. White fish or salmon would also work.

**different greens / veg** – any fresh or frozen greens will work. Baby spinach is easy because it wilts down so quickly. But tossing a pack of defrosted frozen spinach will do the trick. Green beans or snow peas can be sauted in the pan instead. Or serve with a green salad or my [Beautiful Boiled Broccoli](#).

**flavour explosion** – serve sprinkled with the Japanese spice blend [schicimi togarashi](#)

--- DINNER - CARNIVORE ---

## PREPARE AHEAD?

You can! Just cook as per the recipe but keep the mayo, spinach and sunflower seeds separately. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or can be frozen. Don't freeze the mayo because it will split. To serve, warm burgers in a pan on a medium heat. Then warm spinach / greens in the same pan and serve as per the recipe.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**minced (ground) beef** – freeze it.

**green onions** – skip them or keep in the fridge in a plastic bag for weeks.

**miso paste** – unopened paste can be kept in the pantry, once open needs to be refrigerated.

**mayonnaise** – unopened in pantry or once opened will keep for months in the fridge.

**baby spinach** – best to use for another meal. Can be frozen but will wilt when defrosted.

**sunflower or sesame seeds** – keep them in the pantry.



*minute steaks with quick chive butter*

# MINUTE STEAKS WITH QUICK CHIVE BUTTER

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 15 minutes

80g (3oz) salted butter,  
at room temp

2 tablespoons chives,  
finely chopped

1 tablespoon parsley,  
finely chopped

2 teaspoons lemon juice +  
extra lemon to serve

2 steaks

1 large bag baby spinach  
or green salad, to serve

**1.** Mash together butter, chives, parsley and 2 teaspoons lemon juice in a small bowl. Allow to stand while you cook the steaks.

**2.** Heat a frying pan or BBQ on a high heat. Slice each steak into 3 pieces, then using your fist, a meat mallet, a small saucepan or a metal potato ricer, bash each piece of steak out so it is less than 1cm (1/3in) thick. Rub each piece of steak with oil on both sides and season with salt.

**3.** Sear steaks in your super hot pan for 1 minute each side or until browned and still a little pink in the middle. Divide steaks between two warm plates.

**4.** If using baby spinach, return the pan to a medium heat and add the spinach. Cook, stirring for a minute or until the leaves are about 1/2 wilted but some still whole. Remove from heat and add a squeeze of lemon. Divide cooked spinach between two plates.

**5.** If using salad, skip the wilting step and serve the fresh leaves on your plates.

**6.** Smear chive butter over the hot steaks and enjoy asap!

I've become a little obsessed with flavoured butters in the last few months. Ever since I realized that I can just quickly make them without having to do it in advance and refrigerate it before using - like so many recipes tell you to do.

The only thing is you need to have your butter at room temperature so will need to think ahead a little (unless you're happy giving cold butter a quick zap in the microwave).

I've also been loving chives at the moment as a way to get those lovely complex onion-y flavours without actually using non-FODMAP friendly onions.

These days I pretty much only cook minute steaks. It is a little bit of a hassle to bash out the steaks before cooking but then the steaks cook in (literally) a minute on each side AND they are super tender and tasty.

It's really worth the hassle.

The chive butter works beautifully with steak but is also amazing on chicken, fish, roast veg, mushrooms or eggplant 'steaks'. Also thinking it would be lovely on burgers.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**vegetarian** – tofu, large flat mushroom 'steaks' or eggplant 'steaks' with the butter.

**dairy-free** – make a herb oil by infusing chives & parsley in 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil.

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – potatoes (roast, steamed or mashed) or crusty bread to soak up the lovely buttery steak juices.

video

--- DINNER - CARNIVORE ---

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# MINUTE STEAKS WITH QUICK CHIVE BUTTER

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**more substantial (low carb)** – add roast nuts like almonds, walnuts or hazelnuts. Use more butter. Or serve with some extra low carb veg like [roast cauliflower](#) or [steamed broccoli](#).

**different protein** – great with chicken breasts or thighs (just bash out as per the steak). The herb butter is also fab with any pan fried fish.

**different herbs** – tarragon, thyme, basil or any combination is good.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Not really. The butter can be made in advance and either refrigerated for up to 2 days or frozen. And then allowed to come to room temperature before you cook. But the steak is really best when hot from the pan. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for up to 2 weeks or can be frozen.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**butter** – will keep in the fridge for weeks.

**chives** – best to use for another meal.

**parsley** – will keep in the fridge wrapped in a plastic bag for a few weeks. Can be frozen or make a parsley oil by packing the leaves into a clean jar and covering with extra virgin olive oil.

**lemon** – whole lemon will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.

**steaks** – freeze them.

**baby spinach or salad leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.



*quick beef tacos*

# QUICK BEEF TACOS

MAKES 2 to 3 serves

TAKES 20 minutes

*500g (1lb) minced  
(ground) beef*

*4 tablespoons tomato paste*

*1 teaspoon smoked paprika*

*6-8 zucchini tortillas,  
cabbage or lettuce leaves*

*sour cream or smashed  
avocado, to serve*

*baby cos lettuce (romaine)  
leaves or coriander (cilantro),  
to serve*

**1.** Heat a large frying pan on a medium high heat. Add a good glug of oil and cook beef, stirring to break it up until well browned.

**2.** Add tomato paste, smoked paprika and 4 tablespoons water. Simmer for a few minutes to bring all the flavours together. Taste and season generously with salt.

**3.** Warm tortillas according to the packet directions. I generally splash them with a little water and warm in a dry frying pan on a medium high heat for a minute or so on each side and then wrap them in foil and a clean tea towel to keep them warm.

**4.** Serve warm tortillas and cooked beef in the middle of the table with the lettuce and sour cream or avocado for everyone to help themselves.

Tacos are such a brilliant quick family meal.

Cook some fish, beans, chicken or meat. Warm up some tortillas. Pile everything in the middle of the table and let everyone choose their own adventure. I also love them for entertaining as well for the same reason.

This is my go-to for Friday night dinner because Fridays are a work day for me and so I don't have much time to cook. Plus my Irishman is usually home late and the boys are tired from a big day at preschool / family daycare.

The photo above uses corn tortillas which aren't low carb. Make sure you check out the variations below for the low carb options.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**more flavour** – soften an onion before adding the beef or add a few cloves of crushed garlic with the beef. And think about trying the smoky and hot option! And serve with lime wedges.

**no smoked paprika** – use ground cumin and 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper instead. Or your favourite taco seasoning spice blend.

**smoky & hot!** – replace paprika with 100g (3.5oz) chipotle chillies in adobo sauce. Or serve with your favourite smoky hot sauce.

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# QUICK BEEF TACOS

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**different tomato** – use a can of tomatoes or 1.5 cups tomato passata and skip the water. You'll need to simmer a little longer to reduce the sauce.

**vegetarian** – replace beef with cooked lentils, chickpeas or beans (I love black beans). Or use roast veggies instead like sweet potato or cauliflower.

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – more tortillas!

**more substantial (low carb)** – use more [zucchini tortillas](#) or live dangerously with avocado AND the sour cream. Roast cashews or peanuts are good too.

**gluten-free** – use corn tortillas or my [zucchini tortillas](#) or cabbage leaves or lettuce leaves.

**Low FODMAP** – use corn tortillas and sour cream instead of the avocado.

**different meat** – fab with pork, chicken, turkey. For fish tacos I like [this recipe](#) better.

--- DINNER - CARNIVORE ---

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook the beef as per the recipe but keep it separate from the tortillas / salad / sour cream / avocado. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, warm beef in a pan with a little oil. Then warm the tortillas and continue as per the recipe.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**minced (ground) beef** – freeze it.

**tomato paste / smoked paprika** – keep them in the pantry.

**tortillas** – freeze them.

**sour cream** – keeps for weeks in the fridge.

**avocado** – use for another meal. Doesn't freeze well.

**baby cos lettuce (romaine) leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.

**coriander** – best to use for another meal. Can be frozen but will wilt when defrosted.

*bloody delicious kale bowls*



# BLOODY DELICIOUS KALE BOWLS

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 30 minutes

4 slices bacon (120g / 4oz)  
1 large bunch kale (500g / 1lb)  
4 eggs  
1 tablespoon soy sauce  
100g (3.5oz) shaved  
Parmesan  
100g (3.5oz) roast  
macadamias or almonds  
or walnuts

**1.** Heat a splash of oil in a large saucepan on a medium high heat. Slice bacon into bite sized strips and cook, stirring occasionally until bacon is browned. Remove from the pot and place on some scrunched paper towel.

**2.** Wash and chop kale into 1cm (1/2in) ribbons. Don't worry about drying it. Place kale in the pot with a splash of water. Pop the lid on and cook for 5-10 minutes. Stir and check a few times. If it starts to burn on the bottom reduce the heat and add a splash more water.

**3.** When the kale is no longer crunchy, reduce heat to low. Add eggs and soy sauce and cook, stirring continuously until the egg is just set so it looks like little cheesy curds.

**4.** Taste and season with more soy if needed but remember you'll be getting lots of salty flavours with the bacon and Parmesan.

**5.** Divide kale and eggs between two bowls. Top with bacon, Parmesan and nuts. Serve warm and remember to tell everyone it's 'bloody delicious' in your best Aussie accent ☐

Don't be alarmed! This recipe doesn't actually contain any blood!

'Bloody' is just Australian slang for very.

So if something is really really delicious it's 'bloody' delicious.

Which is exactly what my Irishman said (in his best Aussie accent) the first time I made these for dinner.

I could eat these every day. One pot. Packed with greens.

Bursting with flavour and texture thanks to the bacon, soy sauce, Parmesan and nuts. Simple dinner at its best!

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**vegetarian** – bacon = smoked almonds, sun dried tomatoes or grilled red peppers.

**keto / ultra low carb** – replace kale with chard (silverbeet) or spinach and use macadamias or brazil nuts as your nuts.

**dairy-free** – [brazil nut parmesan](#) or extra bacon or extra nuts or olives or sun dried tomatoes.

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – cooked pasta, rice or quinoa or pile it all onto some buttered sourdough toast.

**carnivore** – extra bacon.

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

video

--- DINNER - CARNIVORE ---

# BLOODY DELICIOUS KALE BOWLS

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**more substantial (low carb)** – extra bacon, extra eggs, extra cheese, extra nuts or add some chunks of avocado.

**low FODMAP** – replace kale with spinach and use macadamias as your nut.

**hot!** – add a little fresh chopped chilli with the kale or serve with your fave hot sauce.

**different vegetables** – awesome with cabbage (will take a little longer to cook than the kale), spinach, silverbeet (chard), collard greens. These flavours are also amazing with steamed broccoli or roast cauliflower. And you can always add any cooked veg you need using up! If you have time, soften an onion before cooking the kale. Or for freshness finish with some parsley, chives or basil leaves.

**different protein** – cooked chicken, sausages, chickpeas, lentils. Salami, prosciutto or ham (instead of bacon). Feta, goats cheese, ricotta or pecorino instead of the Parmesan.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook as per the recipe but keep the cheese and nuts separately. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, warm in a pan with a little oil being careful not to overcook the eggs. Finish with nuts and Parmesan.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**bacon** – if you buy it in a cryovac pack it keeps for a few weeks, check the best before date. Otherwise you'll need to freeze it.

**kale** – will keep in the fridge in a plastic bag uncooked for at least 2 weeks. Once cooked like this it will keep for a month or so in the fridge. Can be frozen both cooked or raw.

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

**soy sauce / roast macadamias or almonds or walnuts** – keep them in the pantry.

**Parmesan** – wrap in waxed paper or baking paper and store in the fridge in a sealed paper bag or airtight container. Will keep for months. Can be frozen if you're going away.



# SNACKS

# SNACKS

SMOKED PAPRIKA + ROSEMARY ALMONDS

MARINATED OLIVES

BISTRO PÂTÉ

SEED CRACKERS

CASHEW YOGHURT

PARMESAN KALE CHIPS

ROAST CAULIFLOWER 'HUMMUS'

ALMOND 'HUMMUS'

ZUCCHINI TORTILLAS

LOW CARB ALMOND BREAD

VANILLA ROAST FRUIT

--- SNACKS ---



*smoked paprika & rosemary almonds*

# SMOKED PAPRIKA + ROSEMARY ALMONDS

MAKES 500g (1lb)

TAKES 20 minutes

1 egg white

1-2 sprigs rosemary chopped

1/4 teaspoon salt

500g (1lb) raw almonds

1 heaped teaspoon smoked  
paprika

**1.** Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). In a medium bowl, whisk egg white until frothy using a hand whisk or stick blender – no need to get your stand mixer out for this job.

**2.** Add rosemary, salt, almonds and smoked paprika. Toss until well combined. The fat from the nuts will deflate most of the bubbles from the egg white so don't expect it to look meringuey.

**3.** Spread almond mixture on a baking tray (I line mine with baking paper for easier clean up).

**4.** Bake for 10 minutes. Check and stir. If almonds taste toasted, remove from the heat. If you like a darker roast, leave in for another 5 minutes or so.

**5.** Cool. Store in an airtight container in the pantry.

If you've ever roasted nuts and been disappointed that the flavourings stay at the bottom of the bowl (instead of on the nuts), then this is the recipe for you!

The secret is to use egg white to bind the flavourings onto the nuts. It also helps the nuts stick together into crunchy clusters. So delish!

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**no smoked paprika** – use regular paprika.

**different nuts** – almonds, macadamias or brazil nuts would be the best substitutes or use a mixture.

**egg-free** – the egg is the magic which keeps the flavourings stuck to the nuts but if you need to be egg-free, replace the egg white with 2 tablespoons olive oil.

# SMOKED PAPRIKA + ROSEMARY ALMONDS

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Absolutely! Keeps for weeks in an airtight container in the pantry.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**salt / raw almonds / smoked paprika** - keep them in the pantry.

**egg white** - will keep for a few weeks in the fridge.  
Can be frozen.

*marinated olives*



# MARINATED OLIVES

MAKES about 2 cups  
TAKES 15 minutes

2 cups olives approx  
(200g / 7oz)

zest 1/2 lemon

2 cloves garlic, peeled &  
smashed

1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil

1. Place olives, lemon zest, garlic & oil in a small saucepan.

2. Gently warm over a medium heat and cook for about 10 minutes or until everything smells garlicky and olivey.

3. Remove garlic and discard and pop olives and oil in sterilised jars from the dishwasher. Top up with extra oil to cover and seal.

I love buttery green Sicilian olives for this snack, but any good quality olive or even a mixture of them will be delicious.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**orange & fennel** – replace lemon zest with orange zest and replace garlic with a tablespoon of fennel seeds.

**hot** – add in a couple of dried red chillies.

video

--- SNACKS ---

# MARINATED OLIVES

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Absolutely! Keeps in the fridge for weeks. Just allow to come to room temp before serving. Sometimes the olive oil will solidify in the fridge, if this happens, just warm gently in a pan.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**olives** - keep them in the pantry.

**lemon** – whole lemon will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.

**garlic** - in a dark pantry. I keep mine in a brown paper bag to avoid sprouting.

**extra virgin olive oil** - keep it in the pantry.



*Bistro Pâté*

# BISTRO PÂTÉ

MAKES 6 to 8 serves

TAKES 30 minutes plus setting

250g (9oz) butter

2 medium onions,  
peeled & diced

500g (1lb) chicken livers

1-2 tablespoons  
sherry or wine vinegar

**1.** Melt butter in a small saucepan. Transfer a few tablespoons of the butter to a frying pan and cook onion over a low heat for about 8 minutes or until onion is soft but not browned.

**2.** Increase heat to medium, add livers and cook, stirring frequently for 5-6 minutes or until livers are no longer pink in the middle.

**3.** Remove 100g (3.5oz) melted butter from the saucepan and reserve for topping the pâté.

**4.** Place livers and onion in a food processor with the melted butter left in the saucepan. Add sherry vinegar and whizz for a few minutes until pâté is very smooth. Taste and season with salt and a little more vinegar if needed.

**5.** Pass pate mixture through a fine sieve if you like. I generally don't bother. Divide between serving bowls.

**6.** Top with remaining melted butter and refrigerate until butter is set.

Pâté is one of those dishes that seems quite exotic and costly but is in fact super easy and inexpensive to make.

Plus liver is one of the most nutritious foods on the planet. And a nice pate is much more appetizing for most people than a plate of fried liver.

I make a double batch and freeze in small jars. I then add a tablespoon or two to my abundance bowl lunches.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**different livers** – feel free to use other livers such as duck or pig.

**creamy** – replace 50g (2oz) of the butter with heavy or double cream – just add cream to the food processor stage.

**vegetarian** – try a mushroom pate – replace livers with sliced mushrooms – cook until well browned and tender. Skip the sieving unless you're super keen for

**dairy-free** – I really think that pate needs the butter. But you could cook the onions and livers in olive oil and then use about 1/2 cup olive oil to whizz into the pate. And skip the butter to 'seal' the top and make sure you use your pate within a few days.

video

--- SNACKS ---

# BISTRO PÂTÉ

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Will keep in the fridge for up to a week but the flavour is nicer the fresher it is. Freezes really well.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**butter** – in the fridge in the packaging it was purchased in.

**onions** - in a dark pantry.

**chicken livers** - freeze them.

**sherry vinegar** - keep it in the pantry.



*seed crackers*

# SEED CRACKERS

MAKES about 20  
TAKES 80 minutes

*50g (1.75oz) ground  
sunflower seeds*

*50g (1.75oz) ground linseeds  
(flax seeds)*

*1/2 teaspoon fine salt*

*2 tablespoons extra virgin  
olive oil.*

*150g (5.25oz) water*

*50g (1.75oz) whole linseeds  
(flax seeds)*

*100g (3.5oz) sunflower  
seeds whole*

**1.** Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Line a baking tray with baking paper.

**2.** Place ground sunflower seeds, ground linseeds, salt, oil, water, whole linseeds and whole sunflower seeds in a medium bowl. Stir until well mixed. It will look really runny but that's all part of the grand plan!

**3.** Spread the mixture into a rectangular shape on the prepared tray getting it as thin as you can, but not stressing about it too much.

**4.** Bake for 30 minutes then remove from the oven. Being careful of the heat, either cut or break into individual crackers (you choose the size). I like to use a pizza cutter for this job.

**5.** Spread the cookies out on the tray so they're not touching each other. Bake for another 20-30 minutes or until well browned.

**6.** Cool on the tray for a few minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. Taste and if they're not crispy enough, pop back in the oven for 10 minutes or so.

I LOVE these crackers! I can't tell you how wonderful it is to have something low-carb to eat with your favourite dip or cheese. They're also brilliant to have on their own when you're in the mood for a crunchy, salty snack and don't want to reach for the potato crisps.

Even my 3-year-old loves them (although given a choice he'll go for the potato products every time!). They are on the fragile side though, so best not to expose them to rough treatment! I've used unsalted and unroasted seeds.

Both regular and golden linseeds (flax seeds) will work.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**different seeds** – feel free to play around with the whole seeds. Sesame seeds, chia seeds and/or pumpkin seeds (pepitas) all make lovely additions.

**no ground sunflower or linseeds (flaxseeds)** – I grind my own using an electric coffee grinder. You can buy pre-ground. Otherwise replace one or both the ground seeds with almond meal (almond flour). I've tried both and to be honest if I can't be bothered getting the grinder out I just go with the commercially ground almond meal. In the picture above the paler ones were made with almond meal and the others using the ground seeds.

**extra salty** – sprinkle with sea salt flakes before baking.

# SEED CRACKERS

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Best on the day of baking and the first few days after that. Keep in an airtight container in the pantry for a few weeks but will soften with time. If this happens you can give them a new lease on life by popping back in the oven for 10 minutes to crisp up again and cooling on a rack. Keeps for months in the freezer.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

All ingredients can be kept in the pantry.

*cashew yoghurt*



# CASHEW YOGHURT

MAKES 2 cups  
TAKES 30 minutes  
+ a few days to ferment

300g (10oz) cashews  
300g (10oz) boiling water  
Yoghurt starter culture

1. Sterilize enough jars to hold 2 cups (I used 2x1cup) by either putting them through the dishwasher on a hot setting or popping them in the oven. Turning it on to 100C (212F) and letting it stay at temp for a good 15 minutes. Then turning off the oven and allowing to cool back to a temperature thats OK to touch (don't fill super hot jars – they'll crack). Meanwhile, soak cashews in plenty of water for at least 15 minutes.
2. Drain cashews and add to a food processor with the boiling water. Process until as smooth as you can get it (at least 5 minutes). Scrape down the sides as you go.
3. Add the yoghurt starter culture and pulse to combine.
4. Fill your cooled jars with the cashew mixture. Seal with a lid and keep somewhere warm for 2-4 days or until the yoghurt tastes tangy.
5. Keep in the refrigerator. If you get some white mould growing just scoop it off. But other coloured moulds should be discarded.

When I had [my vegan week](#) recently, I played around with both coconut and cashew 'yoghurts'. And while the coconut yoghurt was good, I much preferred the flavour of this cashew number.

I was amazed how the tangy flavour developed during fermentation. Not quite as intense as dairy-based yoghurt but still super delicious!

Feel free to double or halve as you see fit. And make sure you sterilize your jars so you don't end up with mould growing on top.

I used salted roasted cashews but raw unsalted could also be used (and will give a milder flavour).

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**yoghurt starter cultures** – In terms of a starter culture, you can either use a pinch of regular yoghurt starter culture powder, 2 probiotic capsules (remove capsule covers), 2 tablespoons yoghurt from a previous batch (or a commercial yoghurt) or 2 tablespoons whey (liquid from fermenting veggies or the watery liquid that collect in a dairy-based yoghurt).

**different nuts** – I like cashews because they're soft and easy to get a good puree but there's no reason why you can't use any other nuts. Especially if you have a high powered blender or food processor.

**nut-free** – [regular yoghurt](#).

# CASHEW YOGHURT

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Will keep in the fridge for 4 weeks or so (depends on how well you sterilize your jars!) Can be frozen.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

Keep all the ingredients in the pantry.



*parmesan kale chips*

# PARMESAN KALE CHIPS

MAKES 2 serves as a snack  
TAKES 15 minutes

1 tablespoon sherry vinegar  
1 bunch kale (about 8 leaves)  
small handful finely grated  
parmesan

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F).
2. Combine vinegar with 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large bowl. Season.
3. Tear kale into large pieces and toss in the dressing and arrange on a baking tray in a single layer. Scatter over half the parmesan,
4. Bake for 5 minutes then turn and scatter over the remaining parmesan.
5. Bake for another 5-6 minutes or until the chips are crisp and the cheese is melted.
6. Cool on the tray and eat asap. Or store in an airtight container.

I got slightly addicted to a commercial version of these sold at Whole Foods when I was in New York years ago. If only I'd known how easy they were to make myself, I would have saved a fortune.

Feel free to play around with the flavourings. I love this cheesy version but they're also delicious with a hit of dried chilli powder or flakes.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**vegan** – skip the parmesan and season more generously with sea salt flakes.

**salt & vinegar** – replace the sherry vinegar with brown malt vinegar or balsamic and skip the cheese. Serve sprinkled with sea salt flakes.

**chilli chips** – toss in 1/2-1 teaspoon chilli powder or chilli flakes in with the oil. Or try finely chopped fresh chilli.

video

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# PARMESAN KALE CHIPS

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**different greens** – pretty much any robust greens can be used in place of the kale. Silverbeet (chard), cavalo nero, collard greens or even spinach. If the greens have really coarse stems it might be a good idea to chop them to remove. I'm thinking cabbage chips might also be lovely.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Will keep in an airtight container for a few days. Although best on the day they were made.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**sherry vinegar** - keep it in the pantry.

**kale** - will keep for 1-2 weeks in a plastic bag in the fridge. Or for longer if cooked as per the recipe. Can be frozen.

**parmesan** – keeps for longer in a chunk so only grate when you're cooking. I wrap in waxed paper or baking paper and then keep in an airtight container or a sealed ziplock bag. I prefer this over just wrapping in cling wrap because the air in the container allows the cheese to breathe and not sweat but the container / plastic bag prevents from drying out in the dry fridge air. Either way will keep for months.

*roast cauliflower 'hummus'*



# ROAST CAULIFLOWER 'HUMMUS'

MAKES about a cup

TAKES 30 minutes

*1/2 medium cauliflower  
(about 500g / 1lb)*

*2 cloves garlic*

*8 tablespoons tahini*

*8 tablespoons lemon juice*

**1.** Preheat your oven to 250C (480F). Chop cauli into bite sized chunks and spread on a rimmed baking tray.

**2.** Drizzle with a little olive oil and roast for 15-20 minutes or until cauli is tender and browned. A few crispy bits will add to the flavour!

**3.** When the cauli is cooked, transfer to your food processor. Add garlic, tahini and lemon juice. Process for a minute or so, stopping to scrape down the sides.

**4.** When you have a smooth creamy paste, taste and season generously with salt and more lemon if needed.

OMG I am completely obsessed with this Low Carb take on hummus. It's so so good! I love the sweet nuttiness the cauliflower brings.

It can be used anywhere you'd normally serve regular chickpea based hummus. My favourite is to use it as a sauce for BBQ or pan fried meat or chicken.

It's especially delicious with lamb. But it's also brilliant as a healthy snack to serve with raw veg or some [Low Carb crackers](#). Or just eat it off a spoon like I do.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**no tahini** – tahini is a paste made from sesame seeds. Make sure you get hulled tahini because the unhulled stuff tastes really bitter and way too much like a 'health food'. You can order online or try your health food store (my supermarket stocks it). If you can't find it the best substitute is almond butter or cashew butter. But I have been known to use peanut butter in a pinch.

**more saucy** – add some water to make it less thick.

**richer** – sometimes I add a few tablespoons extra virgin olive oil if I want to up my fat intake.

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# ROAST CAULIFLOWER 'HUMMUS'

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**traditional hummus** – replace cauliflower with canned or home cooked chickpeas (you'll only need about 4 tablespoons each of the tahini and lemon). Chickpeas are a bit carby so I try to go easy on them.

**different veg** – broccoli or eggplant (aubergine) are my fave low carb alternatives. Roast root veg are also delicious but you need to be careful with the carbs.

**no food processor** – you can make a chunky 'smash' version by chopping cooked cauliflower as finely as you can be bothered with a knife and then stirring in the other ingredients. Make sure you finely chop the garlic too.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Absolutely! Will keep in the fridge for up to a week. Can be frozen.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**cauli (whole)** – will keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for weeks. To keep for longer, chop into florets and pop in the freezer. If you have time, grating the cauli before freezing will make life easier so you can just defrost and serve.

**garlic** - in a dark pantry. I keep mine in a brown paper bag to avoid sprouting.

**tahini** - I keep mine in the pantry but will keep longer in the fridge if open.

**lemon** – whole lemon will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.



*almond 'hummus'*

# ALMOND 'HUMMUS'

MAKES about a cup

TAKES 5 minutes

100g (3.5oz) almond meal  
and water

1 clove garlic, peeled and  
smashed (optional)

2 tablespoons lemon juice

2 tablespoons extra virgin  
olive oil

**1.** Place almond meal, 100g (3.5oz) water, garlic (if using) and 2 tablespoons lemon juice in a tall jar or jug.

**2.** Using your stick blender, puree until creamy and well combined.

**3.** Stir in extra virgin olive oil and a pinch of salt. Taste and season with more salt or lemon juice as needed.

One thing I really miss since going low carb is traditional chickpea based hummus.

I've created some delicious low carb alternatives like this [broccoli hummus](#) and this delicious [roast cauliflower hummus](#).

But they take a little longer to cook than opening a can of chickpeas.

So one day when I was craving hummus and didn't have much time, I had the brain flash to try making something with almond meal.

So glad I did!

You can use this creamy sauce anywhere you'd normally use hummus. As a dip, as a sauce, or as a low carb alternative to mashed potato. Super versatile!

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**nut-free** – make [regular hummus](#) instead.

**Low FODMAP** – skip the garlic and use macadamias instead of the almond meal. Puree in a food processor.

**different nuts** – you can use any nut you like. If using whole nuts you'll need to puree in a food processor instead of using your stick blender.

**more hummus vibe** – add 2 tablespoon tahini, a crushed clove of garlic and a splash more water. I made this recently and it took it to a whole new level of deliciousness.

video

--- SNACKS ---

# ALMOND 'HUMMUS'

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Will keep in an airtight container in the fridge for 1-2 weeks or can be frozen.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**almond meal / extra virgin olive oil** – keep them in the pantry.

**garlic** – will keep in the pantry for months. Best if in a dark corner in a brown paper bag.

**lemon** – whole lemon will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.



*zucchini tortillas*

# ZUCCHINI TORTILLAS

MAKES 6 serves  
TAKES 30 minutes

2 medium zucchini  
(300g / 10oz)  
50g (2oz) grated parmesan  
50g (2oz) almond meal  
1 egg

1. Preheat your oven to 200C (400F). Line a large baking tray with baking paper.
2. Grate zucchini coarsely using a box grater or your food processor. Place in a medium bowl with the parmesan, almond meal, egg and a big pinch of salt. Stir until well mixed. Then divide into 6 scoops. I use a 1/3 cup measure to do this.
3. Place each scoop of mixture on your baking tray. Then use your hands to form each pile into a tortilla shape about 10cm (4in) diameter.
4. Bake for 20 minutes or until tortillas are golden brown. Serve warm.

Another fabulous Low Carb / veggie packed alternative inspired by the lovely Luise at [Green Kitchen Stories](#).

Have definitely replaced these [Cream Cheese Tortillas](#) as my go-to when I get a craving for anything Mexican. Even my Irishman loves them!

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**short on time** – use lettuce leaves or cabbage leaves as your tortillas instead.

**egg-free** – I haven't tried it but these should work with 'flax eggs'.

**more substantial (carb lovers)** – use regular tortillas

**Low FODMAP** – replace almond meal with ground sunflower seeds or low FODMAP flour.

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# ZUCCHINI TORTILLAS

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**nut free** – ground sunflower seeds or use flour or soft bread crumbs instead.

**different veg** – should work with any grated veg like carrots, parsnip cauliflower, beets, broccoli. Or a mix of these.

**dairy-free / paleo** – replace parmesan with extra almond meal.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Best when warm straight from the oven. If you want to make ahead you could 'par cook' for 15 minutes then refrigerate for up to 2 weeks. When you're ready to serve cook in the oven for 10 minutes or until golden brown and warm. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or can be frozen.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**zucchini** – will keep for 2 weeks or longer in a plastic bag in the fridge. To keep it even longer, cook sliced zucchini in a little butter until just soft, then store in an airtight container in the fridge.

**parmesan** – keeps for longer in a chunk so only grate when you're cooking. I wrap in waxed paper or baking paper and then keep in an airtight container or a sealed ziplock bag. I prefer this over just wrapping in cling wrap because the air in the container allows the cheese to breathe and not sweat but the container / plastic bag prevents from drying out in the dry fridge air. Either way will keep for months.

**almond meal** – keep in the pantry.

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.



# SWEET TREATS



# SWEET TREATS

RASPBERRY 'GELATO'

COCONUT 'SORBET'

SALTED CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTER CHEESECAKE

BLUEBERRY YOGHURT CAKE

STRAWBERRY ALMOND SHORT CAKES

CHRISTMAS MORNING MUFFINS

QUICK STRAWBERRY MUFFINS

VANILLA ROAST PEARS

STRAWBERRY RIPPLE CHEESECAKE

SUNNY ROAST PEACHES

CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTER FUDGE

PURE CHOCOLATE MOUSSE

EASY LITTLE CHOCOLATE PUDDINGS

NO BAKE CHOCOLATE PECAN 'TART'

CREAMY BERRY MOUSSE

CRUNCHY ALMOND CRUMBLES

VANILLA PANNA COTTA

COCONUT PANCAKES

LAST-MINUTE PEANUT BUTTER MOUSSE

*raspberry gelato*



# RASPBERRY GELATO

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 10 minutes

*150g (5oz) frozen raspberries*  
*1/4 cup whipping cream*

- 1.** Place all ingredients in a food processor and whizz until you have a smooth creamy mixture that looks like soft gelato. If your raspberries are frozen solid, it may take a while for them to defrost enough to puree. You will have a grainy mixture to begin with but keep going and soon it will all be gelato heaven.
- 2.** Either enjoy straight away or return to the freezer for up to a few hours until you're ready to eat.

I love this dessert and always keep frozen raspberries on hand.

The cream is really optional. It adds a lovely creaminess but if you're after a fresher more sorbet vibe, by all means leave it out.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**different fruit** – pretty much any frozen fruit can be used here. Berries are my favourite. For things with stones like mangoes, peaches, nectarines or plums, it's easier to remove the stones and chop into bite sized chunks before storing in the freezer. Tropical fruit like mango, pineapple and banana are also super delicious but I tend to avoid them because of their naturally high sugar content (although my boys love them!)

**fresh fruit** – feel free to pre-freeze your own fresh fruit if you prefer.

**sweeter** – if your fruit is on the tarter side, add a little stevia or sugar.

# RASPBERRY GELATO

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**dairy-free** – skip the cream or use coconut milk instead. Or try adding a spoon of cashew or almond butter.

**richer** – use double cream or mascarpone.

**ice blocks / ice pops** – put the pureed mixture into an ice block / ice pop mould (I love the ones from Ikea) and return to the freezer for an hour or two before serving.

**no food processor** – a stick blender or regular blender can work instead.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Best within about 4 hours of making. Longer storage will result in ice crystals and a hard frozen texture. Still edible for months in the freezer.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**frozen raspberries** – keep frozen.

**cream** – best to use for another meal. Can be frozen.



*coconut sorbet*

# COCONUT 'SORBET'

MAKES 2 to 4 serves as a side  
TAKES 10 minutes  
+ 6 hours freezing

1 can coconut cream,  
unsweetened (400mL / 14oz)

1 ripe pear (optional)

1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
(optional)

stevia, to taste (optional)

1. Place coconut cream in a ziplock bag. Place in the freezer until frozen, about 6 hours.
2. Chop pear (if using) into chunks and place in another ziplock bag or a container. Freeze.
3. About 15 minutes before you're ready to serve the sorbet, remove the coconut cream and fruit from the freezer.
4. Bash the coconut cream in the bag to break into chunks (or throw it on the floor). Remove coconut chunks from the bag and place in a food processor along with the frozen fruit.
5. Whizz with the vanilla (if using) until you have a soft-serve sorbet consistency. This will take a while, so be patient. If it's not coming together add a few tablespoons water to hasten the process.
6. Taste and add your preferred sweetener (if needed). When you're happy, serve asap or place in a container and return to the freezer for up to 4 hours. Longer than this and your sorbet will start to turn icy but will still be edible.

For the dairy-free and vegan options in my recipes, I usually include coconut sorbet as an alternative to vanilla ice cream or cream to serve with desserts.

While there are some great commercial coconut sorbets out there, they can be hard to find. So here's my recipe.

Make sure your coconut cream is unsweetened or you'll end up with a super-sweet mush that won't freeze properly.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**coconut milk** – is fine, will just be less rich than coconut cream.

**no fruit / low carb sorbet** – you could skip the fruit for a lower carb sorbet but you'll need to add some stevia or other sweetener.

**other fruit** – feel free to play around! Berries or pitted cherries are awesome.

**boozy** – add a splash of vodka or white rum.

**no coconut** – use whipping cream or your favourite plant based milk (these will be lighter and more icy in texture).

**short on time** – serve banana / pear with sweetened whipped coconut cream.

video

# COCONUT 'SORBET'

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Best within about 4 hours of making. Longer storage will result in ice crystals and a hard frozen texture. Still edible for months in the freezer.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**coconut cream / vanilla extract / stevia, rice malt syrup or maple syrup** – keep them in pantry.

**pear** – cut and freeze in a plastic bag.



*salted chocolate chip cookies*

# SALTED CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

MAKES 6 serves  
TAKES 20 minutes

200g (7oz) smooth  
peanut butter

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1/8 teaspoon pure stevia  
powder\*

1 egg

50g (2oz) dark chocolate  
sea salt flakes

1. Preheat oven to 180C (350F). Line a cookie tray with baking paper
2. In a medium bowl, stir together peanut butter, stevia and baking powder.
3. Stir in egg to form a wet dough. Break chocolate into chunks and add to the dough.
4. Use a tablespoon to form 6 balls and place on your prepared tray. Press on cookies to flatten slightly until they're about 1cm (1/3in) high. Sprinkle with a little sea salt. I like to manually redistribute the chocolate chunks to make sure each cookie has enough.
5. Bake for 12-15 minutes or until cookies are golden at the edges. Cool on the tray.

Apart from potatoes, two of my Irishman's favourite foods are chocolate and peanut butter. Needless to say, these cookies are one of his all time favourite sweet treats to have with a hot cup of tea.

If you're not worried about your blood sugar, they're even better used to make ice cream sandwiches, like in the photo above. But I'm trying to forget this little piece of wisdom. I should also note they're super rich and one of the few baked goods that I find tastes better if you allow them to cool to room temperature before eating.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**\* important note about stevia!** – there are 4 types of stevia:

1. Pure Stevia Powder – looks like icing (powdered / confectioners) sugar. It's expensive but a tiny amount goes a long long way. We're talking 1/4 teaspoon to sweeten a whole cake. This is what I use.
2. Granular Stevia (like Natvia or Truvia) – looks like regular white sugar. It's a blend of erythritol and stevia. Usually 1/4 teaspoon = 4-6 tablespoons granular stevia.
3. Fresh or Dried Stevia Leaves – from a real stevia plant! I haven't baked with them but they will behave similar to the pure stevia powder. Just add to taste.
4. Liquid stevia – I haven't used this. If you want to use it just add to taste.

# SALTED CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**sugar-lovers / budget / no stevia** – use my original recipe to make 12 cookies – 250g (9oz) smooth peanut butter, 200g (7oz) brown sugar, 1 teaspoon baking powder, 1 egg, 100g (3.5oz) chocolate. Bake 180C (350F) for 10 minutes (all the extra sugar binds up moisture so less baking is needed. It also provides bulk so you get more cookies!).

**peanut-free** – replace peanut butter with almond, cashew, brazil nut or other nut butter.

**nut-free** – sunflower seed butter 'sunbutter' instead of the peanut butter.

**crunchy** – use crunchy peanut butter if you prefer.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Best on the day of baking. Can be kept for a few days in an airtight container in the fridge. Still edible for a few weeks in the fridge but will soften over time. Keeps for months in the freezer.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**peanut butter, stevia, baking powder, chocolate** – pantry.

**egg** – will keep in the fridge for about a month. Or use for another meal.

*chocolate peanut butter cheesecake*



# CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTER CHEESECAKE

MAKES 6 to 8 serves

TAKES 60 minutes

50g (2oz) butter

100g (3.5oz) dark chocolate,  
chopped

250g (9oz) roasted peanuts

500g (1lb) Philadelphia cream  
cheese, at room temp

1/8 teaspoon pure stevia  
powder\*

4 eggs

100g (3.5oz) peanut butter

**1.** Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Grease and line a 20cm (8in) round cake tin. Place two layers of foil over the outside base of the tin to stop water seeping in when you bake in the water bath.

**2.** Melt butter in a small saucepan. Remove from the heat and add 30g (1oz) of the chocolate NOT ALL. Stand for a few minutes for the chocolate to melt.

**3.** Meanwhile whizz peanuts in the food processor until you have a mix of fine powder and chunky nuts.

**4.** Stir chocolate butter mixture and add to the peanuts. Pulse until just combined. (If the chocolate hasn't melted put saucepan back on a low heat. Stir until it melts before adding to the peanuts.) Taste and if it needs more sweetness add a pinch of pure stevia powder or a little sugar.

**5.** Spread nut mixture over the base of your tin and pop it in the freezer to set while you make the filling.

**6.** Clean and dry your food processor bowl. Whizz cream cheese and stevia until smooth. Add eggs one at a time scraping down the sides between each.

OMG peanut butter, chocolate and cheesecake are some of my favourite, favourite things. As soon as I saw a recipe for this in Nigel Slater's latest book, I knew I had to make a low carb / gluten-free version. Luckily it was pretty easy to adapt. But I did repeat it on many an occasion just to make sure I had it 100% right - nothing to do with wanting to eat it again. Nothing.

**7.** To melt remaining chocolate, bring about 2cm water to the boil in the saucepan you used to melt the butter (no need to clean it). Place chocolate in a small bowl and pop it on top of the saucepan. Make sure the bottom of the bowl isn't touching the water and is just being warmed by the steam. Remove from the heat and stand to allow chocolate to melt gently.

**8.** Pour filling over the chilled base.

**9.** Using a teaspoon, top the filling with dots of peanut butter.

**10.** Drizzle over the melted chocolate.

**11.** Place tin in a large baking tray. Make sure your foil is going to protect the cheesecake from the water and pop the tin in the tray. Fill the baking tray with hot water from the tap - about 2cm (1in) up the sides of the tin - don't come up past the foil.

**12.** Bake for 25-30 minutes or until cheesecake is starting to puff up a little and feels firm in the middle, remembering it will firm even more as it chills.

**13.** Remove from the water bath and cool for about 30 minutes before chilling in the fridge for at least 3 hours but preferably overnight.

# CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTER CHEESECAKE

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**important note about stevia!** – there are 4 types of stevia:

1. Pure Stevia Powder – looks like icing (powdered / confectioners) sugar. It's expensive but a tiny amount goes a long long way. We're talking 1/4 teaspoon to sweeten a whole cake. This is what I use.
2. Granular Stevia (like Natvia or Truvia) – looks like regular white sugar. It's a blend of erythritol and stevia. Usually 1/8 teaspoon powdered stevia = 2-3 tablespoons granular stevia.
3. Fresh or Dried Stevia Leaves – from a real stevia plant! I haven't baked with them but they will behave similar to the pure stevia powder. Just add to taste.
4. Liquid stevia. I haven't used this. But add to taste.

**granular stevia** – replace pure stevia powder with 2-3 tablespoons granular stevia.

**vanilla** – add a teaspoon vanilla extract or the scraped seeds of a vanilla bean to the filling.

**sugar lovers** – replace stevia with 75g (3oz) caster sugar (superfine).

**paleo (grain, legume & dairy-free)** – serve dark chocolate smeared with peanut butter.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Will keep for a week or so in the fridge if you like. Don't freeze.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**butter** – will keep in the fridge for weeks.

**dark chocolate / roasted peanuts / pure stevia powder / peanut butter** – keep them in the pantry.

**cream cheese** – keeps in the fridge for weeks.

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**no stevia** – use your favourite sweetener – just add to taste as the only function of the stevia is sweetness. If I didn't have diabetes, I'd totally be making it with maple syrup.

**nut-free** – skip the peanut butter and replace peanuts with digestive biscuits, graham cookies or other plain sweet biscuit / cookie.

**no chocolate** – for a pure peanut butter treat just skip the chocolate in the base and drizzle. I'm also thinking smooth peanut butter mixed through the filling by itself would be lovely.



*blueberry yoghurt cake*

# BLUEBERRY YOGHURT CAKE

MAKES 6 to 8 serves

TAKES 50 minutes

250g (9oz) almond meal

50g (2oz) sugar

1.5 teaspoons baking powder

250g (9oz) natural yoghurt

2 eggs

50g coconut oil or other  
neutral flavoured oil, melted

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

2 handfuls blueberries  
(frozen are fine)

**1.** Preheat your oven to 180C (350F) and grease and line a 20cm (8in) cake tin with baking paper.

**2.** Mix almond meal, sugar and baking powder in a medium bowl. Make a hole in the middle and add the yoghurt, eggs, oil and vanilla. Mix to combine but don't stress if you end up with a few lumps.

**3.** Pour the mixture into the prepared tin. Scatter over the blueberries and bake for 40 minutes or until the cake is golden brown and feels springy. And a skewer inserted in the middle comes out clean.

**4.** Cool in the tin before serving.

This is my gluten-free version of the classic French yoghurt cake that I discovered in Pamela Druckerman's brilliant little book 'French Children Don't Throw Food'.

It's one of Fergal's and my go-to cakes for our Sunday Baking Sessions. The yoghurt makes it super moist but also surprisingly light.

This recipe uses minimal sugar but you can easily replace it with stevia if you prefer to keep it properly low carb.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**budget / nut-free** – replace almond meal with plain (all purpose) flour. Reduce baking time to 25-30 minutes.

**choc-hazelnut** – replace half the almond meal with hazelnut meal and replace blueberries with chopped chunks of chocolate.

**different fruit** – feel free to use your imagination! Raspberries are lovely.

**dairy-free** – use coconut yoghurt or coconut cream instead of the yoghurt.

# BLUEBERRY YOGHURT CAKE

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**vegan** – use the dairy-free option and try replacing the eggs with large mashed banana (I haven't tried this so let me know if it works!)

**sugar-free** – replace the sugar with a granular stevia or your favourite sugar substitute.

**short on time / paleo** – serve fresh berries with yoghurt.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Will keep in the fridge for a week or so. Can be frozen.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**almond meal / sugar / baking powder / coconut oil or other neutral flavoured oil / vanilla extract**  
– keep them in the pantry.

**yoghurt** – usually has a shelf life of a month or so. Otherwise, have it for another meal like breakfast! Don't freeze.

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

**blueberries** – keep them in the freezer.



*strawberry almond shortcakes*

# STRAWBERRY ALMOND SHORTCAKES

MAKES 6 serves  
TAKES 30 minutes

200g (7oz) almond meal  
2 tablespoons psyllium husks  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
1/8 teaspoon pure stevia powder\*  
2 eggs  
200g (7oz) sour cream or greek yoghurt  
handful raspberries (optional)  
2 x 250g (9oz) punnets strawberries, to serve  
whipped cream or double cream, to serve

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Line a tray with baking paper.
2. Mix almond meal, psyllium, baking powder and stevia in a medium bowl. Add eggs, and sour cream / yoghurt. Stir until just combined. Add raspberries (if using) and gently stir again. Stand for a few minutes to allow the psyllium to soak up the extra moisture.
3. Divide mixture into 6 and form each into a little shortcake ball. I find using wet hands helps stop it being too messy. Place balls on your prepared tray and flatten slightly.
4. Bake shortcakes for 15-20 minutes or until lovely and golden brown. While the shortcakes are baking remove stems from strawberries and slice. If they aren't as sweet as you'd like, add a tiny pinch of stevia or a little sugar.
5. When the shortcakes are cooked, cool on a rack.
6. To serve slice shortcakes in half, layer strawberries on the bottom half and top generously with cream. Place shortcake lids on top.

I just love the idea of 'shortcakes' - such a cute name. I still remember the first time I grew my own strawberries, I couldn't believe how strong the flavour and aroma were. When I'm lucky enough to have access to amazing strawberries this is my favourite way to serve them. Although it's pretty tasty with mediocre berries too.

The raspberries may seem like a strange addition, but it's an idea I 'swiped' from Melbourne chef Andrew McConnell. They add an extra boost of berry flavour but you can skip them if you don't have any rasps handy.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**\*important note about stevia!** - there are 4 types of stevia:

1. Pure Stevia Powder - looks like icing (powdered / confectioners) sugar. It's expensive but a tiny amount goes a long long way. We're talking 1/2 teaspoon to sweeten a whole cake. This is what I use.
2. Granular Stevia (like Natvia or Truvia) - looks like regular white sugar. It's a blend of erythritol and stevia. Usually 1/8 teaspoon = 2-3 tablespoons granular stevia.
3. Fresh or Dried Stevia Leaves - from a real stevia plant! I haven't baked with them but they will behave similar to the pure stevia powder. Just add to taste.
4. Liquid stevia. I haven't used this. But add to taste.

**granular stevia** - replace pure powder with 2-3 tablespoons granular stevia.

**no psyllium husks** - replace with another fiber source such as ground linseeds (flax seeds), ground chia seeds or oat bran.

# STRAWBERRY ALMOND SHORTCAKES

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**no stevia** – use your favourite sweetener... Honey, maple syrup, xylitol or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level.

**sugar lovers** – use 50g (2oz) sugar instead of the stevia. If you like things on the sweeter side, add more.

**nut-free / budget** – replace almond meal with finely ground sunflower seeds (I use a little coffee grinder) – no need to change the baking time.

**different fruit** – feel free to use your imagination! All berries are great but you could use any seasonal fruit instead. Sunny roast peaches are especially lovely with the raspberries in the cakes.

**dairy-free / paleo** – use coconut yoghurt or coconut cream instead of the sour cream / yoghurt.

**higher fiber** – add more psyllium or oat bran. You could also add ground linseeds (flax seeds) or chia seeds – or whole seeds for that matter.

**smaller** – form the shortcakes into 8 for a more dainty serve. Expect the baking time to be a few minutes less.

--- SWEET TREATS ---

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Best when freshly made but will keep for up to a week in the fridge if you like. Add the cream and strawberries just before serving.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**almond meal / psyllium husks / baking powder / pure stevia powder** - keep them in the pantry.

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

**sour cream** – keeps for weeks in the fridge.

**yoghurt** – usually has a shelf life of a month or so. Otherwise, have it for another meal like breakfast! Don't freeze.

**berries** - freeze them

**cream** – unopened cartons will generally keep in the fridge for a few weeks. If you need to store for longer, just pop in the freezer in a sealed container. Or freeze in icecube trays so you can easily defrost just what you need.

*christmas morning muffins*



# CHRISTMAS MORNING MUFFINS

MAKES 8 serves  
TAKES 40 minutes

125g (4.5oz) unsalted butter

250g (9oz) almond meal

1/4 teaspoon pure stevia  
powder\*

2 teaspoons baking powder

250g (9oz) natural yoghurt  
(Greek style)

2 eggs

1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
(optional)

125g (4oz) punnet  
raspberries (frozen are fine)

2 handfuls dark chocolate  
chunks

--- SWEET TREATS ---

**1.** Preheat oven to 180C (350F). Line 8 holes of a 1/2 cup muffin tray with squares of baking paper or muffin papers.

**2.** Melt butter in a small saucepan. Place almond meal, stevia, baking powder, yoghurt, eggs, melted butter and vanilla (if using) in a medium bowl. Mix with a spoon until just combined.

**3.** Spoon mixture into your prepared muffin tray. Top each muffin with your raspberries and chocolate chunks.

**4.** Bake for 20-25 minutes or until the muffins are golden brown and feel springy when touched.

**5.** Cool in the tin, then serve.

These are my all-time favourite muffins. They're so delicious that we've developed a Christmas tradition around them. Every Christmas morning I bake a batch of these to have for an indulgent breakkie after a hard morning of present opening.

Of course you don't need to wait until December 25th to make them, just change the name to Raspberry & Dark Chocolate Muffins and you're good to go any day of the year.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**\*important note about stevia!** – there are 4 types of stevia:

**1.** Pure Stevia Powder – looks like icing (powdered / confectioners) sugar. It's expensive but a tiny amount goes a long long way. We're talking 1/2 teaspoon to sweeten a whole cake. This is what I use.

**2.** Granular Stevia (like Natvia or Truvia) – looks like regular white sugar. It's a blend of erythritol and stevia. Usually 1/8 teaspoon = 2-3 tablespoons granular stevia.

**3.** Fresh or Dried Stevia Leaves – from a real stevia plant! I haven't baked with them but they will behave similar to the pure stevia powder. Just add to taste.

**4.** Liquid stevia. I haven't used this. But add to taste.

**granular stevia** – replace pure powder with 4-6 tablespoons granular stevia.

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# CHRISTMAS MORNING MUFFINS

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**no stevia** – use your favourite sweetener... honey, maple syrup, xylitol or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level.

**sugar lovers** – use 75g (3oz) sugar instead of the stevia. If you like things on the sweeter side add more.

**dairy-free** – coconut oil and coconut yoghurt (or use your favourite dairy-free milk).

**nut-free** – replace almond meal with ground sunflower seeds or plain all-purpose flour (reduce cooking time if using flour).

**different flavourings** – skip the chocolate or raspberries for a plain muffin. Or play around with different fruit options. Other berries are all good but feel free to use your imagination!

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Best when freshly made but will keep in the fridge for up to a week and can be frozen.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**butter / almond meal / pure stevia powder / baking powder / vanilla extract / dark chocolate chunks** - keep them in the pantry.

**yoghurt** – usually has a shelf life of a month or so. Otherwise, have it for another meal like breakfast! Don't freeze.

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

**raspberries** - freeze them or use for another meal.



*quick strawberry muffins*

# QUICK STRAWBERRY MUFFINS

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 10 minutes

6 tablespoons almond meal  
(40g / 1.5oz)  
3 tablespoons yoghurt  
(60g / 2oz)  
2 tablespoons oil (30g / 1oz)  
1 egg  
1 tablespoon granular stevia\*  
(15g / 0.5oz)  
1/4 teaspoon baking powder  
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract  
(optional)  
4 strawberries, dehulled and  
chopped

1. Preheat oven to 180C (350F). Line 2 holes of a 1/2 cup muffin tray with papers. Or grease two small mugs, ramekins or tea cups.
2. Combine almond meal, yoghurt, oil, egg, stevia, baking powder and vanilla (if using) in a small bowl.
3. Spoon the mixture into your 2 prepared holes. Top with strawberry chunks.
4. Bake for 20 – 25 minutes or until the muffins are golden brown and feel springy when touched.
5. Cool in the tin.

Normally I prefer to weigh my ingredients when baking because it's quick and so much more reliable. But occasionally its nice to just use a spoon to measure everything.

Its also nice, occasionally, to make a small batch so you don't have 'oh-so-tempting' leftovers lying around! This recipe is perfect for those days because it makes two dainty serves. They're really delicious though so I've included the quantities for a larger batch in the variations.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**\*important note about stevia!** – there are 4 types of stevia:

1. Pure Stevia Powder – looks like icing (powdered / confectioners) sugar. It's expensive but a tiny amount goes a long long way. We're talking 1/2 teaspoon to sweeten a whole cake. This is what I use.
2. Granular Stevia (like Natvia or Truvia) – looks like regular white sugar. It's a blend of erythritol and stevia. Usually 1/8 teaspoon = 2-3 tablespoons granular stevia.
3. Fresh or Dried Stevia Leaves – from a real stevia plant! I haven't baked with them but they will behave similar to the pure stevia powder. Just add to taste.
4. Liquid stevia. I haven't used this. But add to taste.

**extra strawberry!** – double the strawberries and stir some in with the mixture before filling the muffin pans.

**no stevia** – use your favourite sweetener... Honey, maple syrup, xylitol or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level.

# QUICK STRAWBERRY MUFFINS

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**pure stevia powder** – for the small batch of these muffins, I use granular stevia because it's hard to measure a really small amount of the pure powder. But you could just add a tiny pinch to taste if you don't have granular stevia. Or make the bigger batch below.

**sugar lovers** – use 2 tablespoons sugar instead of the stevia. If you like things on the sweeter side add more.

**bigger batch** – to make 8 muffins you'll need 160g (5.5oz) almond meal, 240g (8.5oz) yoghurt, 120g (4oz) oil, 4 eggs, 60g (2oz) granular stevia\* OR 1/4 teaspoon pure stevia powder (see note above), 1 teaspoon baking powder, 2 teaspoons vanilla extract, 16 strawberries. Baking time will be the same.

**dairy-free** – coconut yoghurt or coconut cream instead of the yoghurt (or use your favourite dairy-free milk).

**nut-free** – replace almond meal with ground sunflower seeds or plain all-purpose flour.

**different flavourings** – chunks of chocolate are a nice addition as are blueberries or raspberries or other ripe seasonal fruit.

**no yoghurt** – If I don't have yoghurt, I use whipping cream instead.

--- SWEET TREATS ---

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Best when freshly made but will keep in the fridge for up to a week and can be frozen.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**almond meal / oil / stevia / baking powder / vanilla extract** – keep them in the pantry.

**yoghurt** – usually has a shelf life of a month or so. Otherwise, have it for another meal like breakfast! Don't freeze.

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for a month or so. Or use for another meal.

**strawberries** – use for another meal or freeze them.



*vanilla roast pears*

# VANILLA ROAST PEARS

MAKES 24 pieces  
TAKES 70 minutes

6-8 pears

2-4 hunks of butter

1 vanilla bean, finely sliced  
or 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Quarter pears, lengthwise. Remove any seeds.
2. Layer pears in a baking dish. Top with butter and vanilla. Cover with foil and bake for 30 minutes.
3. Remove foil and stir. Return to the oven uncovered this time and bake for another 20-30 minutes or until the pears are soft and slightly browned. The less ripe your pears are the longer they will take to cook.
4. Serve warm or allow to cool and refrigerate.

Roasting fruit like this is brilliant for enhancing the natural sweetness without adding sugar. Fergal and Finbar just love these pears. I'm constantly amazed how many they can gobble in one sitting.

They make a super lovely dessert for adults too.

The quantities are totally a guideline - double or halve the recipe depending on how much fruit you have.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**different fruit** – apples, peaches, nectarines, apricots, cherries or plums are all brilliant cooked this way.

**no vanilla?** – just skip it or replace with a cinnamon stick.

**dairy-free** – replace butter with coconut oil or just skip it.

**vanilla 'essence'** – this is basically fake vanilla flavour. I prefer to use real vanilla beans or real vanilla extract. But if 'essence' is all you can get, a little will be OK.

video

# VANILLA ROAST PEARS

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**different flavourings** – replace the vanilla with lemon zest, a cinnamon stick, a very small piece of star anise.

**more 'saucy'** – add 1/2 cup dessert wine to the pears before covering with foil.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Absolutely! Will keep for 1-2 weeks in the fridge or can be frozen.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**pears** – will keep for a few weeks (depending on how ripe they are) in a plastic bag in the fridge. For longer storage just pop them in the freezer to defrost and cook later.

**butter** – keeps in the fridge for months.

**vanilla bean** – pantry.



*strawberry ripple cheesecake*

# STRAWBERRY RIPPLE CHEESECAKE

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 10 minutes

250g (9oz) ripe strawberries

250g (9oz) mascarpone

1. Keep 2 good looking strawberries aside. Remove the stems of the remaining strawberries. Place them in a small bowl and smash with a fork or your hands until you have a chunky mess.
2. Stir in the mascarpone until the strawberries are 'rippled' through it.
3. Divide between two little glasses or tea cups. Top with the reserved strawberries. Eat now or refrigerate until you're ready to serve.

video

--- SWEET TREATS ---

It's hard to go past a good cheesecake. These little individual ones are super quick to make and best of all don't leave you with a heap of tempting leftovers.

Mascarpone is a delicious Italian cream cheese. If you can't find it see the 'variations' for alternatives.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**dairy-free / paleo** – replace mascarpone with 'cashew cheese' – soak 200g raw cashews in water for at least 6 hours. Drain and whizz in a food processor with a little water until smooth and creamy. Add more water if too thick. Another alternative here would be to replace mascarpone with chilled coconut cream (discard watery part) or coconut yoghurt.

**different fruit** – lovely with raspberries or blueberries. Or for a lemon version use a commercial lemon curd instead of the berries.

**no mascarpone?** – replace with other soft creamy cheese such as ricotta or even Philadelphia cream cheese.

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# STRAWBERRY RIPPLE CHEESECAKE

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**crunchy** – line the base of your cups with roasted chopped nuts or your fave granola.

**sweeter** – if your strawberries aren't super ripe, add in a little stevia or your choice of sweetener.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! But best within the first 24 hours. Will last in the fridge for up to a week and can be frozen.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**strawberries** – use for another meal or freeze them.

**mascarpone** – unopened tubs usually have a shelf life of a few weeks. Otherwise use for another meal. Can be frozen.



*sunny roast peaches*

# SUNNY ROAST PEACHES

MAKES 4 to 6 serves  
TAKES about an hour

4-6 peaches

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F).
2. Rinse peaches and layer in a baking dish. Sometimes I halve them and remove the stones but usually I just bake them whole.
3. Cover with foil and bake for 50-60 minutes or until the peaches are soft and squishy. The riper your peaches are, the less time they'll take.
4. Serve warm or cold.

I only became a huge fan of peaches a few years ago when I started roasting them. It's almost magical how a little spell in the oven transforms them into super sweet sunny globes of goodness. Now they're one of my favourite summer fruit.

Roasting fruit like this is brilliant for enhancing the natural sweetness without adding sugar. These peaches are delicious on their own as a serve of fruit (especially for small boys). They also make a super lovely dessert for adults served with double cream and a sprinkle of roast nuts for crunch.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**different fruit** – my favourite way to cook all stone fruit (think apricots, nectarines, plums, cherries), apples and pears. I usually quarter apples and pears to remove the seeds. And sometimes I halve apricots or plums and remove the stone, if I can be bothered. I usually pit cherries first because I'm feeding them to little ones (who I must really love because it takes for-ev-er). Smaller fruit will take less time to cook.

**different flavourings** – feel free to add a chopped vanilla bean or some lemon zest.

**more 'saucy'** – leave peaches to cool with a foil cover on.

**short on time** – serve fresh berries or peaches with ice cream or cream.

**paleo (gluten, grain + dairy-free)** – serve peaches with coconut cream or coconut yoghurt.

# SUNNY ROAST PEACHES

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Absolutely! Will keep for 1-2 weeks in the fridge or can be frozen.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**peaches** – best to use for another meal.



*chocolate peanut butter fudge*

# CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTER FUDGE

MAKES 16-20 squares  
TAKES 20 minutes plus setting

200g (7oz) coconut milk  
200g (7oz) dark chocolate,  
70% cocoa solids, chopped  
100g (3.5oz) peanut butter  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
4 tablespoons oat bran,  
optional

1. Bring coconut milk to a simmer in a medium saucepan. Meanwhile, line a loaf pan with foil or baking paper.
2. Remove from the heat and add the chocolate. Stand for a few minutes so the chocolate melts.
3. Stir in the peanut butter, vanilla and oat bran, if using.
4. Transfer fudge mixture to the prepared tin and refrigerate for a few hours, or until set.
5. Chop into small squares.

Fudge isn't something you'd normally associate with healthy treats. But this version is super special, with no added sugar and hidden 'fiber' in the form of oat bran.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**nut-free** – just skip the peanut butter.

**dairy lovers** – replace the coconut milk with regular whipping cream.

**fiber plus** – double the level of oat bran in the recipe.

**budget** – skip the vanilla extract.

**super crunchy** – mix in a handful or roasted peanut halves.

**keto / ultra low carb** – use 85% cocoa solids chocolate + skip oat bran.

**short on time** – serve dark chocolate instead.

video

# CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTER FUDGE

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Essential. You need at least 2-3 hours to get the mixture to set in the fridge.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

All ingredients can be kept in the pantry.

*pure chocolate mousse*



# PURE CHOCOLATE MOUSSE

MAKES 1 serve  
TAKES 20 minutes

50g (2oz) dark chocolate  
(70% cocoa solids minimum)  
40g (1.5oz) water

1. Prepare an ice bath by placing a tray of ice cubes with water to cover them in a large mixing bowl. Place a smaller bowl inside.
2. Weigh 40g (1.5oz) water into a small saucepan. Break chocolate into chunks and add to the water.
3. Place over a low heat and stir for a minute or so until the chocolate is just melted... Be careful not to let it get too hot or the chocolate will split.
4. Transfer melted chocolate to the smaller bowl and whisk until you have a light moussy texture. Transfer to pretty serving glasses.

This pure chocolate mousse, inspired by Heston Blumenthal, is a great dessert to have up your sleeve if you ever need to serve anything egg, gluten or dairy-free.

But not only that, it's absolutely delicious as well. One of those divine things that is both light and rich at the same time. And very satisfying.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**chocolate hazelnut** – serve sprinkled with finely chopped roasted hazelnuts or mix them through the mousse.

**milk chocolate** – don't be tempted to use milk chocolate to make the mousse – there won't be enough cocoa fat to get the mixture to whip, Instead separately whip some cream and fold the two mousses together.

**chocolate swirl** – as per the milk chocolate, but only partially combine the two mousses so you end up with a lovely swirled pattern.

**chocolate snow** – those who prefer a less bitter chocolate might appreciate a dusting of icing (powdered) sugar over the top of their mousse.

video

# PURE CHOCOLATE MOUSSE

## PREPARE AHEAD?

No. Best when freshly made. Leftover can be kept in the fridge but the texture won't be the same.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**chocolate** - keep it in the pantry.

*easy little chocolate puddings*



# EASY LITTLE CHOCOLATE PUDDINGS

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 25 minutes

4 tablespoons (30g / 1oz)  
almond meal

3 tablespoons  
(45g / 1.5oz) milk

2 tablespoons (12g / 0.5)  
cocoa powder

1 tiny pinch pure  
stevia powder\*

1 egg

1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
(optional)

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Grease two 1 cup ramekins or oven-proof tea cups.
2. In a small bowl mix almond meal, milk, cocoa powder, stevia, egg, vanilla (if using) and baking powder until well combined. Taste and add more stevia if needed. Divide mixture between your prepared ramekins / cups.
3. Bake for 10-15 minutes or until the puddings feel springy to touch. I like them slightly under baked so they're squidgy in the middle. Serve warm or at room temp.

I love these for so many reasons. First they're not going to spike your blood sugar. But more importantly they only take a few minutes to stir up AND use ingredients you probably have in your pantry - perfect for those nights when you haven't planned anything for dessert but then feel like something warm and chocolatey. I like them with lashings of double cream but if you're OK with a sugar hit, ice cream is also good.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**\*important note about stevia!** – there are 4 types of stevia:

1. Pure Stevia Powder – looks like icing (powdered / confectioners) sugar. It's expensive but a tiny amount goes a long long way. We're talking a tiny pinch here.
2. Granular Stevia (like Natvia or Truvia) – looks like regular white sugar. It's a blend of erythritol and stevia. You'll need 1-2 tablespoons here.
3. Fresh or Dried Stevia Leaves – from a real stevia plant! I haven't baked with them but they will behave similar to the pure stevia powder. Just add to taste.
4. Liquid stevia. I haven't used this. But add to taste.

**granular stevia** – replace powder with 1-2 tablespoons granular stevia.

**no stevia** – use your favourite sweetener... Honey, maple syrup, xylitol or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level. A few tablespoons should be enough.

**sugar lovers** – use 3 tablespoons white or brown sugar. If you like things on the sweeter side, add more.

# EASY LITTLE CHOCOLATE PUDDINGS

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**dairy-free** – use your favourite non-dairy milk such as almond, hemp or coconut.

**ginger puddings** – replace the cocoa powder with 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger.

**peanut butter** – add a big tablespoon of peanut butter to the center of each pud before baking.

**double chocolate** – add a square of dark chocolate to the middle of each pud before baking.

**hazelnut** – replace almond meal with hazelnut meal.

**nut-free** – replace the almond meal with 2 tablespoons flour and 2 tablespoons melted butter or coconut oil – and they won't be low carb any more.

**more servings** – feel free to double or triple. I've included the weight measurements in case you have more mouths to feed!

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Will keep in the fridge for up to a week or can be frozen. Serve cold or warm in the oven for a few minutes.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**almond meal / cocoa powder / stevia / vanilla extract / baking powder** – keep them in the pantry.

**milk** – will keep in the fridge for a week or so. Use for another meal.

**eggs** – I keep mine in the pantry because we eat a lot of eggs. Will last much longer in the fridge.

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**carb lovers / more substantial** – serve with ice cream!

**keto / ultra low carb** – serve dark chocolate instead of the pudding.



*no-bake chocolate pecan tart*

# NO-BAKE CHOCOLATE PECAN 'TART'

MAKES 6 to 8 serves  
TAKES 20 minutes  
+ 2 hours to set

250g (1 cup) whipping cream  
(35% milk fat)

200g (7oz) dark chocolate

200g (7oz) whole pecans

1. Line a loaf tin with baking paper so the sides are covered.
2. Place cream in a small saucepan and bring to a simmer.
3. Meanwhile, roughly chop the chocolate into chunks and place in a bowl.
4. Pour hot cream over the chocolate and allow to stand for 5 minutes so it melts.
5. Stir until smooth then pour into the prepared pan. Arrange pecans on top, only using the best looking ones.
6. Refrigerate until set – about 2 hours or more.

This isn't really a tart because it doesn't have a crust. But I'm sure there won't be any complaints. You could easily line the pan with some crushed cookies mixed with a little melted butter if you wanted to be more traditional.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**short on time** – chill in the freezer.

**milk or white chocolate** – don't be tempted to substitute in milk or white chocolate because there won't be enough cocoa butter coming from the chocolate to 'set' the tart.

**dairy free** – replace the cream with coconut milk OR other dairy-free milk like soy milk or almond milk. The flavour profile will change, but not necessarily in a bad way.

**different nuts** – feel free to use whatever nuts you have. Might be better to chop some nuts before sprinkling on top.

SEE MORE VARIATIONS >>

# NO-BAKE CHOCOLATE PECAN 'TART'

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**lower carb** – use 90% cocoa solids chocolate. You may or may not want to add a little stevia.

**nut-free** – use shaved toasted coconut or crushed cookies instead of the pecans.

**orange** – add the zest of an orange with the cream.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Absolutely! Best in the first 24 hours but still edible after that, you'll just get some moisture transfer to the pecans so they won't be as crunchy. Can be frozen.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**cream** – freeze it or use for another meal.

**dark chocolate / whole pecans** – keep them in the pantry.

*creamy berry mousse*



# CREAMY BERRY MOUSSE

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 15 minutes

150mL (3/4 cup)  
whipping cream

1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

125g (4.5oz) mixed berries

1. Whip cream until you have soft peaks. Add in vanilla.
2. Mash berries with a fork until you have a rough puree.
3. Fold the berries through the cream, leaving it a little unmixed or 'swirled'.
4. Divide between 2 small glasses and serve immediately or refrigerate until you're ready to eat.

This super quick dessert is great for when you feel like whipping up something sweet after your main course. Feel free to play around with different berries - either frozen or fresh. Or for more ideas see the variations section.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**vegan / dairy-free / paleo** – try berry sorbet instead, Whiz frozen berries in a food processor until you have a lovely 'sorbet' texture. About 300g (10oz) berries will serve 3-4. Or see the coconut idea below. You could also just use coconut yoghurt instead of cream.

**berry & coconut** – chill 2 cans of coconut milk. Remove the lid and whip the solid coconut 'cream' leaving behind the watery liquid. Swirl in berry puree as above.

**stone fruit mousse** – remove the seeds from 4 ripe peaches or 8 apricots and puree the fruit in the food processor. Swirl through cream instead of the berries.

video

# CREAMY BERRY MOUSSE

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**tangy mousse** – whip only half the cream and stir in natural (Greek) yoghurt to make up the remaining half.

**other flavour ideas** – any ripe fruit will work if you mash or puree it first. Chocolate chunks are a nice addition as are chopped roasted nuts for a little crunch.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Absolutely. Will keep in the fridge for a few days. Can be frozen.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**cream** – can be frozen.

**vanilla** – keep it in pantry.

**berries** – freeze really well.



*crunchy almond crumbles*

# CRUNCHY ALMOND CRUMBLES

MAKES 2 serves  
TAKES 45 minutes

2 cups berries or other fruit  
100g (3.5oz) almond meal  
20g (2 tablespoons)  
granular stevia\*  
50g (2oz) grated butter  
50g (2oz) sliced almonds  
(optional)

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Divide your fruit between 2 x 1 cup baking dishes or ramekins – if your fruit isn't bite-sized, chop it first so it will cook in the time it takes the topping to cook.
2. Combine almond meal and stevia in a bowl. Toss in the grated butter and use a fork or your fingers to rub the butter into the almond meal. Or pulse in the food processor.
3. When the mixture looks like lumpy bread crumbs, stir in the sliced almonds (if using). Scatter the mixture to cover the berries, leaving it fairly loose.
4. Bake for 30 minutes or until the crumble topping is golden brown and the fruit is cooked.
5. Serve warm with cream or ice cream or both.

A good crumble is totally up there in my 'favourite dessert' stakes. Especially during the cooler months. I love the contrast between sweet, soft baked fruit, crunchy hot almond topping and cooling cream. So so good! And even better, you can bake them ahead if you're having guests and just warm in the oven before serving. Or pop them in to bake while you're eating your main course (just don't forget to set your timer!).

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**\*important note about stevia!** – there are 4 types of stevia:

1. Pure Stevia Powder – looks like icing (powdered / confectioners) sugar. It's expensive but a tiny amount goes a long long way. We're talking 1/4 teaspoon to sweeten a whole cake. This is what I normally use except for things like this where I only need a tiny amount. For this dessert I use granular stevia.
2. Granular Stevia (like Natvia or Truvia) – looks like regular white sugar. It's a blend of erythritol and stevia. This is what I've used here.
3. Fresh or Dried Stevia Leaves – from a real stevia plant! I haven't baked with them but they will behave similar to the pure stevia powder. Just add to taste.
4. Liquid stevia. I haven't used this. But add to taste.

**pure stevia powder** – replace granular stevia with a pinch of pure powder. I prefer granular here because it's hard to measure such a tiny amount of the pure powder.

# CRUNCHY ALMOND CRUMBLES

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**dairy-free / vegan** – replace butter with coconut oil.

**nut-free** – replace almond meal with plain all-purpose flour or chickpea flour and skip the sliced almonds or use whole sunflower seeds.

**different fruit ideas** – all berries are lovely (fresh or frozen), apple, pear, peaches, cooked rhubarb (add extra stevia to the fruit), pitted cherries.

**extra flavouring** – add a little vanilla or cinnamon to the crumble topping.

**different nuts** – pecans, walnuts or macadamias.

**short on time** – serve fresh fruit with cream instead.

**smaller serves** – the one cup dishes are a very large dessert. Feel free to divide the mixture between 4 x 1/2 cup ramekins or other oven proof dishes. Check after 20 minutes.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Best when hot from the oven. You could prep in advance and leave in the fridge until you're ready to bake. Or even bake ahead of time and pop back into the oven to warm. Leftovers are delicious though, and will keep for 1-2 weeks in the fridge (the crumble topping will lose its crunch over time). Cooked crumbles keep for months in the freezer.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**berries** – freeze them.

**almond meal / granular stevia / sliced almonds**  
– keep them in the pantry.

**butter** – will keep in the fridge for weeks.



*vanilla panna cotta*

# PANNA VANILLA COTTA

MAKES 4 serves

TAKES 2 hours

300mL (1 1/4 cups)  
whipping cream

1 vanilla bean, seeds scraped

2 teaspoons gelatine powder

1/8 teaspoon pure stevia  
powder\*

1 cup milk

**1.** Bring cream, vanilla bean and seeds to a simmer in a small saucepan. Remove from the heat.

**2.** Start stirring the cream vigorously with a whisk and sprinkle gelatine of the top of the cream while you stir. Keep stirring for a minute. Don't worry, there will be little lumps of gelatine. Stand without stirring for 5 minutes for the vanilla flavour to infuse.

**4.** Stir in stevia and cold milk. Strain the mixture to remove the vanilla bean and any gelatine lumps.

**5.** Pour into 4 pretty tea cups. Refrigerate until set. Will take an hour or a bit longer.

I used to have a bit of a phobia about cooking with gelatine. Mostly it was because I've had some disasters in my time - everything from hard and rubbery to completely non-set. When one of my fellow food bloggers posted she was making panna cotta for a lunch of 100 people, I left her a comment saying how brave I thought she was. It also inspired me to include a panna cotta recipe in this book because I love them so much. Don't worry, I've tested and re-tested this one and I promise you'll get that wonderful Goldilocks panna cotta 'wobble'.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**\*important note about stevia!** – there are 4 types of stevia:

**1.** Pure Stevia Powder – looks like icing (powdered / confectioners) sugar. It's expensive but a tiny amount goes a long long way. We're talking 1/2 teaspoon to sweeten a whole cake. This is what I use.

**2.** Granular Stevia (like Natvia or Truvia) – looks like regular white sugar. It's a blend of erythritol and stevia. Usually 1/8 teaspoon = 2-3 tablespoons granular stevia.

**3.** Fresh or Dried Stevia Leaves – from a real stevia plant! I haven't baked with them but they will behave similar to the pure stevia powder. Just add to taste.

**4.** Liquid stevia. I haven't used this. But add to taste.

**granular stevia** – replace pure powder with 2-3 tablespoons granular stevia. Add it at the same time as the gelatine so it dissolves properly.

**no stevia** – use your favourite sweetener... Honey, maple syrup, xylitol or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level. I used to use 60g (2oz) white sugar.

# PANNA VANILLA COTTA

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**no vanilla bean** – use 1-2 teaspoons vanilla powder or vanilla extract instead.

**sour cream** – replace cream with sour cream.

**mascarpone** – replace half the milk with mascarpone or other cream cheese.

**leaf gelatine** – use 1 sheet titanium strength gelatine instead. Soak in cold water until soft, squeeze to remove excess moisture and then stir into the hot cream.

**vegetarian / vegan** – use agar instead of the gelatine (see the pack to figure out how much to use).

**dairy-free** – use coconut cream and your favourite dairy-free milk.

**serving suggestion** – lovely with fresh or cooked fruit.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

A must! Will keep in the fridge for up to a week. Don't freeze.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**cream** – unopened cartons will generally keep in the fridge for a few weeks. If you need to store for longer, just pop in the freezer in a sealed container. Or freeze in icecube trays so you can easily defrost just what you need.

**vanilla bean / gelatine powder / pure stevia powder** - keep them in the pantry.

**milk** - best to use for another meal.



*last-minute peanut butter mousse*

# LAST-MINUTE PEANUT BUTTER MOUSSE

MAKES 1 serve  
TAKES 5 minutes

2 tablespoons double cream

1 tablespoon crunchy  
peanut butter

1 tablespoon golden linseeds  
(flax seeds)

1. Place cream in a tiny cup or ramekin. Spoon on peanut butter and linseeds.

2. Stir and dig in!

You know those nights when you decide after dinner that you really need something else to eat? But you haven't organized anything? Well, my friend, I'm going to share with you my favourite little last-minute indulgence.

Mostly it's something I whip up for myself, but occasionally I share it with company and grandly call it my Peanut Butter Mousse. But it's also great as a post-run snack.

## VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**no double cream?** – use whatever cream you have. Mascarpone is also good or even ricotta.

**dairy-free** – use coconut or cashew cream. Coconut yoghurt will also work. Or try 1 tablespoon coconut oil.

**chocolate!** – drizzle with melted chocolate or just add a small handful of chopped chocolate.

**less fiber** – skip the linseeds or replace with other seeds or nuts. Or just use more peanut butter.

**fruity / sweeter** – add a handful of berries. Or if you don't mind the sugar, add a chopped medjool date. Or drizzle with a little honey or maple syrup.

# LAST-MINUTE PEANUT BUTTER MOUSSE

## MORE VARIATIONS + SUBSTITUTIONS

**different seeds** – use whatever you have. Chia seeds are good but you could also use sunflower seeds or any chopped nut. It's all about the crunch!

**regular linseeds** – I like golden ones because they look prettier but regular are fine!

## PREPARE AHEAD?

No. Best when freshly made.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**cream** – freeze it or use for another meal.

**crunchy peanut butter / linseeds (flax seeds)** – keep them in the pantry.

*part three*  
DAILY LESSONS

# DAY 1. WHY LOW CARB?

Welcome to the very first day of the Love Your Waistline 28 Daily Lessons!

I'm super excited that you've decided to join me on this journey of moving to a healthier way of eating.

One of the most important parts of being successful with making changes is to have a clear and compelling reason why.

Change is hard and when things get tough (which they inevitably will) you need to have a rock solid reason to keep going.

So let's set you up for success with that reason today!

## *What You'll Learn Today:*

- 7 reasons carbs are problematic.
- Why you don't need carbs (but have been told you do).
- How to simplify nutrition.
- How to track your progress.

## WHY LOW CARB?

You're probably already aware of the effect of carbohydrates on your blood sugar levels and the problems that causes. But just to make sure we're on all the same page, let's look at all the reasons carbs can be damaging to our health.

# 6 REASONS CARBS ARE PROBLEMATIC.

## 1. Blood sugar control.

When we eat carbs they are digested and broken down into simple sugars. Mostly glucose and fructose.

These sugars are absorbed into our blood stream.

Our blood sugar levels rise.

To stop the sugar level going too high, insulin is released.

This hormone helps our bodies store the excess sugar in our blood as glycogen (short term energy storage) and fat (longer term energy storage).

So the more carbs you eat, the bigger the influence on your blood sugar.

And the more insulin is released to store the sugar.

As the sugar is stored, our blood sugar levels decrease rapidly, causing a 'crash' which makes you feel hungry.

You eat more carbs and the whole cycle starts again.

Like a roller coaster of highs and lows.

There are differences between the types of carbs and how quickly they are digested.

And how much they spike blood sugar.

The format in which you consume the carbs makes a difference as well.

But at the end of the day, all carbs eventually impact your blood sugar in some way.

## 2. Interfere with your hormones.

Apart from increasing insulin production, carbs also influence our hunger and satiety hormones.

The balance between our hormones is complex and I won't go into the detail here.

You just need to know that Leptin, the hormone which regulates satiety (when you feel full) and Ghrelin (the hunger hormone) are influenced by the amount of insulin in your system.

If these are out of balance, it means your hormones are compelling you to eat more than you actually need.

And you know where that leads.

## 3. Carbs can be addictive.

You're probably familiar with this but the less carbs you eat, the less you crave them.

There are two reasons for this:

i. The blood sugar 'roller coaster' discussed above.

ii. Carbs change the types of bacteria in your gut. The carb-loving bacteria then signal to our bodies that we need more carbs, resulting in cravings.

## 4. Impact your brain health

Glucose in the blood is used as fuel for your brain.

But when blood sugar levels are high for long periods of time, the excess sugar actually causes damage leading to an increased risk of Alzheimer's and dementia.

Which is why these conditions are now being referred to as Type 3 Diabetes.

For more on this, I recommend reading a book called 'Grain Brain' by Dr David Perlmutter. Or [this research paper](#).

## 5. Feed cancer cells.

It's been known since the 1940s that cancer cells can only burn glucose for fuel. So if you have cancer cells in your body as well as high blood sugar, the cancer is able to grow more quickly.

There is [research](#) happening now looking at using an extremely low carb diet (ketogenic) to help treat cancer in conjunction with other treatments and the initial results are promising.

That's not to say that eating low carb will cure you of cancer, but it's certainly a compelling reason for me to keep my blood sugars as low as possible.

## 6. Increases blood pressure.

Insulin increases salt retention which in turn binds water which causes an increase in blood pressure.

## 7. Give you wrinkles!

One of the major causes of ageing and wrinkles in particular is when sugar binds with protein in your body.

I won't go into the details but it's nice to know that following a Low Carb approach is good from a beauty perspective too!

## WHY YOU DON'T NEED CARBS (BUT HAVE BEEN TOLD YOU DO).

We have evolved to run on two different sources fuel – carbs and fat.

Burning carbs for energy is the easiest pathway so whenever we have glucose in our systems, our bodies use that first.

But we're also able to convert fat into things called 'ketone bodies' and use these 'ketones' for fuel.

There are people who follow a purely ketogenic diet where they eat tiny amounts of carbs and get their energy from fat and protein.

And many of them have lost massive amounts of weight doing so.

They are proof that you don't need carbs to survive and even thrive.

There are still nutritionists out there who will tell you you need to eat a certain amount of carbohydrate to meet your energy needs.

But this isn't true as long as you are getting enough fat to burn instead.

Here's the thing. Your body can actually make any glucose it needs from protein via a process called 'gluconeogenesis'.

You literally don't need to eat any carbs to survive.

Personally I find a ketogenic diet too restrictive from a pleasure perspective, which is why I choose a low carb approach.

This gives me a balance between minimizing the side effects of high blood sugar.

And actually being able to enjoy food and life.

## HOW TO SIMPLIFY NUTRITION.

I know nutrition can be super confusing because there is so much conflicting information. Here are the simple guidelines I follow:

### i. Find what works for you

As I mentioned in our [Mindset Training](#), we're all slightly different in our taste preferences, genes and biochemistry.

This is why there isn't an easy one-size-fits-all solution to nutrition. You have to experiment and find what works for YOU.

Only you can determine what is going to work best for you at this stage of your life.

## ii. Reset your nutritional 'compass'

We all know that vegetables are good for us and sugar is bad.

But we've also been lead astray over the years with the low fat message. It makes me angry when I think about all the damage that's been done.

So please, please, please reset your nutritional compass.

Fat, including saturated fat is essential as part of a healthy diet. Carbohydrates, including 'whole grains' are not. Still with me? Good.

For more on this I recommend reading 'The Big Fat Surprise' by Nina Teicholz.

## iii. Your lifestyle over the long term is what counts.

As we covered in the [Mindset Training](#), food moralizing, or labeling specific foods as 'good' or 'bad' is very destructive. Thinking of yourself as 'good' or 'bad' for eating these foods even more unhelpful.

Eating broccoli doesn't make you a 'good' person just as eating a brownie doesn't make you 'bad'.

It's the overall balance over the years that makes the difference between achieving your health goals. Or not.

## TRACKING YOUR PROGRESS.

There's a famous quote from management expert Peter Drucker that in business 'What gets measured gets managed'.

This applies to lifestyle changes as well.

You have to have some way to track your progress otherwise you won't know what's working. Or what's not.

Its super important to choose which metrics you are going to track.

Here are the options:

### i. Weight.

There is strong research that people who weigh themselves every day are more likely to achieve their health goals. And maintain them.

But It's a personal choice. If you can see the result as a 'data point' it's very helpful. BUT if you know you'll find it hard not to obsess, best to choose another method. Weighing once a week is another option.

I have a set of scales connected to the internet which automatically logs my daily measurement and graphs it on an app I access on my phone. This is really helpful because it allows me to see trends rather than get caught up in the daily fluctuations.

### ii. Waist circumference

Measuring your waist is a great way to track progress because the amount of fat you carry around your middle is a much better indicator of health than your overall weight.

If you'd like to use this method measuring once a week or 2 weeks is fine. Just remember to write down your results so you can see the progress. An ['Orbitape' measure](#) makes doing this measurement yourself super easy.

### iii. Fasting blood glucose.

A good metric to track if you have problems with insulin sensitivity but will require you to buy a home blood glucose test kit. And prick your finger every day! Don't worry, I used to be terrified of needles and I'm fine with them now. You can get used to it as well.

#### iv. HbA1C testing

This is a blood test that measures your average blood sugar levels over the last 3 months. It's the best indicator of how your blood sugar control is tracking because it's your overall levels that count rather than day-to-day variation. You'll need to go and see your doctor for this test but I highly recommend it especially if you have insulin resistance.

I personally I weigh myself every morning and I have my HbA1C tested by my doctor every 6 months.

There's no need and track all of these unless you want to. Just choose 1-2 and commit to keeping a record.

Even if things start heading in the wrong direction, it's important to keep the awareness so you are able to correct course and get back on track.

Don't beat yourself up about your progress.

Remember our 'No Guilt' and 'No Shame' philosophy from our [Mindset Training](#).

See yourself as a scientist, using gentle experiments to uncover what works best for you. And these metrics are just your 'experimental data' or guideposts letting you know if you're doing OK or if you need to try something else.

## SUMMARY

We've covered a lot today!

Don't worry the lessons won't all be this long. I promise.

Here's what we've covered:

- + Carbs are problematic because they cause the blood sugar 'roller coaster', interfere with your hunger and satiety hormones, they're addictive, negatively impact brain health, feed cancer cells, increase blood pressure AND give you wrinkles!
- + You don't need carbs because you can make them in your body from protein and because you can burn fat for fuel via ketone bodies.
- + Reset your nutritional compass so fat (including saturated fat) is fine and carbs (including whole grains) should be treated carefully.
- + Ideas to track your progress.

## ACTIVITY

### 1. Don't change your diet yet!

We're going to be taking it slowly to set you up for long term changes that you'll be happy with for the rest of your life.

### 2. Reset your nutrition compass.

Fat, including saturated fat is essential as part of a healthy diet. Carbohydrates, including 'whole grains' are not. Plus you have to find out the right balance for YOU.

### 3. Choose your metrics for tracking progress.

Weight, waist circumference, fasting blood glucose or HbA1C. Choose one.

Then decide how you're going to document – in a notebook or a special note on your phone? Just make it super easy to record your data, so you actually do it.

And take your first 'baseline' measurements.

# DAY 2. WHAT TO EXPECT

I wish I could say that transitioning to eating Low Carb and burning fat for fuel is going to be super easy.

But unfortunately it's not all sunshine and rainbows for everyone.

While I personally didn't experience any difficulties, I know many people who have struggled.

Again, a sign that we're all different!

## *What You'll Learn Today:*

- What to expect as you transition to low carb.
- How to make it as easy as possible.

## WHAT TO EXPECT AS YOU TRANSITION TO LOW CARB

Because we're going to change gradually, these side effects are less likely.

Here are the most common potential problems.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** *If you're on medication for anything especially for diabetes or high blood pressure, it's super important that you talk with your doctor before making changes to your diet. Even gradual changes.*

### **1. Flu-like symptoms**

These include nausea, headaches, brain fog and generally feeling 'blah' (highly scientific term!). If you're experiencing any of these, make sure you're drinking lots of water with a little salt added. A small pinch to each glass of water. Or try drinking bone broth. Also make sure you're getting enough calories by eating enough fat and eating until you feel full rather than trying to 'eat less'.

If that doesn't work, you can always add back more carbs and try an even more gradual decrease.

### **2. Constipation**

If you're used to getting your fiber from whole grains, it can take a while for your gut bacteria to adapt to using fiber from vegetables instead.

The solution is to make sure you're drinking enough water and eating enough vegetables.

If you're worried that your fiber intake isn't high enough, try adding in another fiber source such as 1-2 tablespoons chia seeds, linseeds (flax seeds), psyllium husks or oat bran sprinkled on a salad or with natural yoghurt.

Just go easy, as adding too much fiber too quickly can cause blockages as well.

### **3. Muscle cramps**

Especially in the legs. If this happens again look at your water and salt intake first.

If that's fine, it could be magnesium. Try increasing magnesium rich food (I have a tablespoon of pepitas every day for the magnesium). Or experiment with a slow release magnesium supplement. I've recently started taking Magnesium Citrate which has helped my sleep.

### **4. Heart palpitations**

Having your heart beat slightly faster and harder than normal can happen due to lower blood sugar levels.

The best approach is to combat this is salt and magnesium supplements. Or add back some carbs and try a gradual reduction.

Of course run any concerns you have with your heart by your doctor.

### **5. Other rare side effects**

Can include temporary hair loss, lower tolerance to alcohol, decreased physical performance, increased cholesterol and even gout. If you're experiencing any of these, the [Diet Doctor website](#) is a good resource to help solve these problems.

## HOW TO MAKE THE TRANSITION AS EASY AS POSSIBLE

### **1. Take it slowly!**

One of the reasons I've designed the program with a gradual change process is to make it as pain-free as possible for you. The slower you make changes the less likely your body will be shocked and give you problems.

My personal journey went something like this (over a few years):

- >> Cut out refined carbs (rice / sugar / flour)
- >> Focused on legumes
- >> Reduced legumes / low GI carbs and increased fat.

### **2. Drink plenty of water.**

Most of the potential side effects are a result of dehydration. Carbs help store water so when you switch to low carb you will need to drink more.

### **3. Eat lots of low carb veggies.**

Low carb veggies are awesome because they fill you up, they're rich in minerals and vitamins and they're your best source of the fiber you need to keep your gut bacteria happy.

## SUMMARY

Here's what we've covered:

- + Potential side effects of changing to low carb include flu-like symptoms, constipation, cramps, heart palpitations and other symptoms.
- + The best way to avoid these is to gradually reduce your carb intake, drink plenty of water, increase salt intake and eat lots of low carb vegetables. Plus experiment with magnesium supplements if needed.

## ACTIVITY

### **Don't change your diet yet!**

We're going to be taking it slowly to set you up for long term changes that you'll be happy with for the rest of your life.

# DAY 3. HOW TO CHANGE TO LOW CARB

On Day 1. we covered why low carb is the way forward and the most common side effects on Day 2.

Today we're continuing on our gentle journey where I'll give you an overview of the steps you can take to start making changes.

## *What You'll learn today:*

- 3 Steps to change to low carb.
- An alternative approach.

## HOW TO CHANGE TO LOW CARB

I can't emphasize enough the importance of taking baby steps if you want to make lasting changes. Especially when it comes to changing your food habits.

There is so much research in psychology that supports this approach. The aim is to set yourself up for success by keeping the bar super low. So you only have to take the minimum amount of action to start.

### **STEP 1. Eat more fat and more vegetables.**

We're going to avoid the deprivation that normally goes with a dieting mentality by actually eating more. Not less.

The last thing you want as you transition to low carb is to be constantly hungry.

The idea here is to 'crowd out' the less healthy carbs by filling your plate with delicious, healthy and satisfying fats and veggies.

Apart from avoiding hunger, fat and vegetables really help because they increase the time it takes to digest your food. Which means any carbs you do eat are less likely to spike your blood sugar.

### **STEP 2. Switch to low GI carbs.**

'GI' or 'Glycaemic Index' is a rating of how quickly different foods spike blood sugar. So high GI carbs like white rice and white bread will cause bigger blood sugar spikes more quickly than low GI carbs like lentils or chickpeas.

Depending on where you're starting from, switching from high GI to low GI carbs is a great stepping stone. However you don't have to use this if you don't want to. Some people find it easier to go straight to low carb but the Low GI stepping stone gives you an extra option.

It's also helpful for when you are going to eat carbs, to choose low GI alternatives.

To find out more you can search for [low GI foods on this website](#).

### **STEP 3. Reduce carbs one meal at a time.**

Tomorrow I'm going to give you a heap of different options to change your breakfasts over to low carb. We're starting with breakfast because it has the potential to have the biggest positive impact.

Breakfast tends to be one of the carbiest meals so by switching to a higher protein / fat breakkie you're avoiding that morning blood sugar roller coaster and setting yourself up for a great day.

I'll also have snacking ideas this week because that's another area we tend to reach for the carbs first.

Next week we'll be looking at lunches followed by dinners in week 3 and finally desserts in week 4.

### **AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH**

All that being said about the benefits of baby steps and gradual change, I know for some people going 'all in' is the best approach.

If that's you, I recommend exploring all the recipes now so you can get started now.

For most people, however, gradual change is the most likely to be successful. You know if this is you.

## SUMMARY

The 3 steps to switching to low carb:

1. Eat more fat and more vegetables.
2. Switch to low GI carbs.
3. Reduce carbs one meal at a time.

## ACTIVITY

### **1. Start experimenting with eating more fat and vegetables.**

Take it slowly and set yourself up for success.

For your next meal just try adding an extra vegetable, even if it's just a handful of salad leaves. And if you're up for it, think about how you could add some fat. My favourites are a drizzle of olive oil, home made mayo, nuts, avocado or adding a little butter.

### **2. Decide which is the best approach for you.**

'All in' or 'taking it slow' (recommended).

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** *If you're on medication for anything especially for diabetes or high blood pressure, it's super important that you talk with your doctor before making changes to your diet. Even gradual changes.*

# DAY 4. 25 LOW CARB BREAKFASTS

One of my friends has a saying that ‘variety is the gluttony of life’. And as much as I love trying new foods, she does have a point.

There’s something to be said for keeping your meals simple and on the repetitive side.

Especially at breakfast!

So even though I’m going to share a whole variety of breakfast recipes with you today, I want you to remember my friend and her gluttony quote.

Don’t feel like you need to be having a different breakfast every day.

I certainly don’t.

In fact these days I have the same thing for breakfast, every day.

I’ve been experimenting with intermittent fasting and am loving the results (more to come on this). Basically I have a black coffee instead of breakfast and wait until lunch for my first meal. Not for everyone but it certainly makes life easier!

## *What You’ll learn today:*

- Low carb breakfast recipes + ideas

## NO-COOK / GRAB-AND-GO LOW CARB BREAKFASTS

### **A Handful of Nuts**

Pop them in a ziplock bag for the ultimate convenient breakfast that also provides plenty of good fats, protein and fiber to start your day right. Explore all the different types so you'll never be bored.

### **Greek Yoghurt + Nuts**

Just make sure your yoghurt is full cream, or Greek-style and unsweetened. Flavoured low-fat yoghurts tend to be alarmingly high sugar.

### **Greek Yoghurt + Nut Butter**

This is actually a favourite snack of mine but it works really well as an on-the-run breakfast too. Just stir a tablespoon or two of nut butter into your favourite yoghurt. I often add some linseeds (flax seeds) for extra fiber and crunch.

### **Greek Yoghurt + Berries**

I always have frozen berries and cherries in the house. Although they're lower carb than most fruit, I wouldn't advise this as an every day option. More a special treat.

### **Coconut Yoghurt**

There are some great coconut yoghurts out there now that are fab if you need to be dairy-free.

### **Nut Butter on a Spoon**

My boys love their peanut butter so I always pack a jar (with a spoon) when we're travelling so I know we'll have a tasty breakfast option if we get stuck somewhere. Other nut butters like cashew and almond are also great.

### **Yoghurt & Veggies**

Greek yoghurt works really well with crunchy raw veggies. I also love it with sauerkraut or kimchi. Add nuts if you want a little extra substance.

## SOME-PREP-REQUIRED LOW CARB BREAKFASTS

### **Granola & Yoghurt**

We're not talking just any granola here. Rather than using oats to make this fab crunchy breakfast, I keep it Low Carb (and super delicious) by sticking to nuts and shaved coconut for my granola base. My current fave is this [Nutty Low Carb Granola](#) but I also love this decadent [Chocolatey Coconut Granola](#).

### **Coconut & Almond Cereal**

If you're really missing your cereal and milk, I have a solution for you. This [Coconut & Almond 'Cereal'](#) recipe! If you're really watching your blood sugar levels, consider a non-dairy milk such as coconut milk or almond milk because regular cows milk can cause surprising spikes.

### **Avocado on Toast**

Toast?! Yes toast. I'm talking my [Broccoli Bread](#) toasted and slathered with creamy avocado and lashings of black pepper. It's going to involve some baking but trust me, it's worth it. Not only is it Low Carb, the broccoli bread is giving you an extra serve of vegetables!

### **Almond Breads**

If you really must have something bready in the mornings. These [Little Almond Breads](#) are a staple in our house.

### **Green Smoothies**

To be honest I don't like smoothies because I prefer not to drink my calories (apart from red wine!). But if you're a smoothie fan, keep up the good work. Here's my simple '[template recipe](#)' if you want to try it. Just don't start adding banana or honey or tropical fruit as these will spike your blood glucose at an alarming rate.

### **Overnight Seeds**

Back in my grain eating days, one of my favourite work-day breakfasts was bircher muesli or 'overnight oats'. Basically you just soak rolled oats and grated apple in milk or water overnight and in the morning add some yoghurt and you're good to go. [This low carb recipe](#) is every bit as easy and satisfying.

## A Frittata

These can be made in advance and either eaten cold or at room temp. Or warmed gently. I especially love [this one with walnuts and goats cheese](#) because it feels less eggy and more substantial. And there are greens!

## Feta & Veggie Breakfast Muffins

[These](#) are brilliant if you're looking for a do-ahead brunch, a portable breakfast or lunch box option that's more exciting than sandwiches.

## Zucchini 'Bread'

Banana bread fans don't worry, I've got you covered. All we need to do is make a loaf of this [Zucchini Bread](#). Instant winner!

## SWEET HOT BREAKFAST RECIPES

### Pancakes

I save them for weekend breakfasts. But these Low Carb [Coconut Pancakes](#) really hit the spot when you're in the mood for something sweet without all the carbs.

### Porridge / 'Oatless' Oatmeal

A recent discovery that I can't get enough of! If you're a porridge (oatmeal) fan, you're going to love my [Pecan Porridge](#) which uses ground pecans (or other nuts) instead of oats.

## SAVOURY HOT BREAKFAST RECIPES

### Poached Eggs

I love love love me some [poached eggs](#). I used to be afraid of poaching but after having them so often, I've discovered a few tricks to make them super easy (and a great way to impress guests!).

### Fried Eggs

My Irishman is heavily into his [fried eggs](#), preferably with some bacon or sausages. I always sneak a little bit of salad in there too.

### An Omelette

Omelettes are super versatile. While they make a fabulous easy Low Carb supper, I really love them for a weekend breakfast. My Goats Cheese & Basil Omelette is easily my [favourite at the moment](#).

### Shakshuka

[Shakshuka](#) is a Tunisian dish of baked eggs. I love it because it's super versatile and can be eaten for breakfast, lunch or dinner.

## Cumulus Spiced Eggs

[These eggs](#) are a simplified version of a dish served at one of my favourite Melbourne restaurants, Cumulus Inc. I love having the spinach, eggs and cheese all in one pot.

## Leftover Dinners!

There can be so many 'rules' around what makes a breakfast food. It can be fun to break them. Challenge yourself to enjoy those meatballs or curry first thing in the morning. It might give you an extra reason to leap out of bed in the morning! satisfying.

## SUMMARY

Here's what we've covered:

+ 24 Low Carb Breakfast Recipes + Ideas

## ACTIVITY

### 1. Review the breakfast recipes ideas.

Choose the ones that sound the most appealing to you and add them to your favourites.

### 2. Plan your shopping.

Decide which 2 breakfasts you want to try in the next week. Write a list of ingredients you need and schedule some time to go shopping.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** *If you're on medication for anything especially for diabetes or high blood pressure, it's super important that you talk with your doctor before making changes to your diet. Even gradual changes.*

# DAY 5. READING LABELS

When I was a young food scientist my first job was working in product development for the Kellogg Company.

When we developed a new cereal or snack product, I was in charge of generating the information required for the ingredients list and nutrition information panel.

As you can imagine it was pretty straight forward. The recipe (we called it a 'formulation') gave us the ingredients list. And we would send samples off to the lab to get the nutrition info.

The facts were the facts.

All the claims on the front of the pack, however, were dreamed up by the marketing department. Some of the front-of-pack claims required facts to back them up (like 99% fat free) but many didn't. They were what the legal team called 'puffery' or what you and I would call 'bullsh\*te'.

So today I want to empower you to cut through the marketing spin and get the true information you need to help your food buying decisions.

But before we do, remember the best low carb food choices generally don't come in packages - things like fresh vegetables, eggs, fish and meat. So try and choose these over any packaged food products.

## *What You'll Learn Today:*

- How to read labels.
- The difference between net carbs and total carbs.
- What glycaemic Index (GI) and glycaemic load (GL) are and how they can help you.
- My favourite source of nutrition information.

## HOW TO READ LABELS

### 1. Ignore any claims on the front of the pack.

They were generated by our friends in marketing and may or may not be based on fact.

### 2. Read the ingredient list.

The fewer ingredients the better. And the more ingredients that actually sound like they could be in your pantry, like tomato puree or ground cumin, the better.

If there are lots of numbers or ingredients that sound like chemicals, put the pack back on the shelf.

You also want to look out for sugar (and all its different disguises such as honey, molasses, glucose, fructose, maltose, maltodextrin, sucrose, and my favourite 'evaporated cane juice' (hello sugar!)). It's OK to have small amounts but if these are in the first few ingredients you don't want to go there.

The ingredients are written in order from most to least.

You also want to look out for other high carb ingredients like flours in any form (apart from coconut and almond), grains, starches or gums.

### 3. Look at the nutrition information.

This is different depending on where you live.

In Australia and the EU, nutrition information is given in grams of the nutrient per 100g of the food (g/100g). Sometimes the g/serve are also included. I prefer to ignore g/serve and just look at the g/100g which tells you the percentage.

As a rule of thumb I like products to be 10g carbohydrates / 100g or less.

But if it's something that I'm only going to use a few tablespoons of in a whole meal (like oyster sauce or tomato ketchup) I don't worry if it's higher.

In the US it's a little different because the nutrition facts are given in grams per SERVE. So you need to look and see what the 'arbitrary' serving size the marketing department have chosen for the food.

## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NET CARBS AND TOTAL CARBS.

Another difference between the US and Australia / Europe is the way fiber and carbs are reported.

In Australia and the EU, it's easy because carbs and fiber are written separate. So the carbs are the carbs and the fiber is the fiber. Easy.

In the US it's a little trickier. Fiber is included in the Total Carbs. So to get a real understanding of how carby a food is and the potential impact on your blood glucose, you need to look at the 'Net Carbs'.

Net Carbs = Total Carbs – Fiber.

## WHAT GLYCAEMIC INDEX AND GLYCAEMIC LOAD ARE AND HOW THEY CAN HELP YOU.

As we touched on in Day 3, 'GI' or 'Glycaemic Index' is a rating of how quickly different foods spike blood sugar.

So high GI carbs like white rice and white bread will cause bigger blood sugar spikes more quickly than Low GI carbs like lentils or chickpeas.

Glycaemic Load (GL) gets more confusing but it's a measure which looks at the serving size as well. I don't bother with GL.

The thing to remember is that the carbs are going to end up in your blood stream at some point so I prefer to keep it simple and avoid them to begin with.

However, GI can be helpful for when you are going to eat carbs. Choosing low GI foods is a better option than high GI. But the best option is to reduce your carbs all together.

To find out more you can search for low GI foods on [this website](#).

## MY FAVOURITE SOURCE OF NUTRITION INFORMATION.

When you start eating more real food, there tends to be less packaging which means no nutrition facts!

So how do you know which fruit and veg are the best choices?

Easy!

Just Google the 'ingredient name' and 'nutrition facts'. And again I generally prefer 10g/100g carbs or less but it's not a strict rule.

## SUMMARY

Here's what we've covered:

- + The best low carb food choices generally don't come in packages like fresh vegetables, fish and meat.
- + To read labels, ignore the front of pack and focus on the ingredients list and nutrition facts.
- +  $\text{Net carbs} = \text{Total carbs} - \text{Fiber}$ .
- + Glycaemic Index (GI) and Glycaemic Load (GL) are ratings of how quickly different foods spike blood sugar. Choosing low GI foods is a better option than high GI. But the best option is to reduce your carbs all together.
- + My favourite source of nutrition information is Dr Google.

## ACTIVITY

Start reading ingredients lists and nutrition facts.

Read labels in your pantry to see where you're at. Use this information to decide whether you want to continue to buy these foods.

If something is higher than you like I recommend deciding not to buy it again and eating up what you have. BUT you're welcome to find a 'new home' (in the rubbish bin or compost) for any really high carb items.

Before buying any new packaged food, have a quick look at the ingredients and carb count to make sure it's a good choice.

# DAY 6. THE ART OF SHOPPING

One of the most important skills in being successful with transitioning to a low carb lifestyle is shopping for food.

If you don't have fresh veggies in the house, you can't cook and eat them.

Likewise, if you don't have chips / chocolate / ice cream / popcorn / pasta in the house, you're way less likely to eat them.

Think of shopping wisely as a chance to stack the odds in your favour.

## *What You'll Learn Today:*

- How to master the art of shopping.
- My favourite short-cut low carb ingredients.

## HOW TO MASTER THE ART OF SHOPPING.

### **1. Find a time that works for you.**

Making shopping a regular part of your schedule is the key to developing the habit.

It doesn't matter when or how often as long as you find a rhythm that suits your life. It might be a Saturday morning trip to the farmers market, or a Monday night super market shop after work, or getting a veggie box delivered or it might be ordering online.

Or a combination of any of these, just as long as it works for you.

I recommend not choosing a time when you're hungry because you're way more likely to give in to temptations and load up on less healthy options. I've been there myself!

## **2. Use a list for indulgent items.**

One of the keys of being able to reach your health goals and without feeling deprived is to build in indulgences. However it's super important to plan indulgences ahead AND stick to your plan.

If you really want to have a whole block of white chocolate, that's fine. You just have to decide ahead of time when your rational brain is in control, not in the heat of the moment when your emotional brain is running the show.

The decisions you make when you're shopping are critical for determining what you end up eating. So being strong at the supermarket is critical.

I do this by writing a list for any indulgent items I want to buy and then sticking to my list for these items. No matter what.

I don't stick to my list for things like veggies or fish so I can make the most of what looks good. But I'm very disciplined with sticking to my list and only buying that ice cream if it's on the list.

## **3. Check out the specials for fresh produce**

The easiest way to tell which produce are in season is what's on special. Like most things, price is all about supply and demand, so when produce is in season and there's a heap of it around, the price will be discounted.

Be careful, though. The other reason for discounting is when produce is at the end of it's shelf life. If there are only one or two specimens discounted and they look sad, you know what to do.

## **4. Seek out good suppliers**

There can be a huge variation in quality and price from store to store.

Taking the time to track down the best market, green grocer or butcher is well worth the effort. Developing relationships with your suppliers not only means you're more likely to be able to make the most of their recommendations, you'll have more fun shopping as well.

## **5. Look**

We eat with our eyes. You can tell so much about the freshness and quality of produce by the appearance. Look for vibrant colours, glossiness and the absence of wrinkles or bruises.

And don't forget to look at the surroundings as well.

Fruit flies hanging around are not a good indicator. Be wary of unclean floors and anything else that indicates the proprietors don't care.

## **6. Smell**

Not every buying decision is going to benefit from getting your nose involved. Even the best potatoes smell like, well earth.

But a fresh fish should smell like the sea (not all fishy) and a ripe strawberry should smell sweet. So don't be afraid to have a good sniff from time to time.

## **7. Try to buy organic and grass-fed (pasture raised) but don't obsess**

I either go for organic produce or I try to buy direct from the farmer (some who are certified organic and some who are not). This reduces pesticide, antibiotic and hormone exposure. But there are times when I just grab whatever from the supermarket.

Remember cooking for yourself is already so much healthier than eating out so you don't have to spend the extra.

## **8. Think local but don't obsess**

While I agree flying asparagus half way around the world is a waste of resources, I also don't think that just because something has been grown locally that it is necessarily the most sustainably produced or necessarily the best quality.

## 9. Trust your instincts

If you look at a vegetable or a piece of fish and you just know it's going to be delicious, go for it. But if something is making you hesitate, give it a miss.

## 10. Make it fun!

Personally I love shopping for food. Of course strolling around the farmers market is a joy but I also love heading to the supermarket.

If you don't naturally enjoy food shopping, think of ways to add in a little reward for yourself.

Maybe you pick up a favourite magazine or treat yourself to a coffee. Just think of ways to make it a fun habit that you're going to enjoy for the rest of your very healthy life!

## MY FAVOURITE SHORT-CUT LOW CARB INGREDIENTS.

- Washed Salad Leaves
- Packaged Coleslaw Mix (Shaved Cabbage)
- Frozen Spinach / Kale / Other Greens
- Frozen Onions – diced and ready to go.
- Frozen Peas – a little on the carby side but so great as a backup vegetable.
- Other Frozen Veg – can be a little mushy in texture but better than no veg!
- Frozen Berries – the best low carb fruit.
- Frozen Cherries – another good low carb fruit option.
- Spice blends like curry powder, garam masala, cajun spice, baharat (lebanese spice).
- Spice pastes
- Hot sauces
- Mayonnaise (check for sugar in the ingredient list).
- Pesto

## SUMMARY

Here's what we've covered:

+ 10 ways to master the art of shopping. Including finding a time that works for you. Using a list for indulgent items and making it fun!

+ My favourite short-cut low carb ingredients.

## ACTIVITY

### **Buy fresh food for breakfasts next week.**

If you haven't already, review the breakfast options from [Day 4](#). Decide which 2 breakfasts want to try in the next week.

Write a list of ingredients you need and schedule some time to go shopping following the suggestions we covered today.

Don't forget to make it fun.

# DAY 7. REST AND PREPARE

Yay!

You've made it through the first week!

Well done you.

I know some of the lessons this week have been pretty meaty. But it's important to set the foundations right to make it easier to make the changes you need to get the results you want for the long term.

Today let's take a breather...

## *What You'll Learn Today:*

- A quick recap of Week 1.
- A gentle reminder
- Week 2 Preview.

## WEEK 1. LOW CARB WHY + GETTING STARTED

We've covered a lot including:

- Day 1. [Why Low Carb](#)
- Day 2. [What to Expect](#)
- Day 3. [How to Change to Low Carb](#)
- Day 4. [Breakfasts + Snacks](#)
- Day 5. [Reading Labels](#)
- Day 6. [The Art of Shopping](#)

## A GENTLE REMINDER

### **No forbidden foods!**

There are NO forbidden foods.

Food moralizing, or labeling specific foods as 'good' or 'bad' is very destructive. And thinking of yourself as 'good' or 'bad' for eating these foods is even less helpful.

Eating broccoli doesn't make you a 'good' person just as eating a brownie doesn't make you 'bad'.

### **No guilt or shame.**

The other key philosophy is refusing to feel guilt or shame around what you eat.

This has taken me a while to internalize. I find it's so much more helpful to be kind to myself. I explore what happened as a 'gentle detective', trying to find out what went wrong rather than using over-indulgence as an excuse to beat myself up.

Changing your mindset and how you think is the secret to changing your health.

## WEEK 2. ORGANIZATION + PLANNING

### **Food theme: lunches**

- 25 healthy lunch recipes to make ahead or prep at work.
- How to use habits to avoid the 'willpower mistake' and reach your goals without all the struggle.
- The art of organizing your pantry.
- Meal Planning 101.

## SUMMARY

Here's what we've covered:

- + Week 1 has set the foundation for change.
- + Mindset is key.
- + Week 2 is going to be fun!

## ACTIVITY

Review any lessons you want to go deeper with or catch up on anything you've missed. And get ready for our week of planning and organisation plus lots of delicious lunches next week!

# DAY 8. LUNCHES

Confession time...

I pretty much eat the same thing for lunch every day.

Unless I'm eating out, I have one of the following:

- Poached Eggs + Veggies / Salad
- Sardines / Tuna / Salmon Salad
- Leftover Dinners

On the surface it may sound boring.

But I'm always excited about my lunches.

Within these frameworks or templates, the possibilities are endless!

## *What You'll Learn Today:*

- Portable lunch ideas
- Lunches to 'assemble' at work
- Lunches to 'cook' at work
- Leftover dinner lunches
- How to stay low carb when eating out for lunch

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** *If you're on medication for anything especially for diabetes or high blood pressure, it's super important that you talk with your doctor before making changes to your diet. Even gradual changes.*

## PORTABLE LUNCHES

Unless it's the middle of Summer, most of these are fine without refrigeration for a few hours.

- [Best Ever Broccoli Salad](#)
- [Spiced Roast Cauliflower with Labneh](#)
- [Pesto, Olive & Feta Frittata](#)
- [Lime & Tahini Kale Salad](#)
- [The Ploughman's 'Pie'](#)
- Sandwiches on [Broccoli Bread](#)

## LUNCHES TO ASSEMBLE AT WORK

For those who have access to some sort of kitchenette.

- [Crunchy Bok Choy & Avocado Salad](#)
- [Washing Up-Free Salad](#)
- [Yoghurt & Veggies](#)
- [Cos Lettuce Wraps](#)
- [BBQ Chicken Salad](#)

## LUNCHES TO 'COOK' OR REHEAT AT WORK

For those who have access to a microwave / sandwich press or toaster oven.

- [Roast Mushroom 'Toasts'](#)
- [Halloumi + Cabbage Hash](#)
- [Cheesy Broccoli](#)
- [Bachelorette Eggs](#)
- [Tuscan Greens Soup](#)

## LEFTOVER DINNERS FOR LUNCH

Most dinners work well repurposed as lunches but some are better than others.

Try making extra of these dinner recipes:

- [Gorgeous Greens Tart](#)
- [Bloody Delicious Kale Bowls](#)
- [Creamy Cabbage & Almond Soup](#)
- [Spiced Cabbage & Feta](#)
- [Mushroom & Rosemary Frittata](#)
- [Zucchini Parmigiana](#)
- [Buy Nothing New Curry](#)
- [Okonomiyaki](#)
- [Pesto Cabbage](#)
- [Quick Tuna Curry Bowls](#)
- [Beautiful Broccoli with Creamy Tuna Sauce](#)
- [Salmon with Spiced Butter & Broccoli](#)
- [Quick Tuna Ragu](#)
- [Spiced Chicken & Onions with Hummus](#)
- [Roast Pesto Chicken & Broccoli](#)
- [Sausage, Chilli & Broccoli Bowls](#)
- [Taco Tuesday Bowls](#)
- [Fast Friday Cheeseburger Bowls](#)
- [Sausages & Peppers](#)
- [Sichuan Pork & Greens](#)
- [Quick Pig & Olive Ragu](#)
- [Quick Beef Tacos](#)

## WHAT ABOUT EATING OUT FOR LUNCH?

Apart from when you're going to a bakery or a place that only does sandwiches or pizza there are usually plenty of options at lunch. Just keep an open mind.

Most restaurants will have some sort of protein and veg / salad / soup option. Which may be more expensive than their sandwiches or bowls of pasta but will be much more blood glucose-friendly.

**The thing to remember is that quantity counts.**

So if the options are pizza or nothing. You can always stick to 1-2 slices and include a side salad.

Or if it's a burger joint, you could skip some or all of the bun and order a side salad or pickles instead of the fries.

**You always have a choice of how much you eat.**

## SUMMARY

Today we've covered lots of lunch ideas:

- + Portable Lunch Ideas
- + Lunches to 'Assemble' at Work
- + Lunches to 'Cook' at Work
- + Leftover Dinner Lunches
- + There are Always Options When You're Eating Out

## ACTIVITY

### **1. Review lunch ideas.**

Choose the ones that sound the most appealing to you. Or make a list somewhere else.

### **2. Plan your shopping.**

Decide which 2 lunches (or more) you want to try in the next week. Write a list of ingredients you need and schedule some time to go shopping.

# DAY 9. HABIT CHANGE BASICS

Today we're focusing on one of my all time favourite topics...

Habits!

If you've struggled to change to a healthier lifestyle in the past it was probably because you were relying on willpower.

The problem with willpower is we only have a finite amount of it.

It's a limited resource.

For everyone.

So if you've been using your willpower all day to get through your work, your willpower supply is low when it's time for dinner.

Which is why it can be so difficult to exert self control at times.

Especially when we're tired.

So what's the alternative?

In a word. Habits.

*What You'll learn today:*

- Why habits
- How habits work
- Ideas for healthy food habits.

## WHY HABITS?

I LOVE habits.

Why?

Because habits allow us to automate our decisions by making healthy behaviours a part of everyday life.

This way eating healthy isn't something we battle with every meal.

It's on autopilot so healthy choices become effortless.

So much better than setting ourselves up to fail by relying on will power.

Plus habits allow us to save our limited will power for other situations when we really need to exert self control.

## HOW HABITS WORK

There are three parts to any habit:

- i. The 'trigger' or 'cue' that starts the process.
- ii. The actions you take.
- iii. The reward you get.

In order to change your habit, you need to identify the trigger and reward.

Then you need to develop a plan so that when you feel the urge or trigger, you do a different set of (healthier) actions to get your reward.

It will take some conscious effort or willpower in the beginning but with time you'll reprogram yourself and a new habit will be born.

Charles Duhigg used this process to kick a daily cookie habit and lose 12 pounds.

I recommend watching [this short video](#) to give you a great practical example of how habits work.

## HEALTHY HABIT IDEAS

This is just a list of habits you might want to consider working on. It's by no means exhaustive!

- Cook dinner a certain number of nights per week
- Use [Simple Meal Plans](#) or another meal planning system.
- Take your lunch to work
- Shop at your local farmers market
- Do a regular food shop
- Mindful Eating (more on this later in the week)
- Eating at a table instead of the TV
- Eating proper meals instead of grazing
- Chewing thoroughly
- Switching to [healthy snacks](#)
- Cut out snacks
- Eating vegetables at every meal
- Not drinking calories. Sticking to water, tea or coffee.
- Replace dessert on week nights with fresh fruit
- Replace dessert on week nights with herbal tea
- Testing your fasting blood glucose every morning
- Measuring your waist circumference every week
- Weigh yourself every day
- Meditating every morning
- Deep breathing every day
- Exercise

## SUMMARY

Here's what we've covered:

- + Why habits are so powerful.
- + Habits involve 3 parts. A trigger (or cue), the action and a reward.
- + Ideas for healthy habits to get you started.

## ACTIVITY

### **Create your habit list.**

Brainstorm a list of all the habits you want to change (see above for ideas).

If you want to really geek out on habits, you could actually do a proper audit. Take a whole day to write down all your habits as you go through the day.

## LEARN MORE

The best book I've read on habits is 'Atomic Habits' by James Clear. If you'd like to go deeper into in the fascinating world of habits, I can't recommend it enough!

# DAY 10. YOUR PANTRY

You know the most surprising thing when I look in my pantry since I've been Low Carb?

At first glance, it doesn't seem that different to my pre-Low Carb days. There are still cans of tuna, salmon and sardines. Still two different types of olive oil. Still way more vinegar than any one household should reasonably contain.

And there's still peanut butter. We love peanut butter.

But on closer inspection there are a lot of differences too.

My jars and canisters, which used to hold grains, flours and different types of sugar, are now filled with nuts, seeds and low-carb flours like almond meal and coconut flour. Apart from a couple of jars of Thai curry paste, there aren't any packets of food with more than a few ingredients on the ingredients list.

It took me years to get to this point. And it's still a work in progress.

## *What You'll Learn Today:*

- How to low carb your pantry in 3 easy steps.
- How to avoid 'carb creep'.
- 4-step pantry spring cleaning guide.
- A low carb pantry 'Cheat Sheet'.

## EASY 3-STEP LOW CARB PANTRY MAKEOVER

Here's a rough framework of how I approached my own pantry 'makeover'...

## STEP 1.

Stop buying processed food & carbs.

There's nothing worse than deciding to change your way of eating and throwing out a heap of 'forbidden' foods, only to fall off the wagon and buy them again. I've been there and it's such a waste.

So instead of getting you to purge and waste, I recommend starting with a slower, more gentle approach. Allow yourself an adjustment period where you stop buying new high carb ingredients but continue to 'eat up' the food that's already in the house.

Of course, if you would prefer to just jump in to eating low carb, you can throw out and start a fresh.

It's up to you!

## STEP 2.

Decide which carbs you're not willing to let go of.

My husband is Irish, so if I said I wasn't ever going to cook potatoes ever again, it would be grounds for divorce.

I've found a much better approach is to keep the spuds to about once a week (more for our boys) and stop serving other carbs which aren't so well loved.

It's been years since I cooked couscous, buckwheat or quinoa and there haven't been any complaints!

The important thing to remember with low carb is that 100% compliance all the time isn't necessary. It's about finding the balance that works to keep you and your waistline happy and keeps your blood sugar in a healthy range.

Apart from potatoes, there are a number of carb-heavy ingredients I keep in the house because I have two little men (3.5 years and 6 years) I'm also feeding. These include sweet potatoes, low GI rice, pita bread, pasta, corn tortillas and canned lentils.

I do indulge in these every now and then (like once a month) but I always keep my portions small AND, more importantly, make sure I really enjoy myself.

No guilt!

## STEP 3.

Start experimenting with alternatives.

The first thing I found really helpful was deciding that there is always a healthier alternative that can taste just as good (or almost as good) AND make you feel better afterwards.

By keeping this open mind I've discovered some really delicious combinations.

And the best bit is there genuinely aren't any high-carb foods I miss these days.

## HOW TO AVOID 'CARB CREEP'.

As I mentioned, 100% compliance isn't essential to achieving your goals, but it's important to keep an eye on your progress.

We live in a world where an incredibly high carb diet is the 'norm'.

It can be easy to start allowing more and more little indulgences into every day life.

Even though I'm pretty disciplined, I find I go through phases of being more or less strict with my carb intake.

There's no need to be paranoid, but having some awareness that 'carb creep' happens is key.

As I shared on [Day 1](#), weighing myself every morning helps me stay on track.

For you it might be just getting your HBA1C tested every 6 months, measuring your waist circumference, weighing yourself or keeping a food diary for 2-3 days once every few months.

The important thing is to have some way of keeping yourself accountable, without causing stress. Just a reminder to keep you focused.

## OPTIONAL BONUS HOW TO 'SPRING CLEAN' YOUR PANTRY.

It's up to you to choose the format. Sometimes I take on the whole pantry at once, but mostly I just clean one shelf at a time.

Here's how I do it...

1. Remove everything from the shelf.
2. Throw out anything that you no longer want to eat, smells funny, is well past the 'best before' date, you have no idea what you'd use it in OR anything you don't really like.
3. Wipe down the shelf.
4. Put the 'keepers' back in some sort of order.

I try to keep 'like' items together. So I have the bottles together with things like vinegars and sauces and oils. Spices live in my 'spice box'. The canned goods live together and so on.

## SUMMARY

Here's what we've covered:

- + To low carb your pantry you need to stop buying processed food, decide what to keep and experiment with alternatives.
- + To avoid 'carb creep', be aware it happens and use your testing method (daily blood glucose, waist circumference, weight etc) or a food diary to stay on track.
- + 4-step pantry spring cleaning guide.
- + A low carb pantry 'Cheat Sheet'.  
(see next page)

## ACTIVITY

1. Follow the 3 steps above to conduct your own pantry makeover!
2. Reconnect with your preferred tracking method from [Day 1](#). and make sure you're still measuring. If not, no problem.

Just start again!

# PANTRY 'CHEAT SHEET'

## HIGH CARB

White Rice  
Spaghetti  
Couscous  
Quinoa  
White Bread  
Pita / Flat Bread  
Short Pasta  
Roast Potatoes  
Mashed Potatoes  
Ketchup / BBQ Sauce  
Processed Sweet Treats / Cookies / Candy  
Sugary Desserts  
Ice Cream

## LOWER CARB

Basmati / Doongara Rice  
Spiralized Carrot  
-  
-  
Whole Grain Bread  
Corn Tortillas  
Chickpeas / White Beans / Black Beans  
Roast Sweet Potatoes / Roast Butternut  
-  
-  
Dried Fruit  
Fresh Fruit  
Flavoured Yoghurt

## LOW CARB

Cauliflower 'Rice'  
Spiralized Zucchini  
Cauliflower 'Couscous'  
Cauliflower 'Couscous'  
Almond or Broccoli Bread  
Lettuce or Cabbage Leaves  
Roast Low Carb Veg  
Roast Low Carb Veg  
Cauliflower Mash  
Low Carb Ketchup  
Berries / Stonefruit / Apples / Pears  
Dark Chocolate  
Double Cream / Greek Yoghurt / Coconut Yoghurt

**\*Note: the 'Lower Carb' alternatives aren't my recommendations but can be a useful 'stepping stone' in your low carb journey.**

# DAY 11. YOUR FRIDGE + FREEZER

When I was studying health coaching, my nutrition lecturer had a saying...

'Full fridge, empty pantry'.

In that we should be aiming to eat lots of delicious fresh food and less shelf-stable processed stuff.

So today we're going to dive into some fridge (and freezer) love.

## *What You'll learn today:*

- Why your fridge and freezer are key for low carb.
- How to organize your fridge & freezer.
- Low carb fridge ingredient ideas.
- Low carb freezer ideas.

## WHY YOUR FRIDGE AND FREEZER ARE CRITICAL FOR LOW CARB SUCCESS.

It's a simple equation.

When you start eating less processed high carb food, you need to replace it with something. Right?

So that means more home cooked meals using real food ingredients = more fresh vegetables, more meat and more fish.

And where do you store this fresh produce?

Your fridge and freezer!

# HOW TO ORGANIZE YOUR FRIDGE FREEZER.

## 1. Keep the 'most in need of using' items visible.

It's so easy to forget what you have.

So my first rule is to place anything that needs 'eating up' where you can't miss seeing it each time you open the fridge.

It's a small thing but makes a HUGE difference to how much food I waste.

## 2. Keep like things together.

This is just how my brain works. I have separate places for my cheese, fresh veg, my raw meats, prepped ingredients, my fermented veg and of course my kombucha!

## 3. Have a regular place for different ingredients.

This just makes it easier to find what you're looking for. So I know that half used jar of curry paste will be in the fridge door instead of having to rummage around to find it.

## 4. Really look once a day.

This way I remember what I have and get ideas for what to cook.

Plus I can move things that really need eating to a more visible position so I'm less likely to waste food. Win win!

## 5. Keep things covered.

The air in the fridge is really dry.

So the number 1. cause of food spoilage is dehydration, especially for fresh produce.

So I keep all my fruit and veg in plastic bags either in the crisper or on the bottom shelf. It doesn't look so pretty but really makes a difference to how long things last.

For leftovers and my prepped ingredients I use glass containers with plastic lids.

## LOW CARB FRIDGE INGREDIENT IDEAS

Don't fall into the trap of thinking your pantry is only about the store cupboard ingredients stored at room temperature.

The marvel of modern refrigeration makes 'pantry' staples out of many different fresh ingredients.

**cheese** – parmesan, ricotta, goats cheese, halloumi, cottage cheese, other hard cheeses

**other dairy** – butter, Greek yoghurt, coconut yoghurt

**condiments** – mayonnaise, pesto, miso paste, pickled veg, mustard, sauerkraut, kimchi, capers, olives, harissa, wasabi.

**shorter life low carb vegetables** – salad leaves, baby spinach, snow peas, asian greens like bok choy, asparagus, spinach, kale, chard, other greens.

**longer life low carb vegetables** – cabbage, cauliflower, eggplant (aubergine), zucchini, summer squash, fennel, celery, celeriac (celery root), kohlrabi, radishes, green onions (scallions / spring onions), ginger, swedes & rutabagas.

**protein** – smoked fish, eggs, cured meats (bacon, prosciutto, salami), dried chorizo, packaged tofu, cryovacced meat (only keeps for about 2 weeks).

## LOW CARB FREEZER INGREDIENT IDEAS.

Frozen produce can be just as good, and in the case of frozen peas even better than 'fresh' produce from the supermarket.

Here are some some ideas.

**vegetables** – onion, peas, broad beans, spinach, kale, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, other greens.

**fruit** – berries, cherries.

**protein** – meat, sausages, fish, poultry

**herbs** – rosemary, thyme, sage, kaffir lime leaves, curry leaves.

**spices** – ginger, fresh turmeric, chillies.

**other** – low carb bread, stock / bone broth.

## **SUPER IMPORTANT!**

Please don't feel like you need to rush out and buy everything on these lists.

They're designed to give you ideas and inspire. Not to overwhelm you.

## SUMMARY

Here's what we've covered:

- + Eating low carb = more fresh food = more need for your fridge and freezer.
- + To organize your fridge and freezer keep like items together and really look once a day so you don't forget what's there!
- + Ideas for low carb ingredients to keep in your fridge and freezer.

## ACTIVITY

### **Organize your fridge and freezer.**

Schedule time to organize your fridge and freezer. You can do it all together or just start with one shelf. Follow the steps above.

See you tomorrow when we get into the meaty topic of Meal Planning.

Don't worry, it's not as hard as you'd think.

# DAY 12. MEAL PLANNING 101

Whenever I talk to my readers about their struggles with cooking healthy meals, meal planning always comes up as a big stumbling block.

I know the whole planning process can be overwhelming.

But like most things in life, once you develop a system and habits (there they are again!) that work for you, it can be easy and even fun.

## *What You'll Learn Today:*

- 3 different methods for meal planning
- The advantages and disadvantages of each method.

## MEAL PLANNING METHOD 1. PLAN-IN-ADVANCE DIY

**How it works:** Each week / month / few days you sit down and plan out which meals you're going to cook for that time period. You then create a shopping list and buy ingredients according to the list.

### **Advantages:**

- + Allows for variety which is great from a nutritional and fun perspective.
- + Good for people lacking confidence.
- + Can save money by curbing impulse spending.

### **Disadvantages:**

- Time consuming.
- Lacking flexibility / spontaneity.
- More likely to have increased waste if plans change.
- Can be expensive if the list isn't flexible to allow variations to make the most of seasonal produce / market specials.

## MEAL PLANNING METHOD 2. PLAN-IN-ADVANCE DONE-FOR-YOU

**How it works:** Each week / month / few days you allow someone else (like me!) to sit down and plan out which meals you're going to cook for that time period. They then create a shopping list and you buy ingredients according to the list.

### **Advantages:**

- + Encourages you to try new recipes = more variety and fun!
- + Builds cooking confidence.
- + Can save money by curbing impulse spending.

### **Disadvantages:**

- Can limit flexibility / spontaneity.
- Can be expensive if the list isn't flexible to allow variations to make the most of seasonal produce / market specials.

## MEAL PLANNING METHOD 3. SHOP FIRST, DECIDE WHAT TO COOK LATER

**How it works:** Basically you rock up to the market and just select your produce for the week based on what looks best or what you feel like. Alternatively you can sign up to a CSA (Community-Supported Agriculture) to get box of veggies delivered each week.

-- PART THREE.. DAILY LESSONS --

It helps to have a well stocked pantry to play a supporting role. Or for a pantry shop to accompany your market shop.

### **Advantages:**

- + Simple.
- + Quick – you're pretty much making it up as you go.
- + Can save money because you can capitalize on specials and are less likely to buy expensive, out-of-season imported produce.
- + Wonderful for spontaneity and flexibility – has scope for lots of variety.
- + Most likely to use the freshest and best tasting produce available.

### **Disadvantages:**

- Requires confidence in the kitchen to be able to make a meal out of what you have on hand.
- Intimidating for inexperienced cooks.
- Waste levels depend on how well you manage the produce once you have it home. May not be a problem for experienced cooks.
- Easy to get carried away and buy more produce than you need >> waste. (I've been guilty of this!)

### **NOTE:**

You don't need to stick to the one method for every night of the week. For most people a hybrid approach where they plan some meals (or follow a done-for-you plan) and then 'decide later' for other meals works best because it provides a balance between structure and flexibility.

## SUMMARY

Here's what we've covered:

- + The 3 main meal planning methods include planning in advance yourself, following a done-for-you plan OR shopping first and deciding what to cook later.
- + Planning in advance tends to take more time but lacks flexibility.
- + Shopping in advance is quicker and allows you to choose the freshest and best value produce but requires confidence to pull it off.
- + For most people a 'hybrid' approach will work best.

## ACTIVITY

Choose a meal planning method to try. Read through today's lesson again and choose the method you're going to use.

We're not going to be using it until next week when we get into dinners but it's important to know which approach you want to follow.

If you'd like to try my Simple Meal Plans, [click here for more details](#).

Phew. We're almost half way through our 28 days! You're doing great.

# DAY 13. MINDFUL SERVING

As a food lover, one of my biggest problems has always been portion sizes. Stopping when I've had enough.

Especially when it's really delicious.

While mindful eating did make a difference.

It wasn't foolproof.

Then I came up with the idea to apply mindfulness to my serving sizes.

Excited to share this concept with you today!

## *What You'll Learn Today:*

- What mindful serving is
- How mindful serving can help you
- 5 different methods for serving mindfully

## WHAT IS MINDFUL SERVING?

Mindful Serving is the concept of applying mindfulness to the amount of food you put on your plate.

It allows you to be intentional about your portion sizes.

The idea is you pay attention in the beginning.

So you can relax during the meal and just eat everything on your plate. Unless you really don't want to!

## HOW MINDFUL SERVING CAN HELP YOU

Mindful serving is an easy way to control your portion sizes.

And avoid overeating.

It works because you apply a small amount of discipline up front. Then you just use the natural pause that comes from finishing all the food on your plate as the signal to stop.

If you're like me and grew up in a house where you had to finish everything on your plate, mindful serving can actually be much easier and more effective than mindful eating.

Although I recommend (and use) both strategies.

Mindful serving is also great because you aren't generating any waste.

## 5 DIFFERENT METHODS FOR SERVING MINDFULLY

### 1. Weighing / measuring everything

I think weighing and logging everything you eat for the rest of your life can be counter-productive for most people.

And takes the joy out of eating.

However it is a great way to get a clear picture of exactly how much you are eating.

If the thought freaks you out, no need to try this.

But if you are able to approach it from a place of curiosity, then I think it's helpful to weigh everything for a few days every now and then.

Use it as a check-in.

Rather than tallying up calories, I like to just keep track of the amount of protein, fat and veggies I'm eating.

Here's what I aim for at lunch:  
100g (3.5oz) PROTEIN  
+ 200g (7oz) VEGGIES  
+ 2-3 Tablespoons FAT / SAUCE

And dinner:  
100g-150g (3.5-5oz) PROTEIN  
+ 400g (14oz) VEGGIES  
+ 3-4 Tablespoons FAT / SAUCE

This is just a general target and not something I'm too rigid about.

Some days I'll have more veggies at lunch or I won't make my veggie quota for dinner.

If you eat grains or legumes, include them in your veggie quantity.

Or if you're vegetarian, double the protein quantity and count legumes as your protein. And reduce the veggie quantity accordingly.

### 2. Weighing / measuring some things

A more simple approach is to just weigh and measure your protein and fat and eat as many veggies as you want.

The only downside to this is you probably won't eat as many veggies.

### 3. Plate percentages

This is what I use on a daily basis. I look for 1/4 of my plate (or slightly more) to be protein and sauce / fat. And then the remaining 3/4 to be delicious vegetables!

This is a bit tricky to estimate if you're having a soup or more blended meal like [cabbage lasagna](#). On those days I don't stress about it. And just trust my judgement.

### 4. Using Your Hand to Estimate (see image below)

An idea I got from the book 'Finally Slim, Finally Full' by Lisa R. Young. Use your hand to help estimate quantities.

Especially helpful in restaurants or at other people's houses where you don't want to bust out your kitchen scales.

Here's a list of hand measurements:

1 teaspoon = index finger tip

1 tablespoon = thumb tip

100g (3oz) = palm of your hand

1/2 cup = cupped hand

1 cup = your fist

## 5. Eyeballing it

The easiest approach and a great second step to aim for after you have trained yourself by weighing for a few days.

It can be deceptive though.

In the bonus lessons when we talk about mindLESS eating, I'll give you some tools to make sure your eyeballs don't play tricks on you.

## SUMMARY:

Here's what we've covered:

- + Mindful serving is paying attention to how much food you put on your plate.
- + Mindful serving helps control portion sizes so you avoid over eating.
- + The 5 different methods for serving mindfully

## ACTIVITY:

Think about your current portions. If you're happy with how things are, no homework for you!

But if you would like to do some work around this schedule a few days where you weigh everything you eat.

If you like it can be fun to plug it into an app like [Cronometer](#). But only if you want to.

Then once you've completed a few days, think about switching to one of the more relaxed approaches for longer term Mindful Serving.

Keep it simple (and fun) in the kitchen!

# DAY 14. REST AND PREPARE

Ok! You're officially half way through our 28 days.

You deserve a rest!

So today let's quickly recap where we've been so far and have a sneak peek at the week to come...

## *What You'll learn Today:*

- A quick recap of Week 2.
- Week 3 Preview.

## WEEK 2. ORGANIZATION + PLANNING

- Day 8. [Lunches](#)
- Day 9. [Habit Change Basics](#)
- Day 10. [Your Pantry](#)
- Day 11. [Your Fridge & Freezer](#)
- Day 12. [Meal Planning 101](#)
- Day 13. [Mindful Serving](#)

A Gentle Reminder

### **If you 'fail', keep trying.**

Making changes to your lifestyle can be hard. There will be setbacks. Remember you only 'fail' when you give up.

DO NOT use 'failure' as an excuse to go on a carb binge. Use it as an opportunity to learn and to 'double down' on your commitment to reach your health goals. You can do this!

## WEEK 3. LOW CARB COOKING BASICS

Food Theme: Dinners

- 39 easy, satisfying diabetic-friendly dinner recipes.
- The art of cooking without recipes.
- Catering for different diets without cooking extra meals.
- How to make your favourite recipes low carb so you'll never feel like you're missing out.
- Managing fresh produce and avoiding waste.
- Discover easy ways to make low carb meals satisfying.

## SUMMARY

Here's what we've covered:

- + Week 1 has set the foundation.
- + Week 2 has given strategies for change such as habit change and mindful serving. It's also covered more tactical tools of having a well stocked pantry / fridge and the art of meal planning.
- + Week 3 is going to cover lots of deliciousness!

## ACTIVITY

Review any lessons you want to go deeper with.

Catch up on any lessons or activities you've missed.

Remember to get results you have to actually take action.

Get ready for our week of low carb cooking plus lots of delicious dinners next week!

# DAY 15. EASY + SATISFYING DINNERS

Do you find dinner to be the hardest meal of the day to keep on track?

Well there's a very good reason.

We only have a limited amount of will power each day. And the evenings are when it's most depleted.

You know where this leads.

The secret is to build your habits so you're not relying on will power for this critical meal.

Having a collection of easy go-to dinners that are going to satisfy AND help you meet your health goals really is the key.

So lets arm you with some of my favourite Low Carb dinners...

## *What You'll learn today:*

- 39 easy & satisfying low carb dinner recipes

## VEGETARIAN DINNERS

[Gorgeous Greens Tart](#)

[Creamy Cabbage & Almond Soup](#)

[Walnut + Brown Butter Omelette](#)

[Comforting Cauliflower 'Colcannon'](#)

[Spiced Cabbage + Feta](#)

[Mushroom + Rosemary Frittata](#)

[Moroccan Egg + Olive Tajine](#)

[Zucchini Parmigiana](#)

[Buy Nothing New Curry](#)

[Indian Spiced Omelette](#)

[Okonomiyaki](#)

## FISH DINNERS

Pesto Cabbage  
Spiced Salmon with Almond 'Hummus'  
Quick Tuna Curry Bowls  
Rosemary Macadamia Salsa Salmon  
Fish 'Tacos' with Easy Coriander Hot Sauce  
Beautiful Broccoli with Creamy Tuna Sauce  
Fish with Lime & Miso Butter  
Almond Crusted Fish with Hummus + Green Chilli Oil  
Salmon with Spiced Butter & Broccoli  
Fish with Olive Lemon Salsa  
Quick Tuna Ragu  
Parisian Fish with Almond Sauce

## CHICKEN DINNERS

Cheesy Chicken  
Minute Chicken with Green Olive Chimmichurri  
Spiced Chicken + Onions with Hummus  
Roast Pesto Chicken + Broccoli

## CARNIVORE DINNERS

Sausage, Chilli + Broccoli Bowls  
Taco Tuesday Bowls  
Fast Friday Cheeseburger Bowls  
Sausages + Peppers  
Sichuan Pork + Greens  
Quick Cheese Burgers with Chipotle Mayo  
Quick Pig + Olive Ragu  
Easy Japanese Burgers  
Minute Steaks with Quick Chive Butter  
Quick Beef Tacos  
Bloody Delicious Kale Bowls

## SUMMARY

Here's what we've covered:

+ 39 recipes for delicious vegetarian, chicken, fish and carnivore dinners.

## ACTIVITY

Choose one new low carb dinner to make this week.

Write a list and plan when you're going to shop and cook.

# DAY 16. HOW TO MAKE MEALS SATISFYING

You know that feeling when you're starving? And all you feel like is a big bowl of spaghetti, or rice, or potato chips?

It's times like those that it can be tempting to 'give in' to carby treats.

But it doesn't have to be that way.

It is possible to have satisfying meals without carb-loading.

The secret is to find a way to reframe your low carb meals as being just as satisfying.

And the best way to do that?

Actually make them more satisfying by adding more... you guessed it!

Yes, adding more fat.

## *What You'll Learn Today:*

- Why were we told to eat low fat
- How to make meals satisfying
- How to know if you're eating enough fat
- How to know if you're eating too much fat

## WHY WERE WE TOLD TO EAT LOW FAT?

Know what makes me really angry? Thinking about all the damage the years of the 'low fat' diet message has caused.

Normally I'm a really calm person, but when I consider all the health problems, not to mention all the bland horrible food that we have suffered through.

All for no good reason.

It really drives me crazy.

The advice was based on a simple assumption. It's true that fat contains more energy than protein or carbohydrates. So for every gram of fat you eat, you get about twice as much energy to burn.

So if you want to lose weight by reducing your energy intake, eating less fat seems like an easy way to cut the calories.

It sounds like common sense, right? Eating fat makes you fat.

But it's not that simple.

The 'low fat' hypothesis doesn't take into account the way our bodies store and use energy. Or the delicate system which balances our hunger and satiety.

Plus, it doesn't factor in that there are some fats that our bodies must get from food, called 'essential fats'.

If we don't get those fats, our wise bodies crave what we are missing. So no matter how strong your will power – eventually eating low fat is doomed to failure.

Repeat after me... 'Fat is my friend!'

-- PART THREE. DAILY LESSONS --

## HOW TO MAKE YOUR MEALS SATISFYING

### **Include fat with every meal.**

A few tablespoons usually, but sometimes more. Home made mayonnaise is a favourite but I also love a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil, or chilli oil or just adding some grass fed butter. Adding higher fat ingredients like avocado, nuts and cheese also helps.

And I always eat the fat on my meat. Unless I'm at a restaurant where I suspect the meat may be factory farmed.

**REMEMBER:** A little fat goes a long way. A large slice of sourdough bread has about the same calories as 2.5 tablespoons olive oil.

## HOW TO KNOW IF YOU'RE EATING ENOUGH FAT

For some it's keeping a food diary and analyzing the percentage of calories from fat. Which is fine if that works for you but isn't something that appeals to me.

So how do I know?

### **I pay attention to my hunger levels.**

If I find myself getting ravenous between meals, I allow myself a satisfying high fat snack. Like nuts, a spoon of coconut oil,

some almond butter or even a bite of butter or cheese.

I also use the feedback to focus on upping my fat intake at my next meal. Simple.

## HOW TO KNOW IF YOU'RE EATING TOO MUCH FAT

This is even easier to diagnose!

If you're achieving your goals and happy with your eating and hunger levels. Then you're not eating too much.

If, however, you're not seeing the results you want. Especially if you're not seeing results and you're certain your carb intake isn't too high. Then the most likely cause is too many calories from too much fat.

If you find yourself in this situation, no need for guilt or judgement.

Just use it as a sign to make some changes and keep experimenting.

## SUMMARY

Here's what we've covered:

- + Low fat advice was based on the premise that fat contains more calories than protein and carbs. It didn't take into account the biochemical and hormonal differences in the way our bodies store and use these fuels.
- + To make your meals more satisfying, add some delicious fat!
- + You're not eating enough fat if you're getting super hungry between meals.
- + You're eating too much fat if your carb intake is low AND you're still not achieving your health goals.
- + A little bit of fat goes a long way. A large slice of sourdough bread has about the same calories as 2.5 tablespoons olive oil.

## ACTIVITY

1. Write a list of your favourite fats.  
For example avocado, mayonnaise, extra virgin olive oil, flavoured oils, nuts, nut butters, tahini, butter, cheese, coconut oil.
2. Experiment with including at least one of these in your next meal. Observe how you feel afterwards both immediately and a few hours later.

DAY 17.  
HOW TO  
KEEP YOUR  
CARB-LOVERS  
HAPPY  
WITHOUT  
COOKING  
MULTIPLE  
MEALS

Do you have a confirmed carb-lover in your life?

Someone who couldn't possibly ever consider a meal without some sort of starch?

I have two of them.

My little men.

Actually I have 3 carb-lovers, but my Irish husband is happy to go along with my low carb, high fat ways as long as I cook him some potatoes every now and then.

So how do I keep everyone happy?

Without having to cook multiple meals?

Today I'm going to share all my secrets

### *What You'll Learn Today:*

- How to cater for carb lovers
- Bonus tips on minimising temptations and cooking in bulk.

## HOW TO CATER FOR CARB LOVERS

### **1. Just serve them low carb.**

For many people if you serve a delicious, low carb meal and include enough fat to make it satisfying, they're not going to even notice.

Especially if you don't mention it's low carb.

But of course, there are some people who this won't work for (hello my boys!).

So then you need strategy number 2...

## 2. Serve different sides

Seriously, that's all it takes.

Mostly there's an easy carby side that will work brilliantly with whatever you're cooking.

Sure it does mean extra cooking, but not a whole meal's worth.

I include a 'carb lovers' option in the variations of all my recipes. So look out for those.

Here are some examples to get you thinking:

- Steamed rice
- Fried rice
- Cooked pasta
- Tortillas
- Pita
- Flat bread
- Canned chickpeas
- Canned beans
- Refried beans
- Potatoes (always a fave in our house!)

- Sweet Potatoes (always a fave in our house!)

- Mashed spuds or other root veg
- Roast root veg

And if none of those options work, just give them crusty bread or some pita. Pita goes with everything.

## BONUS TIP 1. MINIMISE THE TEMPTATION

If you really really love potatoes (like my Irishman), then choose another carb you don't love as much to serve.

This way you're less likely to eat something you'll regret later.

AND don't serve extra carbs in the middle of the table.

As we'll discuss when we get into mindless eating, if it's easy to grab something, you're way more likely to eat it.

So when we have potatoes, I serve up on plates for my boys (and my Irishman) and leave any leftovers in the kitchen.

This way my Irishman enjoys his spuds without having too many.

## BONUS TIP 2. COOK CARBS IN BULK

This is the key to making the 'side of carbs' trick work almost effortlessly.

Whenever I am cooking carbs for my boys, I always make extra and either freeze or just keep in the fridge.

Then when it's time to serve, I warm the pasta/rice/veg/whatever in a pan with a little oil.

Too easy.

This also has the added benefit of lowering the GI (Glycaemic Index) of the carbs.

Basically during the cooking and cooling process some of the starch is converted to 'resistant starch' which we can't absorb.

So it acts as fiber (feeding our gut bacteria) instead of contributing to blood sugar spikes.

## SUMMARY

Here's what we've covered:

- + To cater for carb lovers either don't tell them it's low carb (and they probably won't notice) OR serve carbs as a side.
- + To minimize temptations avoid your favourite carbs and serve something less tempting for you. Don't serve carbs in the middle of the table.
- + Cooking carbs in bulk make life easier AND makes them healthier.

## ACTIVITY

This is totally optional.

If you have carb lovers to cook for, choose a meal to make and plan how to include carbs. (hint: don't serve them in the middle of the table!)

# DAY 18. HOW TO MAKE YOUR FAVOURITE RECIPES LOW CARB

At the risk of sounding like a complete food nerd, one of my favourite games to play is figuring out ways to make a low carb or at least, lowER carb version of our favourite meals.

Sure the results don't always end up being exactly the same as the original.

But more often than not the new low carb hybrid is something we love anyway.

You'd be surprised what you can come up with!

## *What You'll Learn Today:*

- How to make your favourite recipes low carb
- My favourite low carb ingredient substitutes.
- Examples of how I low carb favourite recipes

## HOW TO MAKE YOUR FAVOURITE RECIPES LOW CARB

The first part is to keeping an open mind. Have the positive expectation that you can find a way.

Then ask yourself 'what else could I use instead of this high carb ingredient?'

Don't worry, here are some examples to get you going.

Flour = Almond Meal / Flour, Coconut Flour

Rice = [Cauliflower 'Rice'](#)

Spaghetti = Spiralized Zucchini, Baby Spinach  
Couscous / Quinoa = [Cauliflower 'Couscous'](#)  
White Bread = [Little Almond Breads](#)  
Pita / Flat Bread = Lettuce wraps, Cabbage Leaf Wraps  
Short Pasta = Roast Cauliflower, Roast Broccoli, Roast Eggplant, Roast Zucchini  
Roast Potatoes = Roast Cauliflower, Roast Broccoli, Roast Eggplant, Roast Zucchini  
Mashed Potatoes = [Cauliflower Mash](#)  
Bread Crumbs = Almond Meal  
Ketchup / BBQ Sauce = [Miso Harissa 'Ketchup'](#), Tomato Paste  
Sugar = Stevia  
White Chocolate / Milk Chocolate = Dark Chocolate (at least 70% Cocoa Solids)  
Ice Cream = Double Cream, Coconut Cream, Greek Yoghurt

## EXAMPLES OF HOW I LOW CARB MY FAVOURITE RECIPES

### Spaghetti Bolognese

Serve your bolognese sauce on a bed of baby spinach like this [Quick Beef Ragu](#) or spiralize zucchini instead. I just spiralize and toss in a little salt to soften and let it stand at room temp to warm and then serve the hot meat sauce on top but you can warm it in a pan with a little butter for a few minutes.

### Short Pasta

Serve your favourite sauce that you'd normally use for short pasta like macaroni or penne on a bed of baby spinach or roast broccoli or roast cauliflower or any roast low carb veg. Chop veg into bite sized chunks, toss in a little oil and roast 250C (480F) until tender – broccoli, cauli, eggplant, zucchini and will take 15-20 minutes. Although cooking time will vary with the size of your chunks and how crowded the pan is.

I also love using cooked cabbage like this [Super Yum Bacon & Cabbage](#) or cooked kale like this [Killer Kale Gratin](#).

### Lasagne

Use cooked cabbage instead of lasagne noodles as in this low carb [Cabbage Lasagne](#) recipe. For bonus points I use a mix of sour cream and grated parmesan instead of bechamel sauce (much quicker and easier too!).

### Pasta Bakes

Again use roast veg!

### Shepherds Pie

Use [cauliflower mash](#) instead of potatoes. OR try this exotic [Middle Eastern Shepherds Pie](#) with roast cauliflower and a topping of yoghurt and tahini – it's super yummy.

### Avocado on Toast

Use my [Broccoli Bread](#), [Little Almond Breads](#) or other Low Carb bread.

### Schnitzel

Replace flour or crumb coating with Almond Meal.

### Cheese on Toast

Again use my [Broccoli Bread](#), [Little Almond Breads](#) or other Low Carb bread. Also loving these [Tuna Melts](#).

### Stuffed Sweet Potatoes

Use halved roast eggplant instead.

### French Fries

Use this [Spiced Roast Cauliflower](#) without the salad leaves or labneh instead.

### Burgers

Just make these [Almond Burger Buns](#) OR just serve your burger patty 'naked' with lots of salad and mayo to make it nice and satisfying.

### Tacos / Tortillas

These [Zucchini Tortillas](#) are the best substitute I've found. Or just use lettuce leaves or cabbage leaves instead.

### Curries or Stir Fries

Add extra veg or serve on a bed of [Cauliflower 'Rice'](#) instead of regular rice.

# PANTRY 'CHEAT SHEET'.

## HIGH CARB

White Rice  
Spaghetti  
Couscous  
Quinoa  
White Bread  
Pita / Flat Bread  
Short Pasta  
Roast Potatoes  
Mashed Potatoes  
Ketchup / BBQ Sauce  
Processed Sweet Treats / Cookies / Candy  
Sugary Desserts  
Ice Cream

## LOWER CARB

Basmati / Doongara Rice  
Spiralized Carrot  
-  
-  
Whole Grain Bread  
Corn Tortillas  
Chickpeas / White Beans / Black Beans  
Roast Sweet Potatoes / Roast Butternut  
-  
-  
Dried Fruit  
Fresh Fruit  
Flavoured Yoghurt

## LOW CARB

Cauliflower 'Rice'  
Spiralized Zucchini  
Cauliflower 'Couscous'  
Cauliflower 'Couscous'  
Almond or Broccoli Bread  
Lettuce or Cabbage Leaves  
Roast Low Carb Veg  
Roast Low Carb Veg  
Cauliflower Mash  
Low Carb Ketchup  
Berries / Stonefruit / Apples / Pears  
Dark Chocolate  
Double Cream / Greek Yoghurt / Coconut Yoghurt

**\*Note: the 'lower carb' alternatives aren't my recommendations but can be a useful 'stepping stone' in your low carb journey.**

## ANOTHER APPROACH

Another approach is to make the favourites LOWER Carb. Remember the quantity of carbs you eat makes a difference.

For example instead of having 6 tortillas try having 2 and adding extra guacamole to fill you up.

Or just have 2 slices of pizza and a salad instead of eating a whole pie.

Or a small serving of pasta and extra salad or veg instead of a giant bowl of spaghetti.

Another idea is to halve the sugar in sweet treats. It rarely makes a difference.

Especially as your taste buds begin to change as you eat less sweet stuff.

## SUMMARY

Here's what we've covered:

- + Keeping an open mind is key to finding low carb alternatives.
- + Examples of ways I low carb my favourite recipes.
- + My favourite low carb ingredient substitutions.
- + Another approach is to reduce the carbs and replace with salad, veg and some satisfying fat.
- + You can halve the sugar in most dessert recipes without noticing.

## ACTIVITY

Choose a favourite meal and plan how to 'low carb' it.

If you need some help just email me:  
[jules@thestonesoup.com](mailto:jules@thestonesoup.com)

# DAY 19. MAKING THE MOST OF FRESH PRODUCE

Ingredients can be expensive so it's important to make sure they last as long as possible.

Today we're delving into all aspects of fresh produce including shelf life and optimum storage techniques.

## *What You'll learn today:*

- 8 best practices to maximize the life of fresh produce.
- Fresh produce life expectancy and how to use this to your advantage.
- The biggest game changer for avoiding waste.

## 8 FRESH PRODUCE BEST PRACTICES

### **1. Select the best storage temperature**

Just like the way some people love the heat and others are more excited about ski season, different vegetables have different preferences for climate.

Some things like avocado, tomato and banana are actually sensitive to the cold and keeping them in the fridge causes browning known as 'chilling injury'.

I used to give my students a pdf that lists a whole variety of vegetables and their optimum storage temperatures.

But I've since realized it doesn't need to be that complicated.

Basically I now go with the rule of thumb that

*'If in doubt, keep them in the fridge'.*

The reason for this is that most chemical reactions slow down at cooler temperatures. Same with micro-organism growth.

### **So in general cooler = longer shelf life.**

Here are the things I don't refrigerate:

- + potatoes – in a hessian (burlap) sack – allows them to breathe & protects from light.
- + whole avocado (sensitive to chilling injury) once cut though I tend to keep in the fridge.
- + garlic.
- + onions – in a hessian sack (burlap) – allows them to breathe & protects from light.
- + tomatoes (sensitive to chilling injury) refrigeration changes their texture and dulls their flavour.
- + bananas (sensitive to chilling injury).
- + lemons – I love having a big bowl of lemons on the dining room table. They're fine in the fridge too.
- + eggs. Eggs will last for longer in the fridge but I like to have them at room temperature so they cook more quickly. If you don't eat eggs on a regular basis best to keep them in the fridge.
- + anything that is under ripe.

**NOTE:** Fish is super sensitive to temperature. Even more so than meat or poultry. This is because when the fish are alive swimming in the water, their body temperature is much lower than cows roaming around a field.

-- PART THREE.. DAILY LESSONS --

That's why fish shops keep their produce on ice.

When you buy fish or seafood, ask the fishmonger to wrap up a bag of ice with them and then keep the fish wrapped with the ice in your fridge until you're ready to cook.

### **2. Invest in a good fridge.**

A few years ago I got a new fridge. I was really surprised how much longer most produce seemed to last.

So if you suspect your fridge isn't doing its job, it might be worth while putting a new one on your wish list and investing when you can.

Of course if that isn't possible, there is something you can do now. Just have a look at your fridge settings. Basically you want the fridge section as cool as possible without it freezing your veg. So try tweaking the settings until you get to that sweet spot.

### **3. Minimize dehydration**

After temperature, one of the biggest contributors to aging in fresh produce from vegetables to meat to cheese is loss of moisture.

The refrigeration process removes moisture from the air inside your fridge, making it particularly drying. Because veg and fruit tend to have high water contents, they are very sensitive to drying.

You've probably noticed if you leave a lettuce in the fridge uncovered, it will wilt pretty quickly.

The solution is to keep your veg wrapped in plastic bags.

You can buy bags specifically designed for storing veg but I haven't bothered trying them. I just save and reuse the bags I buy my veg in.

And as extra protection I keep as many veg as possible in the crisper section with it set on the 'veg' setting.

It's a good idea to keep your other fresh produce like meat, fish and poultry well covered either in containers or the bags they came in.

### **4. Avoid condensation & sweating**

Of course too much moisture can also be a bad thing and can encourage produce to go slimy. Paper towels can be useful to absorb excess moisture without allowing things to get too dry.

If I've purchased loose salad leaves, or picked excess from the garden, I wash them and spin dry in a salad spinner and then wrap them in paper towels and store in a plastic bag with as much air removed as possible. This makes a huge difference to their shelf life.

I don't do this with bags of salad from the supermarket because they are usually packed with nitrogen gas which removes oxygen needed for spoilage organisms to grow and extends the shelf life that way.

It's also the main reason these leaves go bad so quickly when you open the pack.

Mushrooms are probably the most sensitive to sweating. Best to store them in a brown paper bag in the fridge.

If you do have to buy them from the supermarket in a plastic tray, take them out and free them when you get home.

For cheese, I wrap it in baking (parchment) paper and store it in a container like this. So I avoid sweating AND dehydration.

## **5. Protect from exposure to light**

Sunlight can promote sprouting in things like potatoes and garlic. It can also destroy light sensitive vitamins, like Vitamin E. So, it's best to store them in the dark.

I keep my spuds in hessian (burlap) sacks in the pantry. I've had my garlic hanging on a plait because it looked so pretty, but come to think of it, my garlic started sprouting much earlier than I'd expect so I should be following my own advice!

## **6. Minimize cutting or bruising**

Cuts and bruises damage the cell walls of fruit and veg and open them up to spoilage by microbes. Exposed surfaces also increase the risk of drying out or oxidation from exposure to air.

This is why a whole cabbage or cauliflower will keep for much longer than a cut piece. The same holds true of meat, fish and even cheese.

So a whole chicken will keep for longer than chicken mince (ground chicken). It's best to leave trimming and chopping until the last minute if you can.

It's also important to remember that once you have one rotten piece of veg, it passes on the decay to its mates. So if you do notice any damaged vegetables, get rid of them ASAP.

## **7. Be aware of ethylene gas**

Ethylene gas helps produce ripen. Different fruit and veg are either sensitive to ethylene or ethylene producers.

So ethylene producers will cause sensitive veg to ripen more quickly if they are stored together. Rather than trying to remember which is which, the easiest thing to do is to keep everything in separate bags in the fridge.

A special case to note is bananas which produce heaps of ethylene gas when they are ripening. So if you want your avocado to ripen more quickly, put it in a paper bag with a banana.

But if you don't want it to over ripen, keep them in separate spaces.

## **8. Select the freshest produce**

One of the biggest factors that determines how long your produce will keep is how old they are when you take them home. If you find yourself often throwing out 'veg gone bad' it might be time to change where you shop.

For me it's worth paying a little more for super fresh veg from the markets if it means they'll last longer than tired old supermarket produce.

## FRESH PRODUCE LIFE EXPECTANCY

Not all veg and fresh produce are created equal when it comes to how long they generally last.

The type of produce you choose can make a massive difference to how often you'll have to throw things out.

If you only buy 'short life' produce, you're making it really difficult for yourself to use everything before it goes bad.

The trick is to choose a mixture of produce so you have some that need eating 'now' and others that are fine if you don't eat them this week, or even the week after.

When I first figured this out, there was a dramatic reduction in the amount of food I wasted.

It's one of those simple ideas that makes a really big difference!

### **SHORT LIFE VEGETABLES (less than 1 week)**

coriander (cilantro), basil, mint, lettuce, loose salad leaves, avocado, tomatoes, spinach, baby spinach, chard (silverbeet), corn (more for loss of flavour – will still be edible for a week or so), peas (more for loss of flavour – will still be edible for a week or so), broad beans (more for loss of flavour – will still be edible for a week or so), asparagus, mushrooms

### **SHORT LIFE PROTEIN (less than 1 week)**

shellfish, fresh fish, all fresh poultry, fresh meat not packed in cryovac, soft cheeses not packed in cryovac

### **AVERAGE LIFE VEGETABLES (1-2 weeks)**

flat leaf parsley, woody herbs (rosemary, thyme, oregano), broccoli, broccolini, snow peas, sugar snap peas, fresh beans, bok choy, other asian greens, capsicum (bell peppers), eggplant (aubergine), zucchini, summer squash, chillies, brussels sprouts, kale, collard greens

### **AVERAGE LIFE PROTEIN (1-2 weeks)**

smoked fish (salmon / trout), eggs (room temp), cryovaccated fresh meat, cryovaccated fresh chorizo & bacon, cooked meats the long livers (more than 2 weeks)

### **LONG LIFE VEGETABLES (more than 2 weeks)**

cabbage, cauliflower, celery, carrots, beets (although the leaves will wilt), potatoes, parsnip, celeriac (celery root), kohlrabi, sweet potato, onion, green onions (scallions), garlic, ginger, pumpkin (winter squash), swedes & rutabagas.

### **LONG LIFE PROTEIN (more than 2 weeks)**

halloumi, packaged soft cheeses, hard cheeses, packaged smoked fish, eggs (in the fridge), cured meats, dried chorizo, packaged tofu.

I've often kept long life produce for more than a month. Of course if stored incorrectly, they are still perishable so make sure you show them a little care and you'll be well rewarded.

## THE BIGGEST GAME CHANGER FOR AVOIDING WASTE.

The trick is to pay attention to when food is in danger of going bad, and taking some action to prevent that actually happening.

Remember you have the power to stop spoilage!

My first tip is when I bring home my new veg, I quickly gather up all the old veg and 'rotate' them into the smaller chiller drawer in my fridge.

I then know to look there first for things that are going to need eating up.

### **Develop the habit of having a good look in the fridge every day or so, just to keep in mind how everything is progressing.**

For me 'out of sight is out of mind', so I'm always looking in my fridge to keep on top of it.

If you only remember one thing from today, regular fridge inspections are the biggest game changer for avoiding waste!

A little extra 'freezer inspection' can be helpful as well.

## SUMMARY.

Here's what we've covered:

- + Choosing the best temperature and keeping things covered are the most important practices for maximizing the life of fresh produce.
- + If in doubt keep it in the fridge.
- + Different produce will last for different amounts of time. It helps to buy a mixture of short and longer life produce to make it easier to manage.
- + Regular fridge inspections are the biggest game changer for avoiding waste!

## ACTIVITY.

Set a daily reminder to look in your fridge.  
OR plan how you can build the habit of really looking in your fridge every day.

If you need some help with this review our habits from [day 9](#).

# DAY 20. THE ART OF LEFTOVERS

A while ago I inadvertently sparked some controversy on my blog [Stonesoup](#).

It all started when I suggested that some roast veg would keep in the fridge for 'a few weeks.'

One reader commented "No way would any food be safe to eat after a few weeks in the fridge. Yuck!"

It made me realize different people have different comfort levels around how long leftovers should keep.

Because I have a degree in Food Science, majoring in microbiology I want to make sure your leftovers are as safe (and delicious) as possible.

## *What You'll learn today:*

- The dos and don'ts of keeping leftovers safe
- 7 ideas for leftover meals
- 4 tricks for leftover ingredients

## THE 'DOS' OF KEEPING LEFTOVERS SAFE

### **DO put leftovers away ASAP.**

Bacteria love warm environments. The sooner you refrigerate or freeze your leftovers, the sooner bacteria growth will be slowed and the longer your leftovers will last. Simple.

### **Do cover food well.**

Food exposed to the air in your fridge or freezer will dry out surprisingly quickly. This doesn't tend to be a food safety issue but it does make leftovers less appealing.

I always transfer leftovers into containers with airtight lids. I love the glass ones from Pyrex with the blue coloured plastic lids. For freezing, best to use proper 'freezer' bags or zip lock bags to prevent freezer burn.

### **DO trust your instincts.**

If something smells funny, or doesn't look the right colour or has mold or other nasties growing on it, it's best to trust your senses and throw it out.

### **DO properly reheat food again before eating.**

Just as low temperature is important to minimizing bacterial growth, high temperatures are the best way to 'kill off' any sneaky fellas that have managed to grow.

## THE 'DONT'S' OF KEEPING LEFTOVERS SAFE

### **DON'T eat anything that feels unsafe.**

I still follow my Mum's rule, 'if in doubt, throw it out.' If you feel that something is unsafe, there's no point stressing yourself out and risking your health.

### **DON'T throw away perfectly good food.**

Just because food has passed some arbitrary guideline of being in the fridge for 'X' days, you don't need to toss it automatically.

If you know it's been handled carefully and refrigerated promptly and it looks and smells fine, then in all likelihood it will be safe.

### **DON'T leave things sitting around at room temperature for long periods.**

I know we mentioned the 'opposite' of this in the 'Dos'. But low temperatures are really one of the most important parts of keeping food safe so I wanted to stress it again.

### **DON'T feel like you always have to 'obey' best before dates.**

This applies more to packaged food than leftovers, but since we're talking safety and waste, I thought I'd throw it in.

If you'd like to learn more, check out my [Insiders Guide to Use-by Dates](#).

## 10 TASTY IDEAS FOR LEFTOVERS

### **1. Take a break.**

Having the same leftovers for more than one meal in a row can make even the most unadventurous eater get a little tired. But a break of even just one day can make them seem 'new' again. Most things will keep for 1-2 weeks in the fridge and much longer in the freezer.

### **2. Freeze some.**

If you've got way more than you can possibly eat in a week, be sure to freeze at least some. It's amazing how a few weeks spell in the freezer can make something totally 'old' seem fun again. Most things, with the exception of salads, freeze well.

### **3. Make a leftover leafy salad.**

Make a classic green salad and turn it into a meal by scattering over your leftovers, that have been chopped into bite sized pieces. Works with either cold leftovers or warm them up for a lovely warm salad. If I need to make it more substantial, I add some roast nuts.

### **4. The leftover soup.**

Bring a few cups of water, tomato puree or stock to the simmer and add your leftovers (chopped into bite sized pieces). Instant divinely warming soup. Use this [refrigerator soup recipe](#) if you aren't comfortable with 'winging it'.

### **5. The leftover baked frittata.**

Leftover cooked vegetables, protein, herbs and even cheese, can all go into making the most divine baked frittata. Use the [recipe over here](#) as a base and get creative.

## 6. Change the nationality of your dish.

This can be tricky with strongly flavoured dishes like curries.

But for more European style recipes, a change in nationality can make your leftovers feel (and taste!) like a completely new meal.

For example, leftover roast broccoli could have curry powder added and served with yoghurt and fresh coriander (cilantro) to become an Indian curry.

Toss it in plenty of [pesto](#) and you have an Italian salad.

Or serve it on a bed of [cauliflower hummus](#) and it's a Lebanese treat.

## 7. Try the 'serving with a different side / accompaniment' trick.

Take an example from the humble meatloaf or as the Italians call it, [Polpettone](#).

You can serve it on a bed of [cauliflower 'couscous'](#) or cauliflower 'rice', or with [zucchini 'spaghetti'](#), on a bed of baby spinach or as a sandwich in some [broccoli bread](#) or even instead of a burger patty with these [almond burger buns](#).

## 8. Make a curry

Curries are an excellent way to use up lots of bits and pieces of leftover meals and ingredients.

The strong flavours of the curry sauce work wonders to tie everything together. See my [Buy Nothing New Curry](#) recipe for more detailed ideas.

## 9. Put an egg on it!

This is the basis for most of my [Abundance Bowl](#) lunches. Basically I grab whatever cooked leftover vegetables I have in the fridge. Sometimes I warm them, but mostly I just pile them in a bowl. Top with 1-2 fried or poached eggs. And if I need some extra veg, add some rocket leaves (arugula) from the garden. Or some sauerkraut. Or both.

## 10. Make shakshuka

Shakshuka is a super delicious Middle Eastern dish of eggs baked in a spiced tomato sauce. It's another super versatile leftovers recipe to have in your repertoire. See my ['Next Day' Shakshuka](#) recipe for more detailed ideas.

# 4 TRICKS FOR LEFTOVER INGREDIENTS

You may not have noticed, but for my recipes, I try to keep leftover ingredients to a minimum.

It's a natural part of my simple cooking philosophy.

But when you do find yourself with leftover ingredients, here's how to minimize waste.

### 1. Avoid leftover ingredients.

Try to use up all of the ingredient instead of leaving yourself with leftovers. So if a recipe calls for 1/2 bunch herbs, I'd use the whole bunch instead.

### 2. Store the leftover ingredients correctly.

The general rule of thumb is cooler temperatures are best for most fresh ingredients. So keep them in the fridge for starters.

After temperature, moisture loss is the next biggest destroyer of fresh ingredients, so make sure they're protected.

I tend to store my produce in plastic bags in the crisper section.

### 3. Prep or partially cook the ingredient.

This really extends how long an ingredient will last because it destroys spoilage bacteria.

For fruit and veg it also deactivates spoilage enzymes.

For example, a half bunch of basil can be turned into a tasty pesto. Or if you don't have much time, just pop the leaves in a jar and cover with olive oil for a quick basil oil that will last for weeks rather than days.

More examples include:

- roasting vegetables or fruit
- steaming veg
- wilting down a bunch of spinach or kale
- boiling eggs
- poaching fish, chicken or sausages
- BBQing meats
- slow cooking anything

### 4. Freeze.

If something is going to go bad before you get to it, just pop it in the freezer.

It may not be as good as when it was fresh but at least freezing buys you some time to find another way to use it.

## SUMMARY

Here's what we've covered:

- + Do refrigerate or freeze your leftovers straight away.
- + Don't eat anything that feels unsafe. If in doubt throw it out.
- + 7 tasty ideas for leftovers so you won't feel like you're eating the 'same old' thing.
- + The best approach for leftover ingredients is to avoid them in the first place. But if you do have leftovers, partially cooking or freezing will help.

## ACTIVITY

It's time to play the look in the fridge game! Have a look and see what leftover ingredients or meals you have. Make a plan for how you're going to use them or prep them for later use.

DAY 21.  
YOU DESERVE  
A REST!

It's been a big week. You deserve a rest!

Lets recap where we've been and preview the week to come...

### *What You'll learn today:*

- A quick recap of Week 3.
- Week 4 Preview.

## WEEK 3. LOW CARB COOKING BASICS

### **Food Theme: Dinners**

We covered:

- Day 15. [Easy & Satisfying Dinners](#)
- Day 16. [How to Make Meals Satisfying](#)
- Day 17. [How to Keep Your Carb-Lovers Happy Without Cooking Multiple Meals](#)
- Day 18. [How to Make Your Favourite Recipes Low Carb](#)
- Day 19. [Making the Most of Fresh Produce](#)
- Day 20. [The Art of Leftovers](#)

## WEEK 4. PROBLEM SOLVING

### **Food theme: Desserts**

- 19 super satisfying Low Carb dessert recipes.
- The secret to discovering new treats and comfort foods.
- Navigating social situations and travel with ease.
- Common mistakes and how to avoid them.
- Problem solving for when you're not meeting your goals.
- Making Carb cravings a thing of the past..

## A Gentle Reminder

Making changes to your lifestyle is hard.

DO NOT use 'failure' as an excuse to go on a binge. Use it as an opportunity to learn and to 'double down' on your commitment to reach your health goals.

You can do this!

**When you have setbacks, keep trying.**

## SUMMARY

+ Week 1 has set the foundation.

+ Week 2 has given strategies for change such as habit change and intuitive eating. It's also covered more tactical tools of having a well stocked pantry / fridge and the art of meal planning.

+ Week 3 has set you up with loads of dinners.

+ Week 4 is going to consolidate what you've learned, help problem solve any tricky situations AND give you plenty of low carb options when you need something sweet.

## ACTIVITY

Review any lessons you want to go deeper with. Catch up on any lessons or activities you've missed.

To get results you must take action.

# DAY 22. DESSERTS + TREATS!

Do you have a sweet tooth?

Well this is the week for you!

## *What You'll learn Today:*

- 19 super satisfying low carb dessert recipes.

### **A note about dessert recipes:**

For most of these recipes I use pure stevia powder to sweeten. But I know not everyone is a stevia fan. So I've also included a 'sugar-lovers' variation if you would prefer to use sugar. Of course the sugary variation will no longer be low carb. It's up to you to decide whether the blood glucose spike is worth it.

## DESSERTS + TREATS

[Raspberry 'Gelato'](#)

[Coconut 'Sorbet'](#)

[Salted Chocolate Chip Cookies](#)

[Chocolate Peanut Butter Cheesecake](#)

[Blueberry Yoghurt Cake](#)

[Strawberry Almond Short Cakes](#)

[Christmas Morning Muffins](#)

[Quick Strawberry Muffins](#)

[Vanilla Roast Pears](#)

[Strawberry Ripple Cheesecake](#)

[Chocolate Peanut Butter Fudge](#)

[Pure Chocolate Mousse](#)

[Easy Little Chocolate Puddings](#)

[No Bake Chocolate Pecan 'Tart'](#)

[Creamy Berry Mousse](#)

[Crunchy Almond Crumbles](#)

[Vanilla Panna Cotta](#)

[Coconut Pancakes](#)

[Last-Minute Peanut Butter Mousse](#)

## SUMMARY

Here's what we've covered:

+ Lots of deliciousness!

## ACTIVITY

Review these dessert recipes. Choose one to try this week!

# DAY 23. HOW TO STOP MORALIZING YOUR FOOD CHOICES

After all those recipes yesterday we're going to change gear and go back to some of the mindset stuff we covered in our first bonus.

This concept of food moralizing is something I discovered from my friend and very clever lady, Darya Rose from [Summer Tomato](#).

Darya is all about using science to lose weight without dieting.

I love her approach.

One of the most important things she's shown me is the trap of food moralizing.

So let's take a look...

## *What You'll Learn Today:*

- What is food moralizing?
- Why is food moralizing problematic?
- How to stop moralizing your food choices
- What about low carb?

## WHAT IS FOOD MORALIZING?

Food moralizing is when you label or categorize specific foods as 'good' or 'bad'. It tends to extend to thinking of yourself as 'good' or 'bad' for eating them.

## WHY IS FOOD MORALIZING PROBLEMATIC?

Because it makes it harder to make the everyday food choices that will get you results.

When we label food as 'bad' we trigger a subconscious belief that they taste better. And that by 'giving in' and eating bad food we are rewarding ourselves.

Food moralizing also sets up the belief that 'bad' foods allow us a break from the willpower required to eat 'good' food.

To make matters worse, the good / bad labelling makes it harder to enjoy healthier options because of the subconscious connection that they won't taste as good or be as satisfying as a more indulgent option.

And finally food moralizing encourages you to use external factors (and willpower) to decide what to eat instead of using the intrinsically motivating internal cues of how food makes you feel.

Eating broccoli doesn't make you a 'good' person just as eating a brownie doesn't make you 'bad'.

## HOW TO STOP MORALIZING YOUR FOOD CHOICES

Awareness is the first step.

If you find yourself thinking 'good' and 'bad' food, just catch it and stop.

Or if you start thinking I've been so 'good', I deserve this bread / pasta / cookie. Again stop.

Instead ask yourself:

- How will this food make me feel?
- Is it worth it now?
- How much do I need to be happy?

## WHERE DOES LOW CARB FIT IN WITH THIS?

So everything we covered on [Day 1](#) about why carbs are problematic still holds true.

The less high carb foods you eat, the easier it's going to be to reach your health goals.

We just want to avoid the trap of thinking of High and low carb foods as bad or good.

They're all just food.

And we're not 'good' or 'bad' for choosing either one.

Even more important is just because a food is high carb doesn't mean it's going to taste really amazing (think rice cakes). And just because something is low carb doesn't mean it's not going to taste good or be really satisfying (hello bacon!).

Instead, let's focus on how different foods make us feel.

This takes away the will power struggle and makes it as easy as possible to make the best choices to help us be healthy AND happy.

## SUMMARY

Here's what we've covered:

- + Food moralizing is labelling foods as 'good' or 'bad'.
- + It makes it harder to make good choices because it encourages the use of will power instead of being motivated internally.
- + To stop moralizing, just be aware and start asking yourself 'how will this make me feel?'
- + It's important to avoid the trap of thinking of high carb foods as 'bad'.

## ACTIVITY

1. Decide to stop moralizing.
2. When you catch yourself thinking in terms of 'good' or 'bad', remember to ask the question...  
'How will this make me feel?'

# DAY 24. NAVIGATING TRAVEL AND SOCIAL SITUATIONS

One of the (many) things I love about food is how it weaves into so many aspects of our lives.

I love the social bonds of sharing food.

I love exploring new cultures through their cuisine.

But it does make things more complicated when you need to follow a certain food lifestyle.

However staying on track certainly isn't impossible.

It just takes a little planning...

## *What You'll Learn Today:*

- How to stay low carb in social situations
- The art of low carb travel
- Living with carb lovers

## HOW TO STAY LOW CARB IN SOCIAL SITUATIONS

### **1. Decide ahead whether it's worth it.**

For most of us the odd brief blood sugar high isn't a problem. It's when your blood sugar is high over months and years that will cause harm.

Only you know how you're tracking and how much you will enjoy the indulgence.

Some times it will be easier (and more fun!) to just go with the flow, eat whatever and skip to step 4.

Other times, like when I'm at a conference, having a load of carbs isn't something I want or need.

Then a little planning ahead can save you from embarrassing situations.

## 2. Inform your hosts.

Normally I don't like to make a fuss about my dietary requirements, but it's actually more rude to surprise people.

I prefer when my guests let me know ahead if they're vegetarian, gluten-free, carb-lovers.

Plus honesty is always the best policy so I either decide in advance to eat whatever is put in front of me, or I let my hosts know before hand.

## 3. Make sure you'll have something appropriate to eat.

If the occasion is at someone's house, I like to offer to bring something, like a salad or a cheese plate.

But I'm always happy to work with my host to see what will be easiest (and best) for them and me.

If you're going out, most places have menus online you can check ahead. Or you could always call the venue and ask.

I always carry a small ziplock bag of almonds in my handbag so if I get stuck somewhere I have a backup so I know I won't starve.

You don't want to get stuck having to eat something high carb because you're starving, and not even enjoying it.

That's the worst of both worlds.

## 4. Have fun!

As much as I love food, I often remind myself that social situations are about the people. Not what you're eating.

It's about interacting, connecting, bonding, sharing stories, laughing and having fun.

So remember to enjoy yourself.

## THE ART OF LOW CARB TRAVEL

The principles above for navigating social situation apply to travel as well. Here are a few extra tips for when you're on the road:

### Keep an open mind.

If you start thinking you won't find anything low carb to eat, you're only going to see the bread and pasta. However if you come with a mindset that there will be something suitable, you will see the (delicious!) possibilities.

### Don't use it as an excuse to go crazy.

Remember the amount of carbs you eat makes a huge difference.

## Nuts are your friend

They're filling, portable and most convenience stores sell them. I also have been known to travel with a jar of peanut butter and a spoon in my bag!

## Don't be afraid to order off the menu

Most restaurants are only too happy to meet their customers requests. If I'm at a cafe I often ask for 'no toast' and order a side of avocado, pickles or veggies instead. Asking for some butter is a great way to make your meal more substantial without the cost of ordering extra items.

## Eat proper meals

You're much more likely to find good quality low carb choices in restaurants, than grabbing something on the go.

## LIVING WITH CARB LOVERS

We've already covered how to cater for family and friends who aren't low carb without cooking extra meals on [Day 17](#). But there are a few extra points I want to make about staying low carb at home...

## Don't push your dietary preferences on your loved ones.

Everyone is on their own journey, and just because eating low carb works for you, doesn't mean it's going to be helpful for your family. They have to want to change for their own reasons. You can't be someone else's food police.

### **Don't judge**

As we discovered when we looked at the perils of food moralizing on [Day 23](#), it's not about being 'good' or 'bad', it's about choosing what makes you feel best.

### **Stick to your own path**

If you're the only one in your house eating a particular way, it can be tough. Today's activity will help keep you focused on your goals and why you're making the choices that you are.

## SUMMARY

Here's what we've covered:

- + Planning ahead makes it much easier to navigate travel and social situations.
- + Best to decide in advance whether it's worth it or not.
- + Nuts are a traveller's best friend.

## ACTIVITY

Reconnect with your reason why!

# DAY 25. PROBLEM SOLVING: BLOOD GLUCOSE TOO HIGH

As I write this, I look like a bit of a robot. You see I have this blood glucose monitor attached to my arm recording my sugars 24/7 for two whole weeks.

Finbar (my son) is obsessed with it.

And actually so am I.

It's so helpful to have access to this information. To really be able to see how my blood glucose (BG) changes over the day and after each meal.

I've been doing a little experiment in the last few days, eating more high carb than I normally would, just to see what happens.

And while I did enjoy my bowl of home made Pappardelle Pasta with Duck Ragu the other night, I wasn't a fan of how high my blood sugar was the next morning.

But high blood sugar incidents aren't always as easy to pinpoint the cause. So today we're going to look at other reasons your BG might be higher than you expect.

## *What You'll Learn Today:*

- 6 most common causes of high blood glucose and what to do about them.

## 6 MOST COMMON CAUSES OF HIGH BLOOD SUGAR

### **1. Stress**

While I don't understand how it all works, stress has a huge impact on our hormones. And insulin is a hormone. So it makes sense that stress will have an impact on your blood glucose levels.

**solution:**

Start simplifying your life. Slow down. Learn how to say no. Prioritize some self care.

I meditate twice a day and it makes a huge difference for my stress levels. If you're interested in trying meditation, I recommend the free app from [Headspace](#). Or the deep calm breathing exercises in the [Oak Meditation App](#).

**2. Sickness**

There have been times I've known I'm getting sick before I've even felt ill because my blood glucose has been higher than normal. To be honest I'm not sure of the mechanism here, but it's good to know this cause and effect for times when you have puzzling BG results.

**solution:**

Rest up and get better!

**3. Exercise**

It's easy to forget that glucose is one of the types of fuel our muscles burn for energy. So when we exercise and our muscles need energy our clever bodies release glucose into the blood.

Now, before you start thinking 'Brilliant' I knew there was a good reason not to exercise, we need to take it a step further.

Our blood sugar rises during exercise because we're burning our stores of glucose. And this is what we want.

**solution:**

Choose low intensity steady state exercise like walking. And include some high intensity short bursts like sprints, kettle bell swings or lifting weights. Avoid traditional medium intensity 'cardio' like running or jogging. More on this in the Graduation Bonuses!

**4. Temperature**

Both your body temperature and the weather influence blood glucose. There's a Canadian study showing women who give birth during the summer are more likely to have gestational diabetes than Winter mothers. And I've noticed myself after a hot shower I get a little spike.

**solution:**

Move to Alaska or take cold showers (just kidding!). This is more an awareness thing, so don't be alarmed if your BG is higher in the summer or after a shower.

**5. Surprise / Hidden Carbs**

One of the tricky things with eating low carb is it isn't just sweet stuff that spikes blood glucose.

**solution:**

Review our list of [low carb vegetables and fruit](#) to make sure you're not including too many high carb choices.

If that's fine, you might like to keep a food diary. Use an app which tracks nutrient intake to see if you can pin point any hidden carbs. I use the [Cronometer App](#) with my coaching clients.

**6. Protein**

Did you know that your body converts excess protein into glucose in a process called gluconeogenesis. And that this glucose goes into your blood stream?

That's one of the reasons eating too much protein isn't a good idea.

**solution:**

If you think this is happening to you, try cutting back your protein serving sizes and replacing with our friend fat to keep you satisfied. See [Day 16](#) for a refresher on adding more fat.

## SUMMARY

### **Here's what we've covered:**

+ After eating high carb foods, the most common causes of high blood glucose are stress, exercise, temperature, hidden carbs, sickness and too much protein.

## ACTIVITY

Review your food intake and habits. Identify potential problems. Experiment with different solutions suggested above.

DAY 26.  
PROBLEM  
SOLVING:  
NOT MEETING  
YOUR HEALTH  
GOALS

If you had told me in my 20s that I would be finally happy with my body when I was in my 40s.

And that I wouldn't be running every day to do it. And that I would actually have a flat stomach (apart from the occasional bout of bloating).

There is no way I would have believed you.

I probably also wouldn't have believed that I'd have diabetes.

But here we are.

Since I've been on this path of learning to manage my blood glucose with my lifestyle, I've really found that it is a journey.

There are ups and downs.

When I find myself in a more of a 'down' situation, the most helpful approach is to treat it as an experiment.

To imagine myself as a detective, trying to figure out what's working and what's not.

To try different things and see how they make me feel.

Instead of beating myself up for not reaching my goals, I believe that I can figure it out. It's a subtle shift but it makes all the difference.

### *What You'll Learn Today:*

- 6 most common reasons you may not be meeting your health goals. And what to do about them.

## 1. Getting too hungry

Have you ever felt yourself just eating and eating like some ravenous tiger? It used to happen to me all the time.

Especially in the early days of my low carb journey.

Then I realized there was a simple cause. I wasn't eating enough during the day so I really was super hungry.

### **Solution:**

Experiment with eating more during the day, especially including more fat in your breakfasts and lunches. You might like to review [Day 16](#) for a refresher on making meals more satisfying.

## 2. Broken hunger / satiety meter

If you're not meeting your health goals another common cause is general over eating.

Trying to 'eat less' using will power will backfire because you end up getting too hungry and stoking your 'hungry tiger'.

I know. I've been there many times.

The only thing I've found that works is to reconnect with your internal hunger / satiety cues and let your body do its job of guiding you how much to eat.

### **Solution:**

Review the lessons and exercises on [Day 13](#). Mindful eating.

## 3. Over exercising

While there are many benefits of physical activity, it is possible to overdo it.

If there's one way to make me hungry, it's to go for a long run. When I ran my marathon I actually gained weight even though I was running 100km (lots of miles!) per week because I was just sooo hungry.

### **Solution:**

Experiment with cutting back on your exercise or switching to a more gentle form such as yoga or walking. Look at the bonus lesson which goes deeper into which forms of exercise are the most beneficial.

## 4. Carb Creep

This is when you start to allow more and more carbs back into your everyday foods. When you notice thoughts like 'surely a little bit of brown rice can't hurt', it's a sign carb creep is happening.

This is completely normal so don't beat yourself up.

I definitely go through phases of how many carbs I choose. It's part of being human!

But when I find the number on the scale is heading in the wrong direction or I just feel 'blah', I go back to keeping the carbs to a minimum.

### **Solution:**

Take an honest look at your food choices every day. Are you allowing too many carbs? Are you eating out too often? If the answer is yes, it's time to make some changes.

## 5. Sugar addiction

I've seen studies where mice are given the choice between addictive drugs (I think cocaine) and sugar water. And the mice choose the sweet stuff every time.

There's no doubt in my mind that sugar is especially addictive.

I've noticed in myself and in the people I've coached, the more carbs you eat, the more you want.

One mechanism driving this is that when you eat lots of sugar, it encourages sugar loving bacteria in your gut to grow.

And these crafty devils then send messages to your brain to eat more sugar so they can get their fix.

It's a vicious cycle.

**Solution:**

Experiment with taking a break from sugar. Try at least 2 weeks, then review and see how you feel.

**6. Emotional eating**

This is heading into territory way outside my expertise but I wanted to include this because it has been a personal struggle for me in the past. And occasionally still comes up for me.

Emotional eating is when we use food to 'buffer' or avoid feeling our emotions.

Back in 2004 during the worst year of my life when my first marriage fell apart, I used food. A lot. Since then I've discovered the importance of learning to actually 'feel' your feelings as the best way to process them.

It's hard and definitely takes some practice but as I learned to 'sit with' my feelings I found I was turning to food less.

**Solution:**

Get help with feeling emotions not using food. The best resource I've found is the [Intuitive Eating website](#).

SUMMARY

Here's what we've covered:

- + Getting too hungry is a really common reason for over eating.
- + Other common causes include having a broken hunger / satiety meter, over exercising, carb creep, sugar addiction and emotional eating.
- + When you're not meeting your goals imagine yourself as a detective figuring out what the problem is and how to fix it.

ACTIVITY

Review this list of common problems.

Do any of them resonate with you?

If yes, choose the one which resonates most strongly and spend a few minutes thinking about how you could experiment with solving this problem.

DAY 27.  
PROBLEM  
SOLVING:  
OVERCOMING  
CARB  
CRAVINGS +  
CARB CREEP

Can you believe tomorrow is the last day in our 28-Day journey?

Me. Neither.

If you've made it this far you've done great!

Tomorrow we're going to celebrate.

Today, is the last installment of our 'problem solving' week. I've saved the most important for last.

### *What You'll Learn Today:*

- How to deal with external pressure
- Finding the balance with restriction
- Overcoming carb cravings
- Overcoming carb creep

### HOW TO DEAL WITH EXTERNAL PRESSURE

Often you'll see in the media talk of how low carb is just another 'fad'. Or you may have friends / family / colleagues questioning your choices.

First I think it's great to question everything.

When I catch myself having doubts, I ask myself if I'm happy with what I'm eating and the results I'm getting.

Every time I've asked this the answer has been yes.

So it's a no-brainer to keep on my merry low carb way, knowing it doesn't matter what anyone else thinks, as long as I'm happy this is the right approach for me.

## FINDING THE BALANCE WITH RESTRICTION

I've seen research showing that 95% of diets fail. The conclusion is that any type of restriction won't work for the long term.

I agree, restriction can backfire. If someone tells me I can't have a bowl of pasta, then I'm automatically going to want to eat pasta.

BUT when it's just up to me, and I ask myself 'is this bowl of pasta worth it?' how will it make me feel?

I get a completely different response. I don't want the pasta.

Make sure you tap into your internal motivation and recognize you are choosing to eat low carb because it makes you feel great rather than it being something you 'should' do.

Another thing I find helpful with the low carb restriction piece is to think that we all have something in our bodies that doesn't work as well as it should.

For me, my insulin sensitivity isn't great. So the best solution for me is to eat low carb to keep my blood glucose under control.

-- PART THREE.. DAILY LESSONS --

For someone with excellent insulin sensitivity, eating low carb wouldn't necessarily make a big difference.

Back to the idea that we're all different and we need to experiment and find what works for us as individuals.

## OVERCOMING CARB CRAVINGS

There are 2 reasons cravings are a normal part of the process:

### 1. The blood glucose roller coaster.

You know the drill. The more carbs you eat, the higher your blood sugar spikes. The more insulin is released to store the sugar.

As the sugar is stored our blood sugar levels decrease rapidly causing a 'crash' which makes you feel hungry.

You eat more carbs and the whole cycle starts again.

### 2. Your gut bacteria.

As I mentioned yesterday, the other mechanism driving this is that when you eat lots of sugar / carbs it encourages sugar / carb loving bacteria in your gut to grow. Instead of the bacteria that thrive on veggies.

The carb-loving microbes then send messages to your brain to eat more sugar / carbs so they can get their fix.

So what can you do when cravings strike?

First, remember the less carbs you eat the easier it's going to be.

Ask yourself our favourite questions:

- Is it worth it?
- How will it make me feel?
- Could I have it later?
- How much do I need?

Then use your willpower to stick to that amount (if you do decide to go ahead).

And don't forget to enjoy the indulgence!

## OVERCOMING CARB CREEP

Yesterday we covered carb creep and the solution of taking an honest inventory of your everyday food choices.

I've included it again today because we live in a society where it's normal to eat a high carb diet.

Some nutritionists actually still encourage it.

It's so easy to let a sandwich for lunch creep in here and there. Or having a bagel for breakfast. Or rice for dinner.

When it happens, it's no big deal. Nothing to feel guilty or shame about. You are human!

Just reconnect with why you're choosing low carb in the first place and go back to doing what works.

## SUMMARY

Here's what we've covered:

- + It's good to question everything. As long as you're happy and getting results then you're on the right path.
- + Restriction can backfire. Make sure you tap into your internal motivation and recognize you are choosing to eat low carb because it makes you feel great rather than it being something you 'should' do.
- + When carb cravings strike, ask yourself how it will make you feel.
- + We live in a high carb world so it's important to watch out for carb creep.

## ACTIVITY

Prepare to celebrate! Think about something non-food related that you can do to celebrate. What will nurture you? What do you love to do?

DAY 28.  
YOU'VE  
MADE IT!

As I write this, I'm feeling mixed emotions. Part of me is relieved that I'm about to cross off a BIG chunk on my to-do list.

But the other part is a little bit sad our 28 day journey is over.

Or is it?

As I've shared many times, eating low carb to meet your health goals is a long term solution. The thing is, it only works if you keep doing what you're doing!

You've taken some big first steps on this journey. And I'm so proud of you for sticking with me this far.

*so what's next?*

Keep reading for some extra 'graduation' bonuses which include:

- Mindless eating and how to avoid it
- The power of fasting
- The truth about exercise
- Plus MORE!

## THE FUTURE

As someone with two small boys who has dreams of becoming a grandmother one day, I am on a mission to live a long and healthy life. I'm playing the long game here.

I'm so thankful I've developed a lifestyle where I genuinely love my low carb meals. Where I never feel deprived because I know I can choose to eat whatever I want. And that most of the time I want delicious, fresh real food.

I want you to find your happy place too. You're on the right path.

## ACTIVITY

Remember the celebration you decided on in yesterday's activity. Well now it's time to put that plan into action. Enjoy your chosen activity. You deserve it!

I'm planning to celebrate by sitting in the garden with a coffee and one of my favourite cookbooks. Can't wait.

*part four*  
BONUS LESSONS

# MINDLESS EATING

I'd always thought mindless eating was a negative thing.

Working your way through a bag of popcorn at the movies, hardly even registering a bite.

Can't be a good thing.

Can it?

And then I read the brilliant book 'Mindless Eating. Why We Eat More Than We Think' by Brian Wansink.

Which made me reconsider mindless eating.

What if we used the mindless part to our advantage?

Could mindlessness actually be helpful?

## *What You'll Learn Today:*

- What is mindLESS eating?
- 8 tips to harness the power of mindless eating

## WHAT IS MINDLESS EATING

It's when we allow external factors to govern how much and what we eat.

From an empty packet to a clean plate, we can harness these 'little things' to eat less without even noticing.

As Brian Wansink explains in his book 'Mindless Eating' we humans aren't super accurate in estimating how much we've had to eat. There's about a 20% 'mindless margin' where we won't notice the difference.

But if we stick to the lower limit of this margin we can reduce our calorie intake, without noticing the difference.

Over time, these little mindless margin differences add up.

## HOW TO HARNESS THE POWER OF MINDLESS EATING

### **1. Use small plates and glasses**

The larger the plate, the more food you're likely to pile on. And the more food on your plate the more you're likely to eat.

Same goes for glasses and wine.

I switched to smaller plates and glasses and haven't looked back.

It really makes a difference.

I actually use 23cm (9in) side plates for most meals. Or a 3 cup capacity cereal bowl for my abundance bowls and soups.

### **2. Serve your whole meal out before you start eating.**

I mentioned this idea in [mindful serving](#).

By serving yourself first, you can see how much you're planning on eating and won't fall prey to the 'buffet' syndrome.

-- PART FOUR. BONUS LESSONS --

I also mentioned I have a 'personal rule' of not having second helpings except extra salad or vegetables.

### **3. Don't store food on the counter / table / desk**

Unless you want to eat it all.

Having little bowls of snacks or treats is just too tempting for most of us to refuse. But if the same food is stored in the pantry, we're far less likely to go and get some.

### **4. Keep treats in hard to reach places**

Another case of out of sight, out of mind.

Storing indulgent food in hard to reach places makes it less likely you'll have the urge to indulge.

### **5. Serve up leftovers / lunches first**

If you've made extra dinner, it can easily be eaten before you intended. So serve up your lunch portion / intended leftovers and put them away before you start eating.

### **6. Buy smaller packages**

In 'Mindless Eating', Wansink mentioned an experiment where people were asked to prepare spaghetti bolognese from either small packs of pasta / pasta sauce / meat or large packs.

The group who prepared food from the larger packs then went on to serve themselves

(and eat) significantly larger portions.

You might want to consider breaking up with Costco now you know that preparing food from larger packs means you're more likely to eat a larger serving.

### **7. Don't clear the evidence**

In an experiment researchers got college students to watch a football game and served beers and wings.

For one group they removed the empty glasses and cleared the plates periodically.

For the other group they let the bones and empty glasses pile up.

No prizes for guessing which group ate and drank significantly more!

### **8. Only serve healthy food 'family style'**

For weeknight meals I tend to plate up our meals in the kitchen and then serve extra salads or veg in the middle of the table. So we can easily have more salad or veg. But if anyone wants more meat or potatoes, they have to go into the kitchen to get more.

Of course, sometimes it doesn't make sense to plate up first, like when we have a lot of guests. In that case I make sure I follow tip number 2. and fill my plate before I start eating.

## SUMMARY

Here's what we've covered:

- + We can use mindless eating to eat less without noticing.
- + Some ways are to use smaller plates and serve food out (and put away leftovers) before starting to eat.

## UPDATE

Brian Wansink has been discredited and some of his academic papers have been retracted.

Yet even though the science behind all his findings may not be validated, I personally use the recommendations listed here and still find them valuable.

## ACTIVITY

Which of the mindless eating tips resonates with you most? Choose one mindless eating opportunity and start / stop doing it.

# THE POWER OF FASTING

I remember the first time I came across the concept of fasting.

It made sense... of course if you don't eat for long periods of time you'll lose weight.

BUT what would it be like to skip meals?

Would it be some form of torture?

Long story short, while I was surprised how I could survive without eating. My first few attempts were really hard.

So I gave up on the idea.

Until a few years later when I thought I'd try again.

This time I was eating fairly low carb. It amazed me how much easier fasting was.

And how great the results were.

These days fasting is a key part of my health strategy. I pretty much skip breakfast every day and once or twice a week I skip dinner too so I get in a 23-24 hour fast.

If this sounds crazy, keep reading...

I promise it will be worth it!

## *What You'll Learn Today:*

- Why fasting can be helpful.
- The different types of fasting.
- How to fast.

## WHY FASTING?

### 1. Improves insulin sensitivity

As you know, insulin is also known as the 'fat storage' hormone. The more sensitive your body is, the less insulin you need and the less likely you are to be storing fat and putting on weight. Win win win!

### 2. Lose weight / fat

Of everything I've tried, it's the easiest way to lose weight, fat in particular.

How it works is that when you're fasting, you stop eating and your body has to switch over to burning fat for fuel instead of burning carbs.

So, you're directly burning that fat you've stored.

### 3. Increases human growth hormone naturally

Human growth hormone is awesome for repair and growth of tissues.

I really notice my hair and nails are stronger and grow much faster.

This hormone also helps slow down the aging process.

### 4. More time

I love that on fasting days, you don't have to spend all this time preparing food and cleaning up.

If you're not having dinner there's so much more time in the evenings to spend on yourself.

### 5. WON'T reduce metabolism or reduce muscle mass

There's a myth that if you don't eat, it's going to reduce your metabolism and / or reduce your muscle mass.

From everything I've read about fasting and my own personal experience, this is absolutely not true.

We're actually designed so that in times of famine, our bodies switch to burning fat and preserve our muscle mass.

From an evolutionary perspective it makes sense that when there isn't much food we don't start eating our own muscles which would jeopardize our ability to hunt and gather to feed ourselves.

### 6. It makes food taste better!

Another benefit is that when I do start eating again, I find food tastes so amazing!

I'm naturally drawn to eat really mindfully and really enjoy my food. It makes food even more special!

## 5 DIFFERENT TYPES OF FASTS

### 1. Skip breakfast

This is something I do every day. I find it's the easiest method because you wake up and you're already in a fasting state so it's really easy to just keep going.

This is probably contrary to everything you've heard about the importance of a healthy breakfast. The thing to be mindful of is that the only problem with skipping breakfast is, if you get really hungry and make bad food choices when you do decide to eat.

So, if you skip breakfast and then have cookies at 11 o'clock instead of having breakfast, it would have been better to have a healthy breakfast.

But if you skip breakfast and your next meal is healthy, there's absolutely nothing wrong with skipping breakfast. As I mentioned before, it's not going to reduce your metabolism. You don't need to eat all these little meals every day to keep your blood sugar stable.

It's actually the opposite. The less often you eat, the less likely you are to spike your blood sugar.

## 2. Skip dinner

This can be a little bit harder because you have lunch and then you need to transition to a fasted state. When it gets to dinner time you're tired and it can be tough.

But if you can just push through and distract yourself then you wake up the next morning and you haven't eaten anything since lunch the day before. – a 24 hour fast.

My favourite distraction technique is to drink lots of water. I also focus on using the time in the evening to do something fun like reading a good book or doing some knitting.

It's great to have the extra time. Going to bed early and getting some extra sleep can also help.

I'm finding we're also saving heaps of money on food.

## 3. The 5:2 diet

Michael Mosley, an English doctor and journalist, writes about an approach to fasting where two days a week, you 'fast' by only eating 500 calories per day (600 for men).

You can spread it out however you like. You could have 500 calories all in one meal. You could spread it in three little meals across the day.

It's really up to you.

I'm not a huge fan because I find counting calories is a pain and takes the fun out of eating. I find it easier just to not eat at all.

But this 500 calories can be a really great starting place if you're new to fasting.

If you'd like to try this, Michael Mosley's book, 'The Fast Diet' would be a good one to check out.

## 4. Eat-stop-eat – 24 hour fast

If you're a bit more adventurous and you're ready to try a 24-hour fast, there's a book called, 'Eat, Stop Eat'. Essentially you'd have lunch on say Tuesday, you skip dinner, skip breakfast and then have lunch on the Wednesday. So you get 24 hours fasting but there's no day where you're going without food.

## 5. 36 hour fast

This is the most extreme fast I've tried. Basically I eat dinner, say, on Tuesday night, and not eat anything for the all of Wednesday and then just have breakfast or lunch to break my fast on Friday morning.

## HOW TO FAST

**IMPORTANT: Make sure you check with your doctor before experimenting with fasting. Especially if you are on any medication.**

### 1. Get off the carb / blood sugar roller coaster.

Since you're a graduate of 'How to Love Your Waistline', you're already all over this. But I thought I'd mention it in case you're recommending fasting to a friend. When you're on the carb roller coaster, fasting is so much harder.

I noticed this a few months ago I was fasting the day after Fergal's birthday when I'd had some of his white chocolate birthday cake. My fast was soo hard. Where I normally hardly think about it, I really struggled and ended up breaking my fast early. The next week, though I was back to my low carb ways and my fast was easy.

### 2. Experiment with what works for you.

Once you're eating relatively low carb, then it's up to you to experiment with what works for you. As we've covered, there are many ways to include fasting in as part of your lifestyle.

### 3. Be gentle with yourself.

It can be difficult at first particularly if your body is not used to going without food and you are eating a lot of carbs.

One of the biggest problems is irritability. If that happens or if you're really struggling, just eat something. It's no big deal. Try again another day or week.

Sometimes you'll fast and it will feel amazing. You'll feel really great and you'll just cruise through it.

Then other days it will be a hard slog.

If you're stressed or haven't had a great sleep, there can be days where every five minutes you're thinking about food. If that happens or if you get to a point where you're grumpy, just eat something and try again another day.

Be gentle with yourself and give your body time to learn this new skill.

#### **4. Remember to eat normally when you break your fast.**

It can be tempting to reward yourself with extra food once you do stop fasting. But it's important to just eat normally as if you hadn't fasted at all so you don't undo all your good work.

#### **5. Resource**

I love [this free app](#) for tracking my fasting. It also has some great video content on the benefits of fasting.

**NOTE:** *If you are on insulin or medication to lower your blood sugar, have any health problems or if you've had any eating disorders in the past, fasting is probably not suitable for you. Check with your doctor or your health professional before you start fasting.*

## SUMMARY

Here's what we've covered:

- + Fasting improves insulin sensitivity, helps weight loss, increases human growth hormone and makes food taste amazing (when you do eat)!
- + There are many different styles of fasting to experiment with.
- + To start fasting, skipping breakfast is the easiest first step.

## ACTIVITY

If you'd like to experiment, choose one fasting method and decide when you're going to try it out. Of course check with your doctor first.

# MINDFUL EATING

Want to know the easiest way to enjoy your food more AND avoid over eating?

It may sound like it wouldn't help, but I've found eating mindfully makes a world of difference.

It takes some practice but it's a habit I highly recommend you experiment with.

## *What You'll Learn Today:*

- What is mindful eating?
- How mindful eating can help
- How to start eating mindfully
- Resource

## WHAT IS MINDFUL EATING?

Mindful eating is the practice of focusing on the act of eating while you are eating. It's all about paying attention to each bite rather than devouring your meal on autopilot.

## HOW MINDFUL EATING CAN HELP

By slowing down and really focusing on my food I find I actually enjoy my meals more. Plus I am more likely to stop eating at the sweet spot of when I am satisfied but not over-stuffed.

Chewing more thoroughly, also helps with digestion. And helps me feel more in control.

# HOW TO START EATING MINDFULLY

## 1. Set your expectations.

Like meditation, eating mindfully is a practice. So don't expect to be able to eat every meal perfectly mindfully from the beginning. It's a habit that will take time to develop.

There are still some meals where I completely forget to eat mindfully and that's OK. I don't get frustrated because I know it's a practice. I just remind myself to go back to mindfulness next meal.

## 2. Remove distractions.

You can't focus on your meal if you're checking email or watching TV. Turn off your devices and sit down at a table so you are comfortable. This goes for snacks too.

If I'm having a snack, I try and serve it out into a bowl / plate and sit down to eat. Doesn't always happen but I'm working on it!

## 3. Appreciate the appearance.

Have a good look at your food. What looks appealing? Which bite are you excited about starting with?

## 4. Focus on chewing.

Put down your cutlery and pay attention to how the food feels in your mouth. When you feel the urge to swallow, chew a few more times to slow down the process.

## 5. Wait.

Wait before there is no more food in your mouth before loading up your fork for the next mouthful. When you pick up your fork, remind yourself to check that your mouth is empty.

## 6. Repeat

Keep focusing on chewing and taking each bite one step at a time. Keep eating until you feel satisfied. I find it helpful to have a mental 'check in' with my hunger meter to figure out when to stop.

Again this is a practice, you'll get better with time. I'm still working on it!

## RESOURCE

If you'd like more help with Mindful Eating, my friend Darya Rose has a free 5-day email course that's super helpful. [Signup for free over here.](#)

## SUMMARY

Here's what we've covered:

+ Mindful eating is the easiest way I've found to enjoy your food more AND avoid over eating.

+ To get started remove distractions, sit at a table, chew thoroughly, wait until your mouth is empty before loading up your fork for the next bite. Repeat until you are satisfied.

+ If you'd like more help check out Darya's [Mindful Meal Challenge.](#)

## ACTIVITY

Choose a meal to start eating mindfully, preferably one where you can be on your own. Follow the steps above.

# THE TRUTH ABOUT EXERCISE

Did you notice that throughout the whole program so far we haven't talked about exercise?

It wasn't a mistake.

It was a deliberate choice on my part.

Let's discover why...

## *What You'll Learn Today:*

- The number 1 myth about exercise.
- 7 benefits of moving your body.
- What type of exercise is best?
- My current exercise habits
- Resource

## THE NUMBER 1 MYTH ABOUT EXERCISE.

There is lots of research that shows that exercise does not help people lose weight. It does help weight maintenance but not loss.

The study that really drove this fact home to me was conducted by Danish researchers. They took a group of sedentary, overweight people and over 18 months trained them to run a marathon.

The findings were very telling. Of the men, there was an average weight loss of something like a few pounds but the women in the study averaged no change to their weight.

Imagine running 42km and not losing anything.

This is consistent with my own experience.

In 2005, I decided to run the Sydney marathon. At the height of my training I was running over 90km a week. Which is a lot of running, trust me.

And while I certainly felt a lot fitter and had more energy, my appetite was enormous. Even though I tried to eat a normal amount of food, I couldn't help myself.

So my weight stayed about the same.

But before you start thinking it's good to be a couch potato there are plenty of other reasons to use physical activity to help meet your health goals...

## 7 BENEFITS OF MOVING YOUR BODY

### **1. Helps manage your blood glucose.**

This is huge! When you exercise, the first energy you burn is your short term glucose stores called glycogen.

Then when you eat and your blood sugar rises, the glycogen stores are empty so your body can quickly fill them up again, bringing your blood glucose back down quickly.

If you haven't exercised and emptied out your glycogen the new glucose from the food you eat gets stored as, you guessed it, fat.

The other way exercise helps is that muscles store and use much more glucose than fat.

So anything that builds your muscles increases your sensitivity to insulin and helps manage your blood glucose.

### **2. Improves mood**

Exercise promotes positive brain chemistry which means you'll feel better and be more likely to make healthier choices.

Which means you'll feel better and make better choices – a positive feedback loop.

### **3. Decreasing depression**

My Dad has suffered from depression most of his life. These days thankfully, he has it under control.

And while the medication helps, he says he feels so much better when he walks every day than if he isn't.

### **4. Combat chronic disease**

Exercise helps improve your blood pressure and cholesterol levels which decreases your

chances of suffering from things like heart disease and certain cancers.

### **5. Energy levels**

It's funny but so true. The more energy you use, the more you have.

### **6. Better sleep**

Exercise not only helps you get to sleep more quickly, it also improves the quality of your sleep.

And sleep in turn helps balance your hunger and satiety hormones which makes it easier to balance your appetite and avoid over eating.

### **7. Improves your sex life**

Both men and women experience more enhanced arousal when they are more physically fit.

### **8. Stimulates appetite**

My Irishman always says 'hunger is a tasty sauce' and he's absolutely right.

I find things always taste better when I'm hungry and there's nothing like physical activity to stimulate your appetite, well apart from point 7.

## WHAT TYPE OF EXERCISE IS BEST?

So running marathons is off the list (unless of course you love running long distances, in which case keep going for it!).

I also recommend avoiding other cardio that makes you really hungry like swimming.

So what should you do?

### 1. Anything you love

If it's going to be a long term habit for you, you're going to be much more successful if you build your habits around activities you love. Walking, gardening, surfing, playing tennis or lawn bowls.

Find something that you love to do and would want to do even if there weren't any health benefits.

You're looking for internal motivation, activities that you do because they make you feel good.

Because (a.) you're more likely to do it and (b.) the you're less likely to undo all your work by 'rewarding' yourself with a muffin because you've been so 'good' and gone for a run.

Exercise moralizing is off limits just the same as the food moralizing we covered on [Day 23](#).

### 2. Incidental exercise

This includes all the activities you do that don't involve getting into your gym gear or other formal exercise.

It's walking around the house, doing the gardening, moving fire wood. These activities are powerful because they burn glucose without increasing hunger.

### 3. Anything that builds muscles

After age 30 our muscle mass decreases every year. This is part of the reason why our blood sugar and weight get harder to manage with age. So the older we get, the more important it is to actually build muscle by lifting heavy things.

### 4. Anything that raises your heart rate.

This includes short bursts of really high intensity activity. Like a 30 second sprint or 15 seconds of pedaling as hard as you can on a bike. Or kettle bell swings. For more on this see the resource video.

## MY CURRENT EXERCISE HABITS

To give you an idea how I apply this in my own life, here's what my ideal week looks like.

### Every morning (apart from Sunday)

50 Kettle Bell Swings (high intensity)  
Run for 30 minutes (because I love it)

### Every afternoon or evening

10 minutes ab exercises [like this](#) (build muscles / fix post-baby belly) or a 15 minute relaxing yoga kryia.

### Sundays

20-30 minute arm workout (build muscles)  
I was following an app to lift weights and do pushups etc. but am now just making it up myself.

### Mondays

20 minute leg workout (build muscles)  
I was following an app to do step-ups and squats but am now just doing 3 sets of 25 Kettle Bell swings.

### Sundays

Some sort of incidental exercise / things I love like gardening or moving fire wood.

I don't always get everything done every single day / week but most weeks I get close.

## RESOURCE

Watch this documentary on the [Truth About Exercise](#) by one of my favourite authors Dr Michael Mosely. His books are worth checking out as well.

## SUMMARY

Here's what we've covered:

- + Exercise doesn't directly cause weight loss.
- + The benefits of exercise include better blood glucose control, improved mood, decreased appetite, better sleep and more.
- + The best exercise is something you love.
- + Try and include incidental exercise, something to build muscle and something high intensity.

## ACTIVITY

1. Watch the video in the resources section.
2. Think about your current exercise activities. What's working well for you? What could you improve?
3. Choose one exercise habit you want to change or build and work out a plan to achieve this.

# 7 REASONS TO FOCUS ON SLEEP

We all know we should be getting our 7-8 hours a night. But do you know why?

## **1. Assists with weight loss**

[Recent studies](#) have found that adequate sleep increased the likelihood of people trying to lose weight meet their goal.

## **2. Promotes a healthy balance of hormones**

Sufficient sleep can help increase your metabolism and increase your leptin levels, one of the hormones responsible for helping us feel full.

## **3. Strengthens your immune system**

During sleep we produce proteins which help repair our body and immune system.

## **4. Reduces stress**

Adequate sleep can reduce blood pressure and stress hormone levels. This also assists with the weight loss benefits.

## **5. Improves memory**

No one likes feeling vague. Who knew sleep could help?

## **6. Improves your moods and your mental health**

My Dad suffers from depression and he keeps telling me that his shrink is always stressing the importance of sleep to generally lift moods, but especially so in those inclined towards depression.

## **7. Makes you more likely to be successful**

Arianna Huffington: How to succeed? Get more sleep  
I loved [this short talk](#) about the benefits of sleep.

# FRUCTOSE AND THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT

After years of being told that we should eat a variety of fruit, I know it can seem a little counter-intuitive to ditch fruit from your diet (apart from the occasional treat).

So I wanted to dig a little deeper into the reasons why fruit is a no-go. Just in case you were tempted to let a little fruit or sweet treat creep back into your daily eating habits.

While fruit does contain vitamins and antioxidants, it is loaded with sugar. So the carbohydrate content of fruit unfortunately is too great to justify the vitamins. It's much wiser to rely on vegetables for their antioxidants and other benefits and leave the fruit for special occasions.

Tomatoes and avocados, which I think of more as vegetables, are technically fruit. They are allowed because they aren't high in fructose.

Apart from just being high in carbohydrates, fruit contains sugar mostly in the form of fructose, or 'fruit-sugar'. The problem with fructose is that our bodies can only process it in our liver.

Our livers aren't designed to handle the high fructose in a diet rich in fruit (or high fructose corn syrup). So when we eat lots of fructose our liver converts it to fat and either stores it as fat in our liver or sends it off to be stored in our fat tissue.

As Gary Taubes points out in 'Why We Get Fat', 'Even forty years ago biochemists referred to fructose as the most 'lipogenic' carbohydrate – it's the one we convert to fat the most readily'.

## FRUCTOSE + INSULIN RESISTANCE

Over time, exposure to fructose makes our livers more and more resistant to insulin which also causes our muscle tissue to become more resistant to insulin. Which means we need more insulin to do the same job of regulating our blood sugar levels. Enough said.

## FRUCTOSE + CHOLESTEROL

In the '4-Hour Body', Tim Ferriss experimented with the effects of fructose in the form of a twice daily large glass of orange juice in the morning and before bed.

After only one week of his daily orange juice habit, his cholesterol went from 203 to 243 (which is out of the healthy range).

His LDL cholesterol followed a similar pattern.

So from this small experiment it appears that fructose not only has a negative impact on insulin resistance, it also negatively impacts cholesterol.

## FRUCTOSE + IRON

The other surprising result from Ferriss' orange juice experiment was that his iron levels went from normal to way above the normal range.

For men this is particularly bad because they don't menstruate and therefore don't have a way of getting rid of excess iron.

Excess iron has been implicated with an increased number of heart attacks in otherwise healthy males.

## SOURCES OF FRUCTOSE

While fruit is an obvious source of fructose, it's a good idea to keep an eye out for other, less obvious sources.

High fructose corn syrup is used extensively by food manufacturers these days, mainly because it is one of the cheaper sources of sugar.

HFCS contains the same fructose as in fruit so it's important to make sure you also keep anything with HFCS to very special occasions.

Normal white table sugar, also called sucrose is actually made up of half glucose and half fructose.

So any sugar in your tea or in baked goods made with sugar is about half fructose.

Fructose is also the main sugar found in agave nectar so it's not a healthy choice.

## MISSING THE SWEETNESS?

Cinnamon in your coffee can be a great way to give a little sweet boost without resorting to the sugar pot.

Vanilla extract (not vanilla essence which is artificial vanilla) can also make things taste sweeter without sugar.

If you really need a sweetener, I use stevia either as a pure powder or blended with the sugar alcohol erythritol.

And check out the sweet treats section of the book for plenty of delicious ideas to keep your sweet tooth happy.

# 13 TIPS FOR BEATING SUGAR CRAVINGS

## IS SUGAR REALLY ADDICTIVE?

Absolutely! Sugar stimulates reward centers in our brains similar to those for drugs such as cocaine and nicotine. This can override your self control and lead to addiction.

A study in 2007 of laboratory rats found that when given the choice between water sweetened with sugar and cocaine, 94% of the rats chose the sweet water over the cocaine.

## WHAT'S WRONG WITH BEING ADDICTED TO SUGAR?

Firstly there are the issues arising from sugar (and carbs such as white bread and pasta) spiking blood sugar levels. This results in insulin being released in our bodies, causing us to go into fat storage mode. As a result we gain weight rather than burning our food for fuel.

But that's not all.

Sugar is also associated with problems such as heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, premature aging and decreased immunity. Not a pretty picture.

## 13 TIPS FOR BEATING SUGAR CRAVINGS

### **1. Eat regular meals**

And include healthy snacks too, if your body needs them. This helps decrease the likelihood of hunger which manifests itself as a craving for sweets.

### **2. Choose low GI foods**

By choosing to eat low GI foods you'll be avoiding any blood sugar spikes and insulin release. Often insulin is a bit too effective in reducing blood sugar levels so they end up being too low. Which of course stimulates cravings for, you guessed it, more sweets.

### **3. Have 'breakfast' at a consistent time every day**

The time when we break fast each day is important for setting the circadian rhythm of our digestion processes. Keeping to a consistent time for your first bite of the day helps keep everything working smoothly. I generally fast for breakfast and have my first meal at midday. If I'm not going to be eating until later, I have a snack of nuts at midday to keep my circadian clocks on time.

### **4. Incorporate fat and protein at every meal**

This is an easy way to ensure your body is getting the fuel you need, without spiking blood sugar.

### **5. Use spices**

Try cinnamon or vanilla in your coffee because they add sweetness without actually adding sugar. When I'm feeling like I need something sweet, I have a cup of tea infused with a cinnamon stick and it tends to hit the spot.

Other 'sweet' spices to consider are nutmeg, cloves and cardamom. Licorice tea is another favourite.

### **6. Consider taking vitamin and mineral supplements**

Normally I'm against supplements because I feel it's best to get nutrients from food.

But nutrient deficiencies can exacerbate cravings so it may be helpful to take a supplement to get you through your craving period.

### **7. Exercise**

Another trick that helps me is to go for a walk or a run. This boosts my energy levels and definitely takes my mind off the chocolate.

### **8. Consider a sugar fast**

A short detox from 2 weeks to a few months where you cut out all of the sweet stuff can help reset your body's need for sugar. It also helps your taste buds adjust so when you do have something sweet you won't need as much. These days I find even 70% cocoa solids chocolate incredibly sweet.

Don't make the mistake of going on a juice fast, because juices are high sugar and this is the opposite of what we want.

### **9. Avoid artificial sweeteners**

You don't want to substitute one addiction for another. Of course it's up to you. If you must eat something sweet, I recommend using the natural sweetener Stevia instead.

### **10. Look for sugar in disguise**

Of course if you're following the Stonesoup way of eating you'll already be avoiding 'complex' carbohydrates such as bread, rice and pasta.

But it's good to remember that these are broken down into simple sugars in our bodies and have the same impact on blood sugar levels as chowing down on a bowl of sweets. Carb cravings are really just sugar cravings in disguise.

### **11. Be open to exploring emotional issues around your sugar addiction**

Given that sweet treats are often associated with rewards and expressions of love, it should come as no surprise that our relationship with sugar can be on an emotional level as well. A craving for sugar could be a sign that an emotional need isn't being met.

A great place to start overcoming this is to form the habit of asking 'what am I feeling now?' and checking in with your feelings whenever you feel an urge for something sweet.

### **12. Drink lots of water**

Sometimes we can mistake the signals from our bodies. Make sure your craving for sugar isn't really a symptom of dehydration.

### **13. Look at your sleep**

Sugar cravings can be a symptom of fatigue. So make sure you're getting enough quality sleep to put your body in the best place to beat cravings. Sleep is also important for regulating your hunger and satiety hormones so there are added benefits from getting good quality sleep.

FURTHER READING

# FURTHER READING

## BOOKS

The Big Fat Surprise by Nina Teicholz

Grain Brain by Dr David Perlmutter

The Longevity Paradox by Dr Stephen Gundry

The Paleo Solution by Robb Wolf

Why We Get Fat by Gary Taubes

The 4-Hour Body by Timothy Ferriss

The Happiness Advantage by Sean Achor

Atomic Habits by James Clear

## BLOGS / WEBSITES

Mark's Daily Apple

Zen Habits

Summer Tomato

Low Carb Down Under

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR



The author of this eCookbook is Jules Clancy, a former Food Scientist turned Author and Simplicity Lover.

I only write recipes with 6-Ingredients or less. I'm on a mission to help you SIMPLIFY your cooking.

Why?

Because I know that by keeping things simple, weeknight dinners need not take loads of energy or time.

**Because I believe cooking and eating are two of life's great pleasures.**

Because I believe cooking for yourself is one of the best things you can do for your own health and well being.

Plus home cooking is so much fun!.

I have degrees in both food and wine science but I like to think I'm not a nerd.

In January 2010, I packed in my day job as a chocolate biscuit designer to become a full time blogger over at Stonesoup.

When I'm not cooking, writing about food, thinking about my next meal or taking photographs [of food], I can be found hanging out with my husband, 'the Irishman' and our sons Fergal and Finbar.

Or indulging my passions for growing my own veggies, reading cookbooks like novels, running, wine, shoes and cheese.

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