



# A Vegetarian Family Recipe Book

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# Introduction

*For Simon, Chloe & Harriet*

*and Caroline*

This is not a 'Masterchef' or 'Instagram' approach to cooking. It is simply a collection of recipes that I have regularly made at home for family and friends over the last 25 years. They are, for the most part, vegetarian versions of classic British dishes or popular international ones. I do not like the current vogue in restaurants, and increasingly some vegetarian recipe books, to fail to name, categorise or even describe a dish; instead just listing the ingredients.

There are very few starters as I rarely cook them, except for the occasional formal dinner party, but many of the soups could also double up as a starter. Similarly, there are only a few sweet dishes, as I don't often cook puddings or bake cakes, preferring instead to buy from a good patisserie, as and when required. There are however, sections on both Christmas and babyfood, which generally don't feature prominently in most vegetarian cookbooks, but tend to be the subjects you are most questioned about by non-vegetarians! The section on 'Other' covers picnics, barbecues etc.

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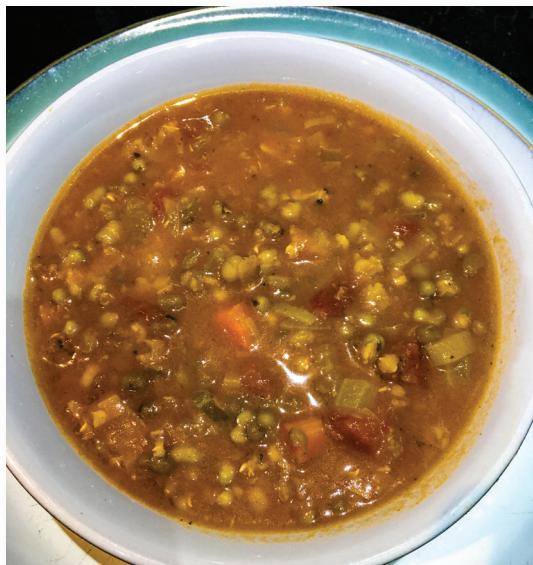
# Soups

*I've always made a great deal of soup. It is one of the quickest ways of getting a healthy home-cooked meal on the table after work. Make the meal more substantial by serving with plenty of bread and cheese, and fresh fruit and yoghurt afterwards.*

*All recipes will feed 6-8 people unless otherwise stated.*

# Mung Bean Soup

This soup is one of our long-standing family favourites. It's very easy to make and freezes very well.



## INGREDIENTS

- 250g mung beans soaked in cold water for at least 6 hours
- 2 tins chopped tomatoes
- 1 large onion (diced)
- 1 leek (diced)
- 2 carrots (peeled and diced)
- 1 stick of celery (diced)
- good squeeze of tomato purée
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- 4 vegetarian stock cubes (not crumbly variety)
- generous season of salt and pepper
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 ½ litres of water

## METHOD

- 1 Soak the mung beans for at least 6 hours in enough cold water to cover them. Drain when ready to use.
- 2 Fry the onion gently in the olive oil in a large saucepan for 3 minutes and then add the diced carrot, leek and celery. Fry for a further 3-4 minutes.
- 3 Put all of the other ingredients into the saucepan and bring to the boil.
- 4 Turn down and simmer for 45 minutes.
- 5 Allow the soup to cool for about 10 minutes and then check the seasoning. You may wish to add another half a stock cube at this point.
- 6 Serve with warm crusty bread and cheese.

# Spicy Tomato & Black Bean Soup

This is a delicious and warming soup, full of Mexican flavours. Ideal for keeping out the cold winter chill!



## INGREDIENTS

- 200g black turtle beans, soaked in cold water for 8 hours
- 1 stick of celery, finely chopped
- 1 carrot, diced
- 1 red pepper, finely chopped
- 1 large white onion, diced
- 1 clove of garlic, finely chopped or crushed
- 1 red chilli, finely chopped
- 1 litre of passata
- 2 teaspoons of dried oregano
- 1 bay leaf
- 3 vegetable stock cubes
- A good squeeze of tomato purée
- 1 handful of finely chopped fresh coriander
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 litre of water
- A dash of lime juice
- $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon sugar
- $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon smoked paprika
- salt & pepper to taste
- natural yoghurt or sour cream to serve

## METHOD

1. Drain the beans and place them in a saucepan covered with fresh water. Bring to the boil and boil for ten minutes. Drain.
2. Fry onion, garlic and chilli in the olive oil for 5 minutes. Add the chopped carrot, pepper and celery, and continue to sweat for 5 minutes.
3. Add the dried oregano, passata, bay leaf, stock cubes, water, tomato purée, sugar, salt, drained black beans, and smoked paprika.
4. Bring to the boil. Turn down low and simmer for 45 minutes, stirring occasionally.
5. Add the chopped coriander and check the seasoning.
6. Serve topped with a tablespoon of natural yoghurt or sour cream.

# Broccoli & Stilton Soup

*I always make this soup at Christmas and it is definitely one of my family's favourites! The proportions for the stilton and the wine are a little vague, as I find that the depth of flavour varies considerably depending on how dry the wine is and what quality Stilton you use. This soup freezes well.*

## INGREDIENTS

- 500g grated stilton cheese, plus extra to taste.
- 880g broccoli, (roughly 2 heads) finely chopped
- 2 large white onions
- 1 ½ pints boiling water with 3½ hard vegetarian stock cubes dissolved into it
- 75g butter
- ¾ pint dry white wine, plus extra to taste.
- ½ pint whole milk
- salt & pepper to taste
- a dash of olive oil
- 1 bay leaf

## METHOD

1. Chop the broccoli into very small pieces including the stalk.
2. Chop the onion. Add a dash of olive oil to a large saucepan and melt the butter on top of it.  
Add the chopped onion, and simmer on a low heat for 5 minutes, stirring regularly. Do not allow the onion to brown.
3. Add the broccoli to the pan and mix well with the onion. Simmer gently for 5 minutes.
4. Add the vegetable stock, bay leaf and the wine and bring to the boil.
5. Simmer with the lid on for 20 minutes.
6. Allow to cool a little and liquidise in the saucepan, removing the bay leaf first.
7. Add the milk and mix well. You may need to process the soup again with the blender.
8. Add the grated stilton and gently warm the soup on a very low heat to melt it. Add freshly ground black pepper and salt to taste.
9. You may need to add further grated stilton and/or further splash of wine to achieve the desired depth of yumminess!

# Minestrone Soup

I love minestrone soup and make endless variants of it. The vegetables all tend to alter according to what I have got in the fridge, and I often use kale or spinach instead of the cabbage. These are the general proportions though. I personally prefer the soup with barley instead of the spaghetti. It makes enough for 6-8 people and leftovers freeze well.



## INGREDIENTS

- 2 tins chopped tomatoes with herbs
- 1 400g can of beans eg borlotti beans or cannellini beans
- 1 large handful of green lentils
- 1 leek, diced
- 1 stick of celery, diced
- 1 carrot, peeled and diced
- 1 parsnip, peeled and diced
- ½ courgette, diced
- 1 red pepper cut into 2cm strips
- 12 fine green beans, topped and tailed and cut in half
- 3 leaves of green cabbage/spring greens, finely shredded
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- ½ red chilli, finely chopped
- 3 litres of water
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon dried, rosemary, partially crushed in a pestle & mortar
- 1 good squeeze tomato purée
- a dash of lemon juice
- 1 bay leaf
- 3 vegetarian stock cubes
- 1 teaspoon marmite
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- A glug of red wine
- 1 handful fresh parsley and basil leaves, finely chopped
- salt & pepper to taste
- 50 g spaghetti broken into short lengths or 100g pearl barley

## METHOD

1. Heat the olive oil in a very large saucepan and fry the onion, garlic and chilli over a gentle heat for 2-3 minutes.
2. Add the rest of the vegetables, except the cabbage and green beans, and the rosemary and thyme and fry for a further 2-3 minutes. >

3. Add the canned tomatoes, water, stock cubes, marmite, bay leaf, dried green lentils, dried oregano, sugar, lemon and tomato purée and salt, and bring to the boil.
4. Add the cabbage, green beans, spaghetti or barley and the canned beans. Turn down to simmer.
5. Simmer for about 40 minutes with the lid on, stirring regularly.
6. Turn off the heat and add the fresh parsley and basil, a good glug of red wine and freshly ground pepper.
7. Allow to stand and serve topped with grated parmesan cheese.

## Curried Butternut Squash & Sweet Potato Soup

*I'm not a huge fan of butternut squash or sweet potatoes, which seem to be having 'a moment' on restaurant menus. I find that they're often under-cooked and over-utilised! However, I do like this soup, and the spices help to temper the natural sweetness.*

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 butternut squash (approx. 1.4kg) peeled, de-seeded and diced
- 2 sweet potatoes, peeled and diced
- 1 stick of celery, diced
- $\frac{1}{2}$  parsnip, peeled and diced
- 1 leek, topped and tailed and chopped
- 1 large onion, peeled and diced
- 2 cloves of garlic, peeled and finely diced
- $\frac{1}{2}$  red chilli, de-seeded and finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon of cumin seeds, partly crushed in a pestle and mortar
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- salt and pepper to taste
- 4 vegetarian stock cubes
- 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  litres of water
- 1 bay leaf
- dash of lemon juice
- 1 handful finely chopped fresh coriander
- 1 tablespoon medium curry powder

### METHOD

1. Heat the olive oil in a large saucepan and gently fry the onion, garlic, chilli, and cumin seeds for 3 minutes.
2. Add the chopped vegetables and stir. Add a pprox half a teaspoon of salt and allow to sweat with the lid on for a further 5 minutes.
3. Add the water, stock cubes, bay leaf and curry powder and bring to the boil.
4. Turn down and simmer for 30-40 minutes.
5. Blend in the saucepan with a stick blender. Add the lemon juice and coriander and season to taste.

# Leek, Potato & Fennel Soup

An easy to make and very tasty soup

## INGREDIENTS

- 3 large leeks, topped and tailed and chopped
- 2 sticks of celery, diced
- 1 bulb of fennel, topped and tailed and diced
- 4 medium sized potatoes, peeled and diced
- 1 large clove of garlic, peeled and finely diced
- 1 large onion, peeled and diced
- 2 stalks of lemongrass, topped and tailed and diced
- 2 litres of water
- 4 vegetarian stock cubes
- 1 bay leaf
- salt & pepper to taste
- 1 large handful finely chopped fresh parsley
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- 2 tablespoons vermouth or dry white wine
- 1 tablespoon olive oil

## METHOD

1. Heat the olive oil in a large saucepan and add the onion, garlic and lemongrass and fry gently for 2-3 minutes.
2. Add the leeks and fennel and half a teaspoon of salt, and sweat over a low heat for 5 minutes.
3. Add the sugar and the potatoes and stir for a further minute.
4. Add the water, stock cubes and bay leaf and bring to the boil.
5. Simmer for approx 30-40 minutes until all the vegetables are soft.
6. Temporarily remove the bay leaf and blend in the saucepan using a stick blender. You may wish to add further water at this stage if you prefer a thinner consistency.
7. Add the parsley and vermouth and allow to cool. Season to taste.

# Roasted Red Pepper & Tomato Soup

This soup is full of antioxidants and really feels like it is doing you good. Ideal for a wintry evening when you are feeling under the weather!



## INGREDIENTS

- 2 red peppers
- 6 fresh tomatoes, halved and cored
- 1 can of chopped tomatoes with herbs
- 1 large clove of garlic, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 stick of celery, diced
- $\frac{1}{2}$  red chilli, de-seeded and finely chopped
- 1 leek, chopped
- 1 carrot, peeled and diced
- 1 parsnip, peeled and diced
- 1 bay leaf
- paprika (optional)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- a good squeeze of tomato purée
- 3 vegetarian stock cubes
- 2 litres of water
- 1 handful finely chopped fresh basil
- 1 teaspoon dried rosemary
- 1 teaspoon dried Italian mixed herbs
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon sugar
- salt & pepper

## METHOD

1. Put 1 tablespoon olive oil into a small roasting dish and heat for ten minutes in the oven at 200°.
2. Then add the fresh tomatoes, rosemary, Italian mixed herbs, garlic and chilli to the roasting pan. Coat everything in the hot oil and season generously. Roast in the oven for 20 minutes, turning the contents over once during the cooking time.
3. Blacken and blister the red peppers. This can be done under a hot grill, over a gas hob with tongs, or in the same hot oven as the tomatoes.
4. Cover the red peppers with clingfilm and allow to cool. Remove the blackened skins and de-seed. Chop the red pepper flesh. This part is inevitably messy!
5. Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a saucepan and gently cook the onion, celery, leeks, carrot, and parsnip for 5 minutes.
6. Add a can of tomatoes and half a teaspoon of sugar and  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt to the pan.
7. When the tomatoes have finished roasting, add the entire contents of the roasting pan to the saucepan.
8. Add the water, chopped red pepper flesh, bay leaf, tomato purée, and stock cubes.
9. Bring to the boil, then simmer gently with the lid on for 30 minutes.
10. Temporarily remove the bay leaf and blend in the saucepan with a stick blender.
11. Add the chopped fresh basil and bay leaf and season to taste, adding a sprinkle of paprika if liked.
12. Top with a swirl of crème fraîche (optional).

# Thai-Style Sweetcorn Chowder

This is one of my favourite summer soups! However, if you can't get hold of fresh sweetcorn, don't try and substitute vacuum-packed or frozen – make something else instead!



## INGREDIENTS

- 5 fresh corn-on-the-cobs
- 1 red pepper, de-seeded and diced
- 1 stick of celery, diced
- 1 large white onion, peeled and diced
- 2 cloves of garlic, peeled and finely diced
- $\frac{1}{2}$  red chilli, de-seeded and finely diced
- 1 stick of fresh lemon grass, end cut off and finely chopped
- 4 fresh or dried Kaffir lime leaves
- 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  vegetarian stock cubes
- 1 litres of water
- 200ml milk
- 1 large handful of finely chopped fresh coriander
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- salt & pepper

## METHOD

1. Remove the husks and the 'strings' from the corn-on-the-cobs. Holding the corn-on-the-cobs vertically, slice the kernels off downwards with a large knife. Trim the cobs to keep as much of the fresh sweetcorn flesh as you can. Place to one side.
2. Heat the olive oil in a saucepan and gently fry the onion, garlic, chilli and lemongrass for 3 minutes.
3. Add all the other ingredients (except the milk, lime juice and the coriander) to the saucepan along with  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt.
4. Bring to the boil and then simmer for 30 minutes.
5. Turn off the heat and remove the kaffir lime leaves and separate the leaves from the stringy stalk in the middle. Throw away the stalks and replace the torn leaves in the saucepan.
6. Blend the soup in the pan.
7. Add the fresh coriander and the milk and the lime juice to the saucepan and stir.
8. Add freshly ground black pepper and check the seasoning.

# Mushroom Soup

The key to a good mushroom soup is to use some dried mushrooms as well as fresh, and a generous amount of mushroom ketchup!

## INGREDIENTS

- 750g mixed mushrooms, washed and chopped
- 1 stick of celery, chopped
- 25g dried porcini mushrooms soaked in ½ pint of boiling water
- 1 large onion, peeled and chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, peeled and chopped
- 25g butter
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon dried rosemary, partly crushed
- 3 tablespoons brandy or whisky
- 2 ½ vegetarian stock cubes
- 2 teaspoons mushroom ketchup
- 1 bay leaf
- A good dash of lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- 1 litre of water.
- single cream to serve
- 1 handful chopped fresh parsley

## METHOD

1. Heat the olive oil and butter in a saucepan, and gently fry the onion and garlic for 2-3 minutes ensuring they don't brown.
2. Add the mushroom, rosemary, celery and leek, a dash of lemon juice and ¼ teaspoon salt and freshly ground black pepper. Cook gently for about 5-7 minutes until the mushrooms are cooked.
3. Add the porcini mushrooms along with the soaking water.
4. Add 1 litre of water along with the bay leaf, mushroom ketchup, stock cubes, and sugar.
5. Bring to the boil then turn down and simmer gently for 20 minutes.
6. Add the fresh parsley and the brandy or whisky and simmer for a further 5 minutes.
7. Remove from the heat and temporarily remove the bay leaf. Blend in the saucepan.
8. Check the seasoning.
9. Serve with a swirl of single cream.

# Mushroom & Hazelnut Soup

This is a very smart version of mushroom soup and would be ideal for a starter at a dinner party.

## INGREDIENTS

- 25g dried porcini mushrooms soaked in ½ litre of boiling water
- 1kg mixed mushrooms, cleaned and chopped
- 200g shelled hazelnuts
- 1 stick of celery, chopped
- 1 leek, cleaned and chopped
- 1 large onion, peeled and chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon hazelnut oil + extra for drizzling
- 25g butter
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- salt & pepper
- 2 tablespoons medium-dry sherry
- 1 litre water
- a dash of mushroom ketchup
- 3 vegetarian stock cubes
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 large handful finely chopped fresh parsley
- 200ml milk
- ½ teaspoon sugar

## METHOD

1. Toast the hazelnuts in a hot, dry frying pan for 5 minutes. Then set aside to cool before grinding to a powder.
2. Soak the porcini mushrooms in half a litre of water for 10 minutes.
3. Add the hazelnut oil and the butter to the saucepan and heat gently.
4. Fry the onion and garlic for 2-3 minutes, without browning.
5. Add the fresh mushrooms, the dried thyme, ¼ teaspoon salt and lemon juice and fry gently for 5 minutes.
6. Add the chopped leek and celery and the sugar, and fry for a further 2 minutes.
7. Add the porcini mushrooms and the soaking water, 1 litre of additional water, the ground hazelnuts, 3 stock cubes, and the bay leaf, and bring to the boil.
8. Turn down to simmer and add most of the fresh parsley, reserving about a tablespoon for a garnish.
9. Temporarily remove the bay leaf and blend the contents in the saucepan.
10. Add the milk, sherry and freshly ground black pepper.
11. Check the seasoning.
12. Serve garnished with a drizzle of hazelnut oil and a little fresh parsley.

# Watercress & Lemon Soup

I love watercress soup, and packed with vitamins and minerals, it's a real summer pick-me-up

Serves 4 - 6.

## INGREDIENTS

- 150g watercress, roughly chopped
- 3 medium potatoes, peeled and chopped
- 1 carrot, peeled and chopped
- 1 onion, peeled and chopped
- 1 litre of water
- 1 lemon
- 2 vegetarian stock cubes
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ¼ litre of milk
- salt & pepper

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## METHOD

1. Fry the onion in the olive oil, over a low heat for 5 minutes
2. Add the potato and carrot,  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon of salt and simmer for a further 2-3 minutes
3. Add the water and stock cube and bring to the boil
4. Add the watercress, retaining a very small amount for a garnish
5. Zest all the lemon rind and add to the pan along with 1 tablespoon of the juice
6. Simmer for 20- 30 minutes
7. Blend in the saucepan and add the milk.
8. Serve with a little watercress garnish.

# Harira Soup

*This recipe is adapted from one by Nadine Abensur. It is absolutely delicious and really quick to make!*

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 onion, roughly chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 stick of celery, roughly chopped
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 3 x 400g cans of chickpeas, retaining all the liquid
- generous pinch of saffron strands
- 1 bay leaf
- good squeeze of tomato purée
- pinch of sugar
- 1 x 400g can of chopped tomatoes
- 250ml water
- 2 hard vegetable stock cubes
- half a large bunch of fresh coriander, chopped
- juice of half a lemon
- half a fresh chilli, finely chopped
- salt & freshly ground black pepper to taste

## METHOD

1. Heat the olive oil in a pan and gently fry the onion, garlic, chilli, celery and cumin for 3-4 minutes.
2. Add the three cans of chickpeas including the liquid to the pan.
3. Add all of the rest of the ingredients except the fresh coriander to the pan and bring to the boil.
4. Turn down the heat and simmer for 10 minutes.
5. Add the fresh coriander and simmer for a further 5 minutes.
6. Turn off the heat and season to taste with freshly ground salt & pepper.

# Lentil & Chestnut Soup

Chestnuts always make think of both Autumn and Christmas. This delicious soup freezes well and I always serve it on Boxing Day with Christmas dinner 'best-ever' sandwiches. Top with a swirl of crème fraîche and toasted seeds.



## INGREDIENTS

- 1 leek, diced
- 1 carrot, peeled and diced
- 1 stick of celery, diced
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 clove of garlic, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 225g split red lentils
- 400g unsweetened chestnut purée
- 1 bay leaf
- 3 vegetarian stock cubes
- 1 ¼ litres of water
- ¼ teaspoon sugar
- 3 tablespoons of brandy
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- 1 teaspoon of crème fraîche per serving
- toasted seeds (optional)
- salt & pepper to taste

## METHOD

1. Heat the oil in a saucepan and gently fry the onion and garlic for 3 minutes.
2. Add the celery, leek and carrot along with ¼ teaspoon of salt and simmer for 3-5 minutes.
3. Add the water, stock cubes, bay leaf, dried thyme, lentils, and chestnut purée, and bring to the boil.
4. Turn down and simmer with the lid on for 30-40 minutes, stirring occasionally.
5. Turn off the heat and remove the bay leaf. Liquidise in the saucepan with a stick blender.
6. Return the bay leaf to the saucepan along with the chopped fresh parsley, and the brandy.  
Season to taste.
7. Allow to stand for at least half an hour before serving to enable the flavour to fully develop.

# Starters

*Starters should set the scene for a dinner party and should be rich enough to tantalise, but not too filling to dull the expectation of the main course. I prefer to make starters that can be made in advance and assembled or heated at the last minute.*

# Roasted Red Pepper & Smoked Paprika Hummus

In 2010 my eldest daughter Chloe won a 'MasterChef' competition at her high school. The competition was judged by celebrity chef and BBC Master Chef presenter, Marcus Wareing. She made a Moroccan vegetable and chickpea tagine for her main course. This hummus was her starter.



## INGREDIENTS

- 1 x 400g can of chickpeas, drained
- 1 clove of garlic, finely chopped
- 2 red peppers
- 2 ½ tablespoons lemon juice
- ¾ teaspoon smoked paprika
- freshly ground salt & pepper
- 3 tablespoons of tahini
- 1 ¼ tablespoons of olive oil
- 1 tablespoon of finely chopped coriander

## METHOD

1. Char the red peppers under the grill until the skins are blackened all over. Place on a chopping board to cool down and cover with cling film.
2. Remove the skins from the peppers and deseed. Finely chop the flesh.
3. Put all the ingredients except the coriander into a food processor and process until smooth.
4. Adjust seasoning to taste, adding a drizzle more olive oil, and a dash more lemon juice and paprika if liked.
5. Garnish with the chopped coriander and serve with warm pitta bread and vegetable crudités.

# Mushroom Pâté

This is a delicious pâté that would make an elegant starter or canapé to have with drinks. It's best made the day before to allow the flavours to fully develop.



## INGREDIENTS

- 450g mixed mushrooms, finely chopped
- 25g butter
- 2 spring onions, chopped
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- salt & pepper
- 1 ½ tablespoon brandy
- 2 hard boiled eggs, finely chopped
- 2 ½ tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 1 clove of garlic, finely chopped
- ¼ teaspoon mushroom ketchup
- a dash of olive oil
- snipped chives

## METHOD

1. Wash the mushrooms and finely chop them. This is best done by hand rather than in the food processor, as it tends to make the pâté too smooth.
2. Add a dash of olive oil to the frying pan and melt the butter on top of it. Add the mushrooms, spring onions, garlic, thyme, lemon juice, mushroom ketchup and salt and pepper, and cook on a low to medium heat for 10 minutes or until all the liquid has disappeared.
3. Turn off the heat and add the brandy and mix well. Set the mushroom mixture aside to cool.
4. Add the chopped hard-boiled egg to the mushrooms along with the mayonnaise and finely chopped parsley.
5. Mix well and add the snipped chives. Adjust the seasoning if necessary.
6. Press into individual ramekin dishes (should make 4-6) or one large pâté' jar, and chill well.
7. Serve garnished with snipped chives (optional) and serve with wholemeal toast or crackers, or on top of crostini.

# Crostini

*Cut a thin baguette or ficelle into slices and brush both sides with olive oil. Cook in a hot oven for 5-10 minutes, turning once. Set aside to cool and then top with cold fillings such as cream cheese or mushroom pâté.*

## Red Pesto & Goats Cheese Crostini

*This recipe makes about 20 crostini. They should be assembled at the last minute and then put into a pre-heated oven. You do not need to brush these with oil first as the oil in the red pesto does the work. Serve hot with pre-dinner drinks.*



*Crostini with mushroom pâté and red pesto and goats' cheese*

### INGREDIENTS

- a long thin baguette (a ficelle is ideal)
- 1 jar of red pesto
- half a jar of pitted black olives
- 200g fresh (rindless) goats' cheese
- dried basil to garnish

### METHOD

1. Cut a thin baguette or ficelle into 1cm slices.
2. Spread ½ teaspoon red pesto onto each slice.
3. Top each slice with approx. 1 teaspoon of goats' cheese.
4. Top half of the crostini with half a black olive. Sprinkle a little dried basil on top of the remaining crostini.
5. Bake for about 10 minutes at 180°.
6. Serve immediately. These are ideal with pre-dinner drinks.

# Stuffed Mushrooms

These serve 4 as a starter or 2 as a main course. They can also be finished off on the barbecue after part-baking in the oven. They are absolutely delicious!



## INGREDIENTS

- 4 large flat mushrooms eg portobello
- 100g dry roasted peanuts
- ½ jar red pesto
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- ¼ teaspoon dried basil
- ¼ teaspoon paprika (optional)
- 200g mature cheddar cheese or soft, rindless goats' cheese
- dash of lemon juice
- 2 cloves of garlic, peeled and finely diced
- salt & pepper to taste

## METHOD

1. Wash the mushrooms and use a sharp knife to cut round the rim of the mushroom and the stalk out. Set aside.
2. Use a teaspoon to remove the gills and hollow out the mushrooms. Set aside.
3. Finely chop the mushroom mixture, garlic and parsley.
4. Melt a dash of olive oil in a saucepan and add the butter. Gently fry the mushroom mixture and garlic, and add lemon juice, dried thyme and salt & pepper.
5. Cook until all the water from the mushrooms, evaporate, and then turn off the heat.
6. Grind the dry roasted peanuts into a coarse powder in a grinder, and mix into the mushroom mixture.
7. Place 1 generous teaspoon of red pesto inside each mushroom and use the back of the spoon to cover the mushroom.
8. Divide the mushroom and peanut mixture between each mushroom and press down flat.
9. Top with grated cheddar cheese or dots of fresh goats' cheese.
10. Dust the cheese with dried basil and paprika. Bake in a baking tray for 30 minutes at 200°.

# Mains

*Protein should be a substantial component of a vegetarian main course. Protein sources include dairy, eggs, pulses, tofu, soya, seitan, quorn etc. Vegetarian main dishes can be lacking in flavour compared to their meat equivalents, so judicious use of seasoning, herbs and spices is required. Serve all main dishes with fresh seasonal vegetables and/or salad.*

# Cheesy Lentil Bake

A tasty dish for all the family rich in iron and protein – lovely winter comfort food! Sweet vegetables such as carrots, sweetcorn, and roasted tomatoes, complement the lovely earthy taste of the lentils in this dish.



## INGREDIENTS

- 200g fresh spinach leaves (preferably young/baby spinach)
- 200g red lentils
- 400g cottage cheese
- 2 tablespoon grated fresh parmesan
- 100g mature cheddar cheese
- 4-6 large potatoes (depending on size/shape of your baking dish)
- 2-3 tablespoons milk
- 1 ½ - 2 hard (not crumbly) veggie stock cubes e.g. Knorr
- ½ pint of water
- salt & pepper to taste
- 1 bay leaf

## METHOD

1. Wash, de-stalk and shred the spinach finely and drain thoroughly in a salad spinner.
2. Place the lentils in a saucepan and pour on just enough water to cover them. Add the bay leaf and 1½ stock cubes
3. Bring the lentils to the boil and turn down to simmer. Stir continuously and gradually add more water as the lentils cook. Add ½ extra stock cube to taste and continue to stir and add water until the lentils are cooked and form a thick savoury paste.
4. Remove the lentil paste from the heat and add all the spinach. It will wilt in the heat of the lentils. >

5. Drain any excess fluid from the cottage cheese and add to the saucepan. Return the pan to a low heat and stir thoroughly. Add the grated parmesan cheese to mixture and add freshly ground black pepper and salt to taste. Remove the pan from the heat and set aside.
6. Wash the potatoes and remove any blemishes with a sharp knife. Slice the potatoes into slices approx  $\frac{1}{2}$  cm thick, retaining the skins. Place the potato slices in a pan of salted water and bring to the boil.
7. Simmer the potato slices for 5 minutes and then drain- they should be partially cooked. Rinse them in cold water to make them a safe temperature to handle and to prevent further cooking.
8. Grease a lasagne or deep pottery dish and add the spinach, lentil and cheese mixture. Layer the potatoes over the top overlapping them in concentric circles.
9. Brush the potato slices with milk and season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle over the grated cheddar cheese and bake in the oven at 180° for 30-40 minutes. The top should be well browned and the mixture bubbling.

## Spinach and Three Cheese Lasagne

*This is an unusual twist on a lasagne and the intensely sweet sauce contrasts nicely with the 'earthy' texture of the lentils. This is very popular with adults and older children and is smart enough for a dinner party. It adapts the lentil and spinach mixture in the cheesy lentil bake. You could also use the filling to stuff cannelloni pasta tubes and pour the red pepper and tomato sauce over it.*

### INGREDIENTS

- 200g fresh spinach
- 200g red lentils
- 2 red peppers
- 1 bay leaf
- 400g cottage cheese
- 2 hard veggie stock cubes
- 200g feta cheese
- 2 tablespoons freshly ground parmesan cheese
- 1 onion
- 2 cloves garlic
- $\frac{1}{2}$  red chilli
- 2 tins chopped tomatoes with herbs
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon dried Italian mixed herbs
- small handful of fresh basil leaves
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon sugar
- 250g fresh lasagne sheets
- $\frac{1}{2}$  pint water

### METHOD

1. Wash, de-stalk and shred the spinach finely and drain thoroughly in a salad spinner.
2. Place the lentils in a saucepan and pour on just enough water to cover them. Add the bay leaf and 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  stock cubes. >

3. Bring the lentils to the boil and turn down to simmer. Stir continuously and gradually add more water as the lentils cook. Add  $\frac{1}{2}$  extra stock cube to taste and continue to stir and add water until the lentils are cooked and form a thick savoury paste.
4. Remove the lentil paste from the heat and add all the spinach. It will wilt in the heat of the lentils.
5. Drain any excess fluid from the cottage cheese and add to the saucepan. Return the pan to a low heat and stir thoroughly. Cut the feta cheese into cubes and add to the mixture along with add freshly ground black pepper and salt to taste. Remove the pan from the heat and set aside.
6. Chargrill the red peppers in a hot oven or under a grill until they are black and blistered on all sides. Remove from the heat and place on a chopping board and cover loosely with clingfilm while they cool.
7. Finely chop the onion, garlic and chilli and simmer gently in the olive oil for 3-5 minutes.
8. Add the sugar, salt, Italian herbs, ground pepper and canned tomatoes and bring to the boil.
9. Turn down to a simmer and 'mash' the sauce with a potato masher to obtain a smooth consistency.
10. Simmer gently for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, peel, de-core the peppers and remove the seeds. Chop the red pepper flesh finely.
11. Add the red pepper and the shredded fresh basil to the tomato sauce and remove from the heat.
12. Calculate how many lasagne sheets you will need to use in your dish. Preferably use fresh pasta as it will not need to be pre-cooked. Dried pasta (even one that says it does not require pre-cooking) will absorb too much liquid from this dish. Dried lasagne sheets should be soaked in boiling water for 3-4 minutes with a little olive oil added to prevent sticking. When the sheets are flexible, remove from the water and place on a clean tea towel.
13. Grease your lasagne dish and add  $\frac{1}{2}$  the tomato and red pepper sauce onto the bottom of the dish. Place a layer of lasagne sheets over the top and add 1/3rd of the spinach, lentil and cheese mixture. Place more pasta sheets over and cover with another 1/3rd of the spinach mixture. Continue until all the spinach mixture has been used and a final layer of lasagne sheets is covering it.
14. Cover the lasagne sheets with the remaining  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the tomato and red pepper sauce. Cover with grated parmesan cheese.
15. Bake at  $180^{\circ}$  for 30-35 minutes. Serve with a crisp rocket salad and garlic bread.

# Macaroni Cheese with Spinach and Hard-boiled Eggs

This is a delicious, rich and nutritious dish for all the family. If making a 'baby' version for children aged 9-12 months, omit the seasoning and use hard-boiled yolks only.



## INGREDIENTS

- c. 350g pasta shapes. We like penne or spiralli rather than macaroni
- 200g fresh spinach
- 350g cheddar cheese
- 3-4 eggs
- 1 pint of semi-skimmed milk
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon English mustard
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt
- good shake of white pepper
- ground salt & black pepper to taste
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons flour
- small handful of mixed seeds ('Munchy Seeds' are ideal)

## METHOD

1. Grate all the cheese and set aside. Wash de-stalk and finely shred the spinach and drain thoroughly in a salad spinner.
2. Melt the butter in a sauce pan and add the flour. Blend the two to make a roux, stirring continuously over a low heat for 3 minutes.
3. Add the milk, a little at a time, stirring continuously to prevent sticking and lumps.
4. When approximately half a pint of milk has been added, add the bay leaf, the  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt, the  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon English mustard, and a good shake of white pepper and stir over a low heat.
5. Add the rest of the milk and turn the heat up. Add 250g cheese and stir continuously. Once the cheese sauce starts to thicken and bubble, turn it down. Add more cheese/milk to taste.
6. Add the spinach to the cheese sauce and stir for 3-5 minutes. Remove from the heat and set aside.
7. Hard boil the eggs: place room temperature eggs into a saucepan of cold, salted water and bring to the boil. Then turn down and simmer for 8 minutes. Remove from the pan with a spoon and place the eggs directly into a large bowl of cold water for 1 minute. This prevents a dark ring from forming between the yolk and the white of the egg. Remove the eggs from the cold water and peel off the shells. Place the hard-boiled eggs back into a fresh bowl of cold water until needed.

8. Bring a large pan of salted water to the boil and place the pasta shapes in it when it starts to boil. Simmer fiercely and stir the pasta from time to time. Cook the pasta according to the packet directions (normally 15 -20 minutes) or until the pasta is cooked but still has some bite (al dente) Drain the pasta and add to the cheese and spinach sauce and mix thoroughly.
9. Grease a large baking dish and add the cheesy pasta. Cut the hard-boiled eggs into quarters and arrange around the edges of the dish. Use a spoon to cover each of the egg quarters with a little cheese and spinach sauce. Sprinkle over the remaining cheddar cheese and freshly ground black pepper and salt to taste. Sprinkle over the seeds and bake in an oven 180 -200° for 30 minutes. Serve with peas and sweetcorn and (for adults and older children) sliced tomato and watercress salad.

## Twice-baked potatoes with Sweetcorn, Red pepper & Basil

*This was one of my daughter's favourite 'comfort foods'.*

### INGREDIENTS

- 4 large baking potatoes
- $\frac{1}{2}$  red onion
- 1 small can of sweetcorn
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 handful fresh basil leaves
- 1 red pepper
- salt & pepper to taste
- 200g cheddar cheese

### METHOD

1. Wash, scrub and prick the baking potatoes and bake in a pre-heated oven at 200° for 45 minutes.
2. Finely chop the onion and the red pepper and simmer very gently in a frying pan with the olive oil for 10 minutes until soft and sweet –avoid browning. Season to taste and add the (drained) sweetcorn and fry for 2 minutes. Stir through the shredded fresh basil leaves and remove from the heat.
3. Remove the cooked potatoes from the oven and slice in half. Scoop out the cooked potato flesh into a bowl and mash with the butter. Season to taste. Add the red pepper mixture and the grated cheese and mix thoroughly.
4. Re-fill the potato skins and place on a baking tray with a roasting rack. Replace in the oven and bake for another 10-15 minutes, until golden brown.
5. Serve with a small green salad or with crudités of favourite vegetables e.g. carrot, celery, cucumber.

*Alternative fillings: follow the method above, and instead fill with cheese & pickle, or brie and cranberry.*

# Toad in the Hole

*This makes a very nice evening meal on a winter's day. Serve with mashed potatoes and steamed broccoli, and onion gravy.*



## INGREDIENTS

- 6 vegetarian sausages e.g. cauldron cumberland, or quorn 'best of british' sausages
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 125g plain or strong flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon dried rosemary
- 1 egg
- 150ml milk
- 150ml water
- 1 red onion, cut into thick slices.

## METHOD

1. Heat the olive oil in a roasting tin in the oven at 180-200° for 10 minutes.
2. Cut the sausages in half and the onion into thick slices.
3. Add the onion, sausages, and dried rosemary into the roasting tin and coat in the hot oil. Return to the oven and roast for 15 minutes until the sausages are nicely browned.
4. Mix together the flour, water, milk, salt and beaten egg and whisk until smooth with an electric hand blender.
5. Remove the sausage pan from the oven and pour in the batter, covering the sausages.
6. Replace in the oven and bake for 20-25 minutes until risen and golden brown (do not open the over door before 15 minutes!).

# Quorn Spaghetti Bolognese

*Don't be put off by the long list of ingredients: this is very easy to make – and very delicious!*

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 x 350g pack of quorn mince
- 1 onion (diced)
- 1-2 cloves of garlic (crushed or finely chopped)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  a fresh red chilli, finely chopped, (or a good pinch of chilli powder)
- 6-8 chestnut mushrooms (sliced)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  red pepper (chopped)
- a generous squeeze of tomato purée
- salt & pepper (to taste)
- 1 teaspoon of marmite
- 1 vegetarian stock cube (hard, squidgy ones such as Knorr, rather than the crumbly Oxo type, are best)
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 teaspoon Italian mixed herbs
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon dried oregano
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon dried thyme
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon dried rosemary
- a handful of fresh chopped basil leaves (or  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon dried basil)
- 2 tins of chopped tomatoes with herbs +  $\frac{1}{2}$  tin of water
- 12 black olives, quartered
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon sugar
- 1-2 tablespoons of red wine
- pasta shapes, e.g. penne, shells, spaghetti
- cheese to grate on top (cheddar or parmesan)

## METHOD

1. Fry the onion, garlic & chilli gently in 1-1  $\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons of olive oil for 3-4 minutes.
2. Add the mushrooms and red pepper and cook for another 2 minutes.
3. Add the Quorn mince and fry for 1 minute.
4. Add all the other ingredients (except the pasta shapes, red wine, basil leaves and cheese) and use the empty tomato can to measure out the  $\frac{1}{2}$  can of water.
5. Bring to the boil, and then simmer for 20-25 minutes, stirring occasionally.
6. Add the red wine and the basil leaves and simmer for a further 5 minutes.
7. Use the remaining  $\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoon of oil to add to a large pan of salted, boiling water. Add the pasta shapes and cook according to packet instructions.
8. Drain the cooked pasta and mix with the sauce in a pan.
9. Serve topped with grated cheese and freshly ground black pepper, along with salad and garlic bread.

# Quorn Mince Lasagne

This takes a little while to make, but it's well worth it. This is the kind of 'one-pot' meal I like to make on Saturday nights, to eat with the family gathered around X-Factor. I think the recipe may outlive the TV show though.

## INGREDIENTS

- 350g extra mature cheddar cheese
- 1 pint of semi-skimmed milk
- ½ teaspoon English mustard
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- good shake of white pepper
- ground salt & black pepper to taste
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 ½ tablespoons flour
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 350g pack of quorn mince
- 1 onion (diced)
- 2 tomatoes
- 1-2 cloves of garlic (crushed or finely chopped)
- ½ a fresh red chilli, finely chopped, (or a good pinch of chilli powder)
- 6-8 chestnut mushrooms (sliced)
- ½ red pepper (chopped)
- 1 packet fresh lasagne sheets
- a generous squeeze of tomato purée
- salt & pepper (to taste)
- 1 teaspoon of marmite
- 1 hard vegetarian stock cube
- 1 teaspoon Italian mixed herbs
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- ¼ teaspoon dried rosemary
- a handful of fresh chopped basil leaves (or ½ teaspoon dried basil)
- 2 tins of chopped tomatoes with herbs + ½ tin of water
- ¼ teaspoon sugar
- 1-2 tablespoons of red wine

## METHOD

1. Make up the Bolognese mixture according to the Quorn Spaghetti Bolognese recipe, omitting the olives.
2. Set aside to cool.
3. Add a little oil to the pan and melt the butter over it and then add the flour. Blend the two to make a roux, stirring continuously over a low heat for 3 minutes.
4. Add the milk, a little at a time, stirring continuously to prevent sticking and lumps.
5. When approximately half a pint of milk has been added, add the bay leaf, the ¼ teaspoon salt, the ½ teaspoon English mustard, and a good shake of white pepper and stir over a low heat.
6. Add the rest of the milk and turn the heat up. Add 250g cheese and stir continuously. Once the cheese sauce starts to thicken and bubble, turn it down. Add more cheese/milk to taste.
7. Grease a lasagne dish and cover the bottom with about 1/3rd of the cheese sauce.
8. Layer the fresh lasagne sheets and bolognaise mixture, finishing with a final layer of lasagne sheets.
9. Smother with the remaining cheese sauce and 100g grated cheese.
10. Decorate with sliced tomato. Grind salt and pepper across the top and sprinkle with dried oregano.
11. Bake at 200°c for about 30 minutes and then serve with green salad and garlic bread.

# Quorn Moussaka

I really enjoy Moussaka and here are two versions of it. Serve with a Greek salad and garlic bread.

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 x 400g can of chopped tomatoes with herbs + 1 can of water
- 1 onion, peeled and chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, peeled and chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$  red onion
- 2 large potatoes
- 1 medium aubergine
- 1 350g packet of quorn mince
- 1 teaspoon of marmite
- 1 vegetarian stock cube
- a good squeeze of tomato purée
- 1 bay leaf
- 3 teaspoons of oregano
- 1 teaspoon of cinnamon
- 100g extra mature cheddar cheese
- 2 eggs
- 500ml full-fat Greek yoghurt
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- salt & pepper

## METHOD

1. Cut the aubergine into round slices. Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large roasting pan and place the slices in the pan. Ensure the aubergine is coated on both sides with the oil. Bake at 150°C for 30-40 minutes, turning the slices occasionally, until the aubergine is cooked and the slices are translucent. Set aside to cool.
2. Fry the onion, garlic and chilli in 1 tablespoon of olive oil for 3 minutes. Add the quorn mince and simmer for a further minute adding  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt.
3. Add the canned tomatoes, using the can to measure out another tinfoil of water.
4. Add the bay leaf, marmite, stock cube, tomato purée, oregano, cinnamon, salt and pepper and bring to the boil. Turn down and simmer for 20-30 minutes, stirring occasionally.
5. Peel the potatoes and cut into 1cm thick slices.
6. Parboil the potato slices for 3-4 minutes and then drain and cool.
7. Layer the quorn mixture with the aubergine slices. Top with a layer of potato slices.
8. Whisk the eggs together and then beat in the Greek yoghurt. Add a good grind of salt and pepper.
9. Cover the potato slices with the yoghurt mix and top with grated cheese.
10. Bake at 200°C for 3-40 minutes until golden brown.

# Lentil Moussaka



## INGREDIENTS

- 2x 400g cans of chopped tomatoes +  $\frac{1}{2}$  can of water
- 1 onion, peeled and chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, peeled and chopped
- 2 large potatoes
- 2 medium aubergines
- 200g puy lentils
- $\frac{1}{2}$  red pepper, diced
- $\frac{1}{2}$  courgette, diced
- 1 teaspoon of marmite
- 1 vegetarian stock cube
- a good squeeze of tomato purée
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 tablespoons of oregano
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon of ground cinnamon
- pinch of sugar
- dash of red wine
- 100g extra mature cheddar cheese
- 2 eggs
- 500ml full-fat Greek yoghurt
- 1 tablespoon grated parmesan
- 50g grated mature cheddar cheese
- 6 tablespoons olive oil
- salt & pepper

## METHOD

1. Cut the aubergine into round slices approx. 1 cm thick. Heat 5 tablespoons olive oil in a large roasting pan and place the slices in the pan. Ensure the aubergine is coated on both sides with the oil. Bake at 150°C for 30-40 minutes, turning the slices occasionally, until the aubergine is cooked, and the slices are translucent. Set aside to cool.
2. Fry the onion and garlic in 1 tablespoon of olive oil for 3 minutes. Add red pepper and courgette and simmer for a further minute adding  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt.
3. Add the canned tomatoes and water.
4. Add the bay leaves, puy lentils, marmite, stock cube, tomato purée, oregano, cinnamon, salt and pepper and bring to the boil. Turn down and simmer for c.30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Turn off the heat and add a dash of red wine.
5. Peel the potatoes and cut into 1cm thick slices.
6. Parboil the potato slices for 5 minutes and then drain and cool.
7. Layer the lentil mixture with the aubergine slices. Top with a layer of potato slices.
8. Whisk the eggs and then beat in the Greek yoghurt. Add a good grind of salt and pepper, and the grated parmesan.
9. Cover the potato slices with the yoghurt mix and top with a little grated cheese.
10. Bake at 200°C for 30-40 minutes until golden brown. Serve with Greek salad and garlic bread.

# Quorn & Lentil Shepherd's Pie

Shepherd's Pie traditionally has a mashed potato topping and is made with lamb mince. This protein-packed vegetarian version uses quorn and lentils. I also like to vary the topping and sometimes use half and half mashed swede and turnip, or cauliflower cheese. Serve with cabbage and peas and ketchup gravy.



The photo shows a low-carb version replacing the mashed potato topping with half and half mashed turnip & swede.

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 350g pack of quorn mince
- 1 large handful of brown or puy lentils
- 1 400g can of chopped tomatoes with herbs  
+ 1 can of water
- 1 onion, peeled and chopped
- 1 clove of garlic, peeled and chopped
- 2 carrots, peeled and chopped into semi-circle slices
- 1 stick of celery, chopped
- 6 chestnut mushrooms, sliced
- 1 teaspoon marmite
- 1 vegetarian stock cube
- salt & pepper
- good squeeze tomato purée
- ½ teaspoon oregano
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon dried rosemary, partly crushed in a pestle and mortar
- 1 bay leaf
- 6-8 potatoes
- milk
- 25g butter
- A dash of mushroom ketchup or vegetarian Worcester sauce.
- 100g extra mature cheddar cheese.
- 1 tablespoon olive oil

## METHOD

1. Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a pan and gently fry the onion and garlic for 2-3 minutes.
2. Add the mushrooms, carrots and celery and fry for 2 minutes along with ¼ teaspoon of salt
3. Add the quorn mince, rosemary and thyme and fry for a further minute.
4. Add the canned tomatoes, using the can to measure out a further can of water.
5. Add the lentils, tomato purée, oregano, bay leaf, stock cube, marmite and salt and pepper and bring to the boil.
6. Turn down to simmer for 30-40 minutes stirring regularly. >

7. Add a dash of mushroom ketchup or vegetarian Worcester sauce to taste. Allow to cool and season to taste, and then place in a baking dish.
8. Peel and dice the potatoes.
9. Place in a pan of salted water and bring to the boil. Turn down and simmer for 20 minutes. Drain and mash the potatoes adding the butter and 1-2 tablespoons of milk. Season to taste.
10. Cover the quorn and lentil mix with the mashed potato and use a fork to trace out a pattern of lines – these help the top go crispy. Cover with grated cheese (or alternatively thinly sliced tomato) and bake at 200°C for approximately 30 minutes until the top is golden brown.

## Shepherd's Pie with Cauliflower Cheese Topping



### INGREDIENTS

- 1 large head of cauliflower
- 25g butter
- 200g grated mature cheddar cheese
- salt & pepper
- nutmeg
- approximately 50ml milk.

### METHOD

Make filling as above.

1. Wash and chop the cauliflower into small pieces. Place in a pan and just cover with salted water. Bring to the boil and then turn down to simmer with the lid on for 20-30 minutes until tender.
2. Drain the water and mash the cauliflower along with the butter, a good dash of milk and half the cheese. Season generously with salt & pepper and freshly ground nutmeg.
3. Place on top of the filling and smooth out with a spatula.
4. Sprinkle the remaining cheese all over it and bake at 200°C until golden brown.

# Beanfeast Chilli

*My family all enjoy vegetarian chilli and here are two versions of it. Leftovers freeze well or can be used to make nachos.*

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 packet "Beanfeast" soya mince chilli mix
- 1 can chopped tomatoes with herbs
- 1 can water (use empty tomato can to measure out)
- 1 can kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 6 mushrooms, sliced
- 1 large green pepper, chopped
- 1 fresh red chilli, de-seeded and finely chopped
- 1 clove of garlic (finely chopped)
- 1 onion (finely chopped)
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 'hard' vegetable stock cube
- 1 handful chopped fresh coriander
- dash of lime juice
- good squeeze of tomato purée
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- ½ tsp cocoa powder (optional)

## METHOD

1. Add bean feast mix, onion, garlic, chilli, mushrooms, pepper, chopped tomatoes, water, tomato purée, oregano, salt and pepper and bay leaf into a pan. Mix together.
2. Bring to the boil. Turn down and simmer for 10 minutes (mix will need regular stirring to stop it sticking).
3. Add drained kidney beans, lime juice and coriander and cocoa powder and simmer for 5-10 minutes until mushrooms and pepper are tender.
4. Check seasoning and add extra salt and pepper if necessary.
5. Serve with tortilla wraps, crème fraîche, salad leaves etc and/or with rice. Also good on jacket potatoes.
6. This chilli will taste even better the next day and will also freeze well in the unlikely event you have any leftovers.

# Quorn Mince Chilli

This vegetarian version uses Quorn mince which is widely available in the UK. For best results make 3-4 hours ahead of time as the flavour improves on standing. Serve topped with sour cream or crème fraîche and grated cheese, in fajitas, tacos or jacket potatoes along with salad and rice. Any leftovers (if you have any) freeze well or can be used to top homemade nachos.



## INGREDIENTS

- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- 1 medium red chilli, de-seeded and finely chopped
- 1x 350g packet of quorn mince
- 2x 400g cans of chopped tomatoes with an additional  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a cup of water
- 6-8 chestnut mushrooms, sliced
- 1½ green peppers (capsicum), de-seeded and cut into 2cm strips
- 2x 400g cans of red kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 tablespoon of olive oil
- 1 bay leaf
- good squeeze of tomato purée
- 2 hard (not crumbly) vegetarian stock cubes
- 1 heaped teaspoon of marmite
- $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a teaspoon of grated dark chocolate (at least 70% cocoa solids)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  a teaspoon of sugar, and a good squeeze of lime juice
- 2-3 tablespoons of finely chopped fresh coriander
- 1 heaped tablespoon of dried oregano
- salt and pepper

## METHOD

1. Heat the olive oil in a saucepan. Add the onion, garlic, and chilli and fry gently for 3 minutes, without browning the onion.
2. Add the mushroom, and green pepper and fry for a further 2 minutes. Season generously with salt and pepper.
3. Add the quorn mince and fry for a further minute.
4. Add the chopped tomatoes, and the water using the empty can to measure out the water.
5. Add the stock cubes, marmite, oregano, bay leaf, sugar, lime juice, and tomato purée and bring to the boil.
6. Turn down and simmer for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.
7. Add the rinsed and drained red kidney beans and simmer for a further 15 minutes.
8. Add the grated chocolate and stir well.
9. Turn off the heat and add the finely chopped coriander.
10. Leave to stand and check the seasoning once the chilli has started to cool.

# Sausage, Cider & Butterbean Casserole

This is a very popular dish with my family. Serve with mashed potatoes or celeriac mash, and serve with green vegetables. Serves 4-6



## INGREDIENTS

- 8 quorn 'best of british' sausages
- 2 x 400g cans of butterbeans, drained and rinsed
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 clove of garlic finely chopped or crushed
- 1 red pepper, de-seeded and cut into approx. 3cm long strips
- 1 courgette, ends cut off, and then sliced lengthways and then cut into 1cm wide semicircles
- 1 leek, cleaned, ends cut off, and cut into 1cm thick rounds
- 1 stick of celery cut into 1cm thick slices
- 100g baby button mushrooms, cleaned and left whole
- 1 cooking apple, peeled and cored, cut into quarters and then sliced into 1cm thick slices
- $\frac{3}{4}$  litres water
- 2 vegetarian stock cubes
- 1 teaspoon marmite
- 500ml dry cider
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 2 tablespoon olive oil and an extra drizzle of olive oil
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 6 fresh sage leaves, chopped
- salt and pepper to taste
- cornflour or gravy granules to thicken (if required)



## METHOD

1. Halve sausages and fry in 1 tablespoon olive oil until golden brown.
2. Fry onion and garlic in 1 tablespoon olive oil for 3 minutes. Then add the leek, red pepper, celery, courgette, mushrooms and dried thyme. Season and fry for a further 5 minutes.
3. Transfer the vegetables, cooked sausages and butter beans to a hob and oven proof casserole dish with a lid.
4. Put a drizzle of olive oil in a saucepan and put the butter on top. Melt the butter and then add the flour when the butter starts to sizzle, to make a roux.
5. Cook the roux for 2-3 minutes whilst stirring continuously.
6. Gradually add the vegetable stock (made from  $\frac{3}{4}$  litre boiling water, 2 stock cubes and marmite) a ladleful at a time to the roux mixture whilst continuing to stir.
7. When all the stock has been added, add the cider to the mixture.
8. Add the stock to the casserole dish along with the sliced cooking apple, bay leaf and chopped sage.
9. Stir the casserole and bring up to the boil on the hob.
10. Put the lid on the casserole and transfer to an oven pre-heated to 200°C and cook for 1-1½ hours. Thicken, if required with a little cornflour and water or gravy granules.



# Borlotti Bean, Mushroom & Ale Crumble

I love savoury crumbles although you could use puff pastry instead if you prefer. The ale gives a strong and slightly bitter taste to the crumble, so serve with a sweet root vegetable mash.



## INGREDIENTS

- 100 g dried borlotti beans
- 50g dried pearl barley
- ½ red pepper, diced
- ½ courgette, diced
- 6-8 chestnut mushrooms, thickly sliced
- 1 stick of celery, diced
- ½ leek (white parts only), diced
- 40g dried porcini mushrooms
- 1 white onion, diced
- 2 cloves of garlic, finely diced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 vegetarian stock cube
- 1 teaspoon marmite
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- 125 g plain flour + 2 tablespoons
- 50g porridge oats
- ½ teaspoon herbes de provence
- 50g butter + 1 tablespoon
- 25g savoury seed mix plus extra for sprinkling
- 25g grated cheddar cheese
- 300ml brown ale
- 1 bay leaf
- a good dash of mushroom ketchup
- 4-6 teaspoons of gravy granules
- a good squeeze of tomato purée
- salt & pepper

## METHOD

1. Soak the borlotti beans overnight in plenty of water. Drain and put in a saucepan and cover with unsalted water. Bring to the boil and boil fiercely for 10 minutes. Turn down to a simmer and cook gently with the lid on for 1 ½ hours. Drain and set aside. >

2. Soak the porcini mushrooms in 1 litre of boiling water for 15 minutes. Remove the mushrooms and set aside. Add the vegetable stock cube and marmite and tomato purée to the mushroom soaking water.
3. Fry the onion and garlic gently in the olive oil for 3-4 minutes and then add the courgette, leek, chestnut mushrooms, celery, red pepper and dried thyme, and continue cooking for a further 5 minutes. Season to taste and then place in a mixing bowl.
4. Put the barley in a saucepan and cover with salted cold water. Bring to the boil, and then turn down and simmer for 15 minutes. Drain and set aside.
5. Add the cooked borlotti beans, part-cooked barley, soaked porcini mushrooms, and fresh parsley to the mixing bowl and combine with the other vegetables. Transfer to a greased oven dish.
6. Make a roux by frying two tablespoons of flour in one tablespoon of butter and fry gently until golden brown. Gradually add the hot stock and mix well. Add the bay leaf and the mushroom ketchup and bring to the boil. Turn down to simmer and reduce by approximately 1/3rd. Gradually add the ale, and simmer gently for 3-5 minutes. Thicken with gravy granules or a little cornflour mixed with water.
7. Pour the sauce over the bean and mushroom mixture and stir well.
8. To make the crumble, work the 50g butter into the flour with your finger tips. Then add the oats, savoury seed mix, grated cheese, herbes de provence and salt and pepper to taste, and stir with a fork.
9. Sprinkle the crumble mix over the dish, adding extra cheese or seeds, if liked.
10. Bake at 200°c for 30-40 minutes until golden brown and bubbling.



# Meatball & Barley Bake

*This is a delicious and comforting meal to share with friends on a cold winter's day.  
Serve with a crisp, green salad and garlic bread.*



## INGREDIENTS

- 2 x 300g pkt quorn meatballs
- 1 red pepper, de-cored and chopped into approx 2cm pieces
- 8 mushrooms, sliced
- 1 ½ courgettes, chopped as the red pepper
- 1 small aubergine, chopped as the red pepper
- 1 onion, peeled and diced
- 2 cloves of garlic, peeled and diced
- ½ red chilli, de-seeded and finely diced
- 2x 300g cans of chopped tomatoes and ¾ can of water
- 10 black olives, stoned and quartered
- good squeeze of tomato purée
- 1 teaspoon dried herbes de provence
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 hard vegetable stock cube
- 1 ½ teaspoons marmite
- 100g pearl barley
- 210 g packet of mozzarella pearls (or 200g mozzarella torn into very small pieces)
- 100g grated cheddar cheese
- 25g parmesan
- 220ml red wine
- 12 fresh basil leaves, shredded
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- salt & pepper to taste

## METHOD

1. Fry the onion, garlic and chilli in the olive oil for 3-5 minutes.
2. Add the mushrooms, red pepper, courgettes, aubergine and ½ teaspoon of salt and fry gently for 5-10 minutes until soft.
3. Add the canned tomatoes, water, bay leaf, tomato purée, stock cube, dried herbs and marmite and bring to the boil.
4. Add the meatball and barley and turn down to simmer with the lid for 40 minutes, stirring occasionally.
5. Add the red wine and fresh basil and simmer for a further 5 minutes, then turn off the heat. Season to taste with salt & pepper.
6. Grease a large lasagne baking dish and place the mixture into it, ensuring the meatball are evenly distributed.
7. Add the mozzarella pearls evenly all over the dish, pushing down into the sauce.
8. Top with grated cheese and parmesan and bake at 200° for approximately 30 minutes until golden and bubbling.

# Mushroom & Pea Risotto

## INGREDIENTS

- 25g dried porcini mushrooms soaked for 30 minutes in 1 pint of vegetable stock made with 2 crumbly vegetarian stock cubes
- 200g mixed mushrooms (e.g. chestnut, portobello) roughly sliced
- 125 fresh wild mushroom ( e.g. shitake, oyster, cep etc.) roughly chopped
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 finely diced garlic cloves
- 150g frozen peas
- 150 ml dry white wine
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 25g butter
- 200g Arborio risotto rice
- 2 tablespoons crème fraîche
- salt & pepper to taste.
- Parmesan to serve

## METHOD

1. Heat the oil and butter gently.
2. Simmer onion, garlic and thyme for 3-5 minutes.
3. Add the fresh mixed and wild mushrooms, and the drained reconstituted mushrooms and simmer for 1-2 minutes.
4. Add the risotto rice and cook for 5 minutes, stirring all the time. (You can pause the dish here if necessary.)
5. Heat the drained stock in the microwave until piping hot.
6. Add a ladleful at a time and keep stirring until the liquid is absorbed.
7. Add the white wine gradually when all the stock has gone.
8. Add the crème fraîche and parsley and keep stirring.
9. Check the seasoning and then add the frozen peas and fresh basil and cook for 1-2 minutes until the peas are cooked.
10. Serve topped with shaved parmesan and a herb salad.

# St Agur Tagliatelle

This is adapted from a recipe by Nigella Lawson and is one of the most delicious and easiest pasta dishes I know.



## INGREDIENTS

- 225g St Agur blue cheese
- 400g cherry tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons dry white wine
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 clove of garlic, unpeeled
- 500g dried tagliatelle pasta
- good handful of basil leaves, chopped
- small handful of parsley, chopped
- 2 tablespoons snipped fresh chives,
- 12 black olives, stoned and quartered
- parmesan cheese to serve
- salt & pepper to taste

## METHOD

1. Rinse the tomatoes and put in a small roasting dish with 2 tablespoons olive oil and 2 tablespoons dry white wine.
2. Pierce the unpeeled garlic clove several times with a knife and add to the pan. Add the dried oregano and a good grind of salt and pepper and roll the tomatoes around in the pan to coat them.
3. Let the St Agur cheese come to room temperature, and then mash up with a fork, adding the fresh parsley, basil and chives. Keep covered in a bowl at room temperature.
4. Roast the tomatoes for 20 minutes at 180°. Mash the garlic clove with a fork and remove the garlic skin and set aside.
5. Cook the tagliatelle according to packet instructions in plenty of well-salted water, with a dash of olive oil.
6. When the pasta comes to the boil, return the tomatoes to the oven and cook for a further ten minutes.
7. When the tagliatelle is al dente, remove from the heat and drain in a colander. Return the tagliatelle to the saucepan and add in the St Agur & herb mix. Mix well until all the cheese melts. >

- Crush 3 or 4 of the tomatoes with a fork and add these and the pan juices to the pasta. Mix well.
- Add the black olives and the rest of the tomatoes. Stir carefully, trying not to crush the remainder of the tomatoes.
- Check seasoning and salt and pepper to taste.
- Serve, topped with fresh parmesan and serve with a green salad and garlic bread.

# Slow-Cooker Curry

*This is a delicious curry to come home to and the flavours mature very well through the day.*

*Serve with rice, naan bread and Indian snacks.*

## INGREDIENTS

### FIRST STAGE

- 4 cauliflower florets chopped into approx. 2x2 cm pieces
- 4 new potatoes, quartered (or 1 turnip peeled and chopped into chunks)
- 1 courgette, chopped into chunks
- 1 carrot, peeled and chopped into chunks
- ½ red pepper, chopped
- 8 green beans, topped and tailed and cut into 3cm lengths
- 6 mushrooms cut into thick slices
- 1 onion, peeled and diced
- 1 clove of garlic, peeled and diced
- 3 tomatoes, skinned and chopped
- ¾ jar Patak's tikka masala curry paste

### SECOND STAGE

- 1 x 350g packets quorn pieces
- 390g can of chickpeas
- 200ml crème fraîche
- 2 tablespoons creamed coconut
- salt & pepper

### FINAL STAGE

- good handful of frozen peas
- 2-3 tablespoons of chopped fresh coriander
- dash of lemon juice

### OPTIONAL EXTRAS

- dried chilli flakes for extra heat
- chopped fresh spinach
- chopped banana
- handful of raisins

## METHOD

- Turn the slow cooker up to high and boil a kettle. Prick the tomatoes all over with a knife and place into a bowl and cover with the boiling water. Leave to cool for 10 minutes and then remove from the water. Remove the skins and de-core the tomatoes and chop.
- Add the diced onion, garlic, Patak's curry paste and tomatoes to the slow cooker, and mix well.
- Wash and dice all the other stage 1 vegetables and add to the slow cooker and mix well.
- When the contents have come to the boil, turn down to low. The contents will be cooked after 3-4 hours but can be left all day if you are out.
- About an hour before you wish to eat, add all the stage 2 ingredients and mix well. Leave on low for an hour.
- Finally add the frozen peas and fresh coriander. Add a dash of lemon juice if liked and check the seasoning. Add any of the optional ingredients, if liked.
- Leave for a further ten minutes, and then turn off the heat and serve.

# Walnut & Mushroom / Quorn & Mushroom Stroganoff

This is quick to make and has a superb flavour. Serve with a mixture of white and wild rice or spiced cauliflower rice, and garden peas.



## INGREDIENTS

- 225g wild and chestnut mushrooms, sliced.
- 25 g dried porcini mushrooms
- 350g quorn pieces (or 150g dried walnuts soaked in 1 litre of water with ½ teaspoon salt for 4-6 hours)
- 2 cloves of garlic, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 onion, peeled and diced
- 25g butter and a dash of olive oil
- 250ml veggie stock - 250 ml boiling water + 1 veggie stock cube and 1 teaspoon marmite
- 1 teaspoon wholegrain mustard
- 2 teaspoons of paprika
- 3 tablespoons brandy
- 150g crème fraîche
- 2 teaspoons cornflour
- good grind of nutmeg
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
- good glug of red wine
- good dash of mushroom ketchup
- salt & pepper to taste

## METHOD

1. Soak the dried mushrooms in the hot stock for at least 15 minutes.
2. Remove the mushrooms and set aside, retaining all the stock.
3. Heat the oil and butter and gently fry onion and garlic for 3 minutes.
4. Add all the fresh mushrooms, a dash of lemon juice, ground black pepper and cook gently for 5 minutes.
5. Add the quorn pieces and simmer for 3 minutes, gently stirring the pan.
6. Add the stock, soaked mushrooms, bay leaf, mustard, mushroom ketchup and paprika and bring to the boil. Simmer for 5-10 minutes with the lid on, stirring occasionally.
7. Add the crème fraîche and 2 tablespoons of brandy and simmer for 5 minutes.
8. Mix 2 teaspoons of cornflour with the remaining tablespoon of brandy and add to the pan along with the fresh parsley.
9. Stir and simmer for 2 minutes. Turn off the heat and add finely grated nutmeg. Season to taste with salt and pepper and add a good glug of red wine.
10. Allow to rest before serving.

# Quorn Steak, Mushroom & Ale Pie

An easy dish to make using ready-to-roll puff pastry. Serve with seasonal vegetables.



## INGREDIENTS

- 300g packet of quorn steak strips
- 150g baby button mushrooms (preferably chestnut) washed and left whole.
- 25g dried wild mushrooms soaked in 1 pint boiling water for 10 minutes
- 1 celery stick, washed and diced
- ½ leek, diced
- ½ red pepper cut into 2cm strips
- 1 onion, peeled and diced
- 1 clove of garlic, peeled and diced
- 150ml brown ale
- 1 veggie stock cube
- 1 teaspoon of marmite
- 2-3 teaspoons of vegetarian gravy granules
- 1 tablespoon each chopped fresh parsley & basil
- ½ teaspoon each dried thyme and rosemary
- salt & pepper to taste
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- good squeeze of tomato purée
- 1 tablespoon flour
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 sheet of puff pastry and milk or beaten egg to glaze

## METHOD

1. Wash and dice vegetables, leaving button mushrooms whole.
2. Soak dried mushrooms in 1 pint of boiling water for at least 10 minutes.
3. Fry onion, garlic, celery leek, and red pepper gently in the olive oil for 3 minutes.
4. Add the dried herbs, button mushrooms and salt & pepper, and simmer for 5 minutes.
5. Turn off the heat and add the steak strips and soaked mushrooms (retaining the soaking water) and mix together. ➤

6. Add stock cube, marmite, sugar and tomato purée to the mushroom soaking liquid, to make a stock.
7. In a separate pan, add a dribble of olive oil and then gently simmer the butter. Add the flour to make a roux and cook gently for a few minutes. Allow to turn golden brown.
8. Gradually add the stock to the roux, stirring all the while.
9. Add the ale and stir. Add the gravy granules and stir.
10. Add the sauce to the other pan and add the fresh herbs. Check the seasoning.
11. Transfer to a pie dish and top with puff pastry.
12. Decorate and glaze the pie and put in an oven at 200°C for 20-30 minutes.
13. Serve with seasonal vegetables.

## Alternative: Quorn Chicken & Mushroom version



### INGREDIENTS

- Use 350g pkt of quorn (chicken) pieces
- 2 tins condensed mushroom soup
- 200ml dry white wine
- chopped fresh parsley
- use baby button mushrooms, leek, celery, red pepper as above.

### METHOD

1. Fry onion, garlic, celery, leek, and red pepper gently in the olive oil for 3 minutes.
2. Add the dried herbs, button mushrooms and salt & pepper, and simmer for 5 minutes.
3. Add the quorn pieces, soup and white wine and bring to the boil.
4. Simmer gently for 5 minutes and then add the fresh parsley.
5. Thicken if required, with cornflour and add seasoning.

# Tofu & Vegetable Stir-fry

*This is not a traditional stir-fry – it is virtually fat-free for a start- but it is quick to make, very nutritious and delicious. It serves 4 and is also nice cold the next day as a salad. You could also use quorn pieces in place of the tofu.*



## INGREDIENTS

- 1 onion, peeled and diced
- 1 clove of garlic, peeled & diced
- ½ red chilli, de-seeded and finely chopped
- 2 bags of prepared stir-fry vegetables with beansprouts
- 1 green vegetable (pak choi, choi sum or tender stem broccoli) chopped into medium size pieces
- 1 packet marinated tofu pieces
- ½ teaspoon chinese 5 spice
- 1 teaspoon black bean sauce
- 1 vegetable stock cube
- good dash of light soya sauce
- ½ pint boiling water
- sprinkle of savoury seed/chilli seed mix (optional)
- brown rice
- black pepper

## METHOD

1. Cook the brown rice according to packet instructions.
2. Dissolve the black bean sauce and the stock cube in the boiling water to make a savoury stock.
3. Fry the onion, garlic and chilli in half the stock for about 3 minutes.
4. Add the green vegetable and the five spice powder and fry for a further 3 minutes, with the lid on, stirring occasionally.
5. Add the rest of the stir-fry vegetables and stock, ground black pepper, and stir-fry vigorously with the lid off for 4 minutes, stirring frequently.
6. Add the tofu pieces and soy sauce and fry for a further minute.
7. Serve on a bed of rice with a sprinkle of mixed seeds on the top.

# Roasted Vegetable Pasta

A delicious summer pasta recipe full of Mediterranean flavours. The recipe will make enough for 3-4 people, so adjust the amount of pasta you need accordingly.



## INGREDIENTS

- 1 red pepper, de-seeded and cut into 2cm pieces
- 1 green pepper, de-seeded and cut into 2cm pieces
- 1 courgette, halved lengthways and cut into 2cm half-moon slices
- 1 small aubergine, diced
- 8-10 mushrooms, thickly sliced
- 1 red onion, peeled and diced
- 2 cloves of garlic, peeled and finely chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$  red chilli, de-seeded and finely chopped
- 20 black olives, halved
- 1 400g can of chopped tomatoes
- 1 generous teaspoon of red pesto
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon herbes de provence
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon oregano
- 1 large handful of chopped fresh basil
- 200g feta cheese
- salt & pepper
- penne pasta

## METHOD

1. Heat the olive oil in a roasting pan at 200°C for 10 minutes. Add the onion, garlic, and chilli and stir to coat in the oil. Roast for 10 minutes.
2. Add the peppers, courgette, aubergine and herbes de provence. Roast for 25 minutes, stirring once or twice.
3. Layer the mushrooms over the roasted vegetables and return to the oven for 15 minutes.
4. Stir, season generously with salt, and return to the oven for 5 minutes.
5. Add the canned tomatoes, pesto, olives and oregano and return to the oven for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.
6. Cook the pasta according to packet instructions until it is al dente.
7. Dice the feta cheese and shred the fresh basil.
8. Stir the hot roasted vegetable mixture into the cooked pasta and season to taste with salt and freshly ground black pepper.
9. Add the diced feta and stir carefully to avoid breaking up too much.
10. Serve sprinkled with the fresh basil.

# Salads

*I like to make lots of different salads as a quick after-work meal in summer, or as a side dish. These are a few of my favourites.*

# Lentil, Pea & Feta Salad

This is a lovely summer salad that I serve alongside a homemade quiche or with other salads at a barbecue. Make a couple of hours in advance for the flavour to develop fully.



## INGREDIENTS

- ¼ red pepper, finely chopped
- 1 handful of frozen peas
- 2x 390g cans of green lentils, rinsed and drained
- 200g feta cheese, cut into small cubes
- 2 ½ tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon wholegrain mustard
- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
- 10 fresh mint leaves, finely chopped
- salt & pepper

## METHOD

1. Place the rinsed and drained lentils into a bowl and add the red pepper, frozen peas and finely shredded mint leaves. Season well.
2. Whisk together the mustard, olive oil and white wine vinegar and add a little salt and pepper.
3. Add the dressing to the lentils and mix well to combine.
4. Add the feta and stir gently, trying not to break up the cubes.
5. Chill in the refrigerator before serving.

# Warm Halloumi & Chickpea salad

This recipe is adapted from one by Nadine Abensur. The recipe makes enough for 2-3 people and it's a really delicious main course summer salad.



## INGREDIENTS

- 2x 390g cans of chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- $\frac{1}{4}$  red pepper, diced
- 1 stick of celery, diced
- salt & pepper
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh coriander
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- $\frac{3}{4}$  tablespoon lime juice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil + extra for greasing the frying pan
- 200g cherry tomatoes
- 1 clove of garlic, partly crushed
- mixed green salad leaves (e.g. spinach, watercress and rocket) Allow one handful per portion.
- 250g halloumi cut into 8 slices

## METHOD

1. Place the drained chickpeas into a mixing bowl. Add the celery, red pepper, coriander and cumin and season generously.
2. Mix well and then add the lime juice. Mix again and place to one side.
3. Add the olive oil to a small roasting dish. Add the cherry tomatoes and the oregano and season with salt and pepper. Crush an unpeeled garlic clove with a pestle or end of a rolling pin and add to the pan. Ensure all the tomatoes are coated with the oil and seasoning. Roast at 200° for 20 minutes.
4. Lightly oil a frying pan (preferably a ridged, cast iron one) and fry the halloumi until golden on both sides.
5. To assemble the salad, divide up the chickpea mix between the bowls. Top with a handful of salad leaves and spoon the roasted tomatoes over the leaves. Arrange the halloumi slices on top and eat straight away.

# Homemade Coleslaw

*Homemade coleslaw is delicious and easy to make. Although you can make it in a food processor, I prefer to finely shred everything by hand. The ingredients are in proportions, rather than exact, so you can adjust the recipe depending on what quantity you wish to make.*

## INGREDIENTS

- equal amounts of shredded white cabbage and grated carrot
- half the amount of finely chopped red onion
- $\frac{3}{4}$  good quality mayonnaise to  $\frac{1}{4}$  salad cream
- generous amount of salt & pepper
- snipped chives

## METHOD

1. Finely shred the white cabbage and use two forks to mix in the grated carrot in a large mixing bowl. Season generously.
2. Add the finely chopped red onion and mix again.
3. Add a generous quantity of mayonnaise and approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the same quantity of salad cream.
4. Mix well with two forks, taste and season again.
5. Place into a clean bowl and cover with freshly snipped chives. Chill well before serving.

# Green Bean, Tomato & Olive salad

*This is a lovely salad with a nice 'crunch'. It uses the same dressing as the lentil, pea & feta salad.*

## INGREDIENTS

- approx. 300g green beans, topped and tailed.
- 150 g cherry tomatoes, halved
- 8 sundried tomatoes, quartered.
- 2 shallots, finely diced
- 12 black olives, halved
- 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon wholegrain mustard
- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
- salt & pepper



A trio of summer salads: (l-r) Coleslaw; Lentil, Pea and Feta Salad; Green Bean, Tomato & Olive salad

## METHOD

1. Put the green beans in a saucepan and cover with salted water and bring to the boil.
2. Turn down and simmer for five minutes and then drain and refresh in cold water.
3. Add the cooled beans, fresh and sundried tomatoes, shallots and olives to a mixing bowl and season with salt & pepper.
4. Whisk together the mustard, olive oil and white wine vinegar and add a little salt and pepper.
5. Chill well before serving.

# Avocado, Tomato & Mozzarella Salad



## INGREDIENTS

- 3 ripe tomatoes on the vine
- 250g mozzarella (preferably buffalo mozzarella)
- 1 ripe, but still firm avocado
- $\frac{1}{2}$  small red onion or shallot
- 6 black olives, halved
- 4-6 freshly torn basil leaves
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon dried oregano
- balsamic dressing
- rocket leaves
- salt & pepper

## METHOD

1. Slice the tomatoes and season with salt & pepper and the dried oregano.
2. Cut the mozzarella into slices and halve the black olives.
3. Slice the onion or shallot.
4. Cut the avocado when you are ready to assemble the salad.
5. Arrange on a handful of fresh rocket leaves.
6. Top with freshly torn basil leaves and balsamic dressing.

# Sides

*These are a few of my 'essential' side dishes*

# Roasted Tomatoes

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 small pack of cherry tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- salt & pepper to taste
- 1 unpeeled clove of garlic

## METHOD

1. Heat the oil in a small baking tray.
2. Wash and 'de-spider' the tomatoes and add to the hot oil along with freshly ground salt and pepper, the oregano and the unpeeled garlic clove.
3. Toss around in the pan and bake for 15 minutes at 180°.
4. Remove from the heat and squeeze the roasted garlic out of its 'shell' and toss the ingredients around in the pan again.
5. Roast for another five minutes and then serve, discarding the garlic clove.

# Ketchup Gravy

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 vegetarian stock cube
- 1 teaspoon marmite
- 1-1 ½ tablespoons ketchup
- 2 teaspoons vegetarian gravy granules
- 100 ml boiling water + cooking water from vegetables
- 1 pint glass jug

## METHOD

1. Break up the stock cube and place in the bottom of the jug along with the marmite, gravy granules and ketchup. Add a little boiling water and mix to a thick paste.
2. When ready, drain the cooking water from the vegetables and top up the jug to approximately three quarters full.
3. Stir well and serve.

# Onion & Ketchup Gravy

## INGREDIENTS

- ingredients as above plus one white onion finely sliced
- 1 tablespoon oil
- ¼ teaspoon sugar
- salt and pepper

## METHOD

1. Heat the oil in a saucepan and fry the onion very gently for 5 minutes.
2. Add the sugar, salt and pepper and continue to cook gently for another five minutes or until the onion is translucent and sweet.
3. Add the onion to the made-up ketchup gravy and stir.

# Braised Leeks

## INGREDIENTS

- 400g leeks
- 1 x 390g chopped tomatoes with herbs
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- salt & pepper
- ½ teaspoon oregano
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 stick of celery, chopped

## METHOD

1. Cut leeks lengthways into thin strips and wash thoroughly. If the leeks are quite tough, then blanch them in boiling water for 3-4 minutes. Otherwise place in an ovenproof dish with a lid.
2. Add all the other ingredients and put the lid on.
3. Place in a 200° oven for 2-3 hours, stirring regularly.
4. The final dish will resemble a sweet mash. Serve with roast dinners.

# Red Wine Gravy

*This makes approximately 2 litres and freezes well.*

## INGREDIENTS

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • 1 swede, peeled and chopped                 | <i>in a pestle and mortar</i>                                   |
| • ½ leek, chopped                             | • 1 handful fresh parsley, chopped                              |
| • 1 carrot, peeled and diced                  | • 2 bay leaves  |
| • 1 stick of celery, diced                    | • 1 veggie stock cube   |
| • 1 ½ -2 onions, peeled and chopped           | • 1 ½ -2 teaspoons marmite                                      |
| • 2 cloves of garlic, peeled and diced        | • good squeeze of tomato purée                                  |
| • 2 tins of chopped tomatoes                  | • 1 large glass red wine (c.250ml)                              |
| • 1 litre of water                            | • 2 tablespoons olive oil                                       |
| • ½ red chilli, finely diced                  | • salt & pepper   |
| • ½ teaspoon sugar                            | • 2 teaspoons of vegetarian gravy granules<br><i>(optional)</i> |
| • ½ tablespoon oregano                        |   |
| • 1 tablespoon dried rosemary, partly crushed |   |

## METHOD

1. Put the swede in a saucepan with the litre of water and the bay leaves and a generous pinch of salt. Bring the swede to the boil and then turn down to simmer with the lid on for at least 30 minutes, until soft.
2. Drain the cooking water and bay leaves carefully into a jug and add the stock cube and marmite. Use the swede to make mashed swede with nutmeg and black pepper.
3. Fry the onion, garlic and chilli gently in the olive oil for 3-4 minutes. ➤

4. Add the leek, carrot and celery and a generous pinch of salt and sweat for a further 3-4 minutes with the lid on the sauce pan.
5. Add the canned tomatoes, tomato purée, oregano, dried thyme and sugar and bring to the boil. Simmer with the lid off, stirring regularly until almost all the liquid in the tomatoes has evaporated.
6. Add the jug of vegetable stock and bring back up to the boil. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until the stock has reduced by about a third. Add the red wine and fresh parsley and simmer for 5 minutes. Remove the two bay leaves and blend to a smooth consistency with a hand blender. Add the gravy granules if required, and season to taste with freshly ground black pepper.



# Roast Potatoes

Crispy on the outside and fluffy in the middle. Everyone knows what a good roast potato should taste like, but sadly they often disappoint. These are my favourite!



## INGREDIENTS

- A packet of floury potatoes, I use King Edward's
- Extra virgin olive oil
- 2-3 tablespoons of sesame seeds
- 1 tablespoon dried thyme

## METHOD

1. Peel the potatoes and cut into large pieces.
2. Put into a pan with salted water and bring to the boil.
3. Turn down and simmer for 5-7 minutes.
4. Drain in a colander and 'rough up' the edges of the potatoes by tossing them in the colander.
5. Cover with a good shake of sesame seeds and dried thyme and allow to steam dry.
6. Heat a generous quantity of extra virgin olive oil in a roasting dish at 200°C for 15 minutes.
7. Add the potatoes to the hot oil and baste thoroughly with the oil. Cover with the remainder of the sesame and seeds and sprinkle more dried thyme.
8. Return to the oven for 40 minutes. During this time, remove the potatoes once or twice to baste with the olive oil, but do not turn them.
9. After 40 minutes, turn the potatoes gently and baste with oil. Return to the oven for 30-40 minutes, and baste again with the oil, but do not turn.
10. When the potatoes are golden brown, drain on kitchen paper and serve.

# Baby Roast Potatoes

These are a quick and easy way of turning a mid-week meal into something a bit more special!

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 packet of waxy new potatoes
- Extra virgin olive oil
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 stalk of fresh rosemary

## METHOD

1. Wash the un-peeled potatoes and remove any 'eyes' or grit. Drain in a colander.
2. Partially crush the garlic clove and leave the skin on.
3. Cover the bottom of a baking tray in olive oil, and add the potatoes, rosemary and garlic.
4. Roast at 200°C for approximately an hour, turning and basting regularly.
5. To serve, remove the garlic and rosemary and sprinkle with sea salt & black pepper.

# Roast Vegetables

For a low-carb alternative, peel and chop celeriac, swede, parsnip, carrot and turnip and cook as above.



# Sweet

*I don't have a particularly 'sweet tooth' and I don't enjoy the precise approach to measuring and recipes that are required in baking. I prefer to add ingredients by the handful, and experiment and taste! However, a few sweet dishes of your own are always needed to please family gatherings and provide contributions to school bake sales!*

# Chocolate Brownies

These make delicious, squidgy brownies, with a nice bite from the pecans. Serve at room temperature dusted with icing sugar, or warm as a pudding with crème fraîche or vanilla ice-cream.



## INGREDIENTS

- 1 pack (8oz) butter
- 12 oz caster sugar
- 1 ½ teaspoons vanilla essence
- 3 large eggs
- 4oz plain flour
- 3oz cocoa powder
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 4oz pecans, roughly chopped
- icing sugar

## METHOD

1. Mix all the dry ingredients together.
2. Melt the butter gently in a saucepan.
3. Whisk the eggs together in a glass jug.
4. Remove the butter from the heat and gradually beat the eggs into the butter.
5. Mix in all the other ingredients.
6. Place the batter in a greased baking tin and bake at 180°C for 30-40 minutes.
7. Cut into squares and allow to cool in the tin.

# Flapjacks

## INGREDIENTS

- 200g butter
- 150g dark muscovado sugar
- 400g rolled oats
- 3 tablespoons golden syrup
- 1 tablespoon black treacle
- large handful of raisins or other dried fruit eg cranberries
- pinch of salt

## METHOD

1. Melt the butter and add the sugar, syrup, treacle and salt and mix well.
2. Add the oats and dried fruit.
3. Place in a greased baking tray and cook for 25-35 minutes at 180°C.
4. Cut into squares and allow to cool in the tin.

# Apple & Blackberry Crumble

*I prefer my crumble filling not to be too sweet to contrast with the topping. If you prefer your filling sweeter, then add extra sugar or honey to taste. My husband is not a 'pudding main' but he loves crumble! Serve with custard, crème fraîche or vanilla ice-cream.*



## INGREDIENTS

- 75g flour
- 75g brown sugar + extra 3 tablespoons brown sugar
- a pinch of salt
- 50g butter + extra 1 tablespoon butter
- 50g porridge oats
- 4-5 bramley apples
- 1 small punnet (150g) blackberries
- 2-3 tablespoons orange juice
- 1 teaspoon of cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons of assorted sunflower seeds, pine nuts, sesame seeds, (or 2 tablespoons finely chopped hazelnuts)

>

## METHOD

1. Core, peel and slice the apples. Melt 1 tablespoon butter in a saucepan and add the 3 tablespoons brown sugar, the orange juice and the cinnamon and toss the apples slices in the mixture. Allow to simmer gently for 5-10 minutes.
2. Remove from the heat and add the washed blackberries.
3. Place in a greased baking dish.
4. Put the flour, 75g brown sugar, salt and oats in a mixing bowl.
5. Cut the 50g butter into small pieces and work into the dry mixture in the bowl until all the butter has been combined.
6. Spoon the crumble topping over the fruit. Sprinkle with the mixed seeds or finely chopped hazelnuts.
7. Bake for 30 minutes at 180°C.

# *Christmas*

*I love Christmas, but I do think the key to great food and enjoying yourself on the day, is to make (and buy) as much as you can in advance. I try to start in October and make and freeze the following – red wine gravy, cauliflower and broccoli cheese, festive seed and lentil roast, stuffing balls, broccoli and stilton soup, lentil and chestnut soup and mince pies. I prepare all the vegetables on Christmas Eve and also make the mashed swede and mushroom pâté.*

*What do vegetarians eat for Christmas dinner<sup>1</sup>? This:*

## 25th December: CHRISTMAS DAY



**Breakfast:** homemade low-sugar soya and raspberry smoothies, scrambled egg and quorn ham, croissants & coffee.

**Lunch:** Homemade broccoli & stilton soup, red pepper & goats' cheese crostini, mini cheese and vegetable quiches, mushroom pâté on cocktail oatcakes, cream cheese celery bites panettone & mince pies.

### **Dinner:**

Festive Seed & Lentil roast, quorn roast, roast potatoes with thyme and sesame seeds, roasted parsnips and carrots with honey, orange and mustard, stir-fry savoy cabbage with shallots, soy sauce and sesame oil, peas & sweetcorn, mashed swede with butter, black pepper & nutmeg, home-made cauliflower & broccoli cheese, Yorkshire puddings, veggie sausage-meat stuffing balls, red wine gravy and cranberry sauce.

Christmas Pudding ice-cream

Cheese Board & Port

Coffee

<sup>1</sup> *What do the non-vegetarian members of the family eat on Christmas Day? Exactly the same, but with the addition of a seafood platter with lunch, and pan-fried duck breasts and a roast turkey crown with the dinner.*

# Festive Seed and Lentil Roast

Every year at Christmas I cook turkey. My husband prefers duck, so we have that as well. This is what I cook for the vegetarians in the family. Fortunately the recipe makes enough for two roasts, as everyone else also likes to have some alongside their meat, so one is never enough!



## INGREDIENTS

- 225g savoury pumpkin and sunflower seed mix
- 180g fresh breadcrumbs made from a wholemeal or granary loaf
- 1 carrot (grated)
- 1 onion, finely diced
- salt & pepper to taste
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 125g dried red lentils
- 2 eggs (beaten)
- 1 bay leaf
- 1½ vegetable stock cubes (hard, not crumbly variety)
- 1 handful grated mature cheddar cheese
- 1 cooking apple, cored, peeled & grated

## METHOD

1. Grind the seed mix and combine with the breadcrumbs in a large mixing bowl.
2. Add the seasoning, the dried oregano and thyme, and fresh basil and parsley, the olive oil, the beaten egg, the onion and the grated carrot and apple, and mix well.
3. Place the lentils, bay leaf and stock cubes in a saucepan. Cover with just enough water to cover them and bring to a rolling simmer. Keep stirring and adding a little more water, until the lentils are completely cooked and have formed a thick sauce.
4. Remove the bay leaf and add the cooked lentils to the mixing bowl and mix well to combine all the ingredients.
5. Place the mixture in two 1lb loaf tins. The uncooked loaf freezes well at this stage if required. >

- To cook, place the loaf can with a covering of foil in a pre-heated oven at 200° for 45 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to cool a little. Carefully loosen the sides with a pallet knife and turn out onto a greased baking tray. Return to the oven for another 15 minutes to crisp up.
- If you decide to cook one large roast eg in a 2lb silicon loaf tin, then cook uncovered for 1 hour, and then turn out and cook uncovered for 20-30 minutes.
- Serve with seasonal vegetables and gravy. The loaf is also nice cold served the next day with chutney.

## Veggie Sausagemeat Stuffing Balls

*These are delicious and easy to make. They can also be frozen prior to cooking.*



### INGREDIENTS

- 4 cauldron Lincolnshire sausages
- 4 (1pkt) quorn frankfurters, fresh or frozen
- 1 pkt quorn bacon, fresh or frozen
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 onion, finely diced
- 1 carrot, peeled and grated
- 1 cooking apple, peeled, cored and grated
- 6-8 chopped fresh sage leaves
- good grind of salt & pepper

### METHOD

- Allow quorn to come to room temperature, if frozen. Process veggie sausages, frankfurters and bacon in a food processor.
- Combine with all the other ingredients except the egg and mix well.
- Add the beaten egg and mix well. Roll into balls – makes approximately 12 –and place on a greased baking tray. Cook at 180° for approximately 30 minutes, turning once carefully with a spatula.

# Christmas Casserole

The origin of this dish (I believe) is an American magazine recipe circa 1982. This dish which originally used previously cooked chicken became our traditional 'Christmas dinner' with the roast following on Boxing Day. Now, I always make it at some point over the Christmas period. The recipe has evolved over the years, with this vegetarian version, and a salmon version, popular in my wider family. Do not tell people (especially children!) what the secret ingredient is in the sauce, until after they have tried it and love it!

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 x 350g packet quorn 'chicken' pieces
- 1 head of broccoli
- 3 eggs
- 2x 295g tins of condensed cream of mushroom soup (or 1 can of cream of mushroom and 1 can of mushroom)
- $\frac{1}{4}$  pint of full fat mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon of medium curry powder
- 1 large handful of grated cheese
- generous dash of lemon juice
- salt & pepper.
- handful of munchy seeds (savoury seed mix)

## METHOD

1. Cover the eggs with cold salted water and bring to the bowl. Simmer for 8-10 minutes and then plunge immediately into cold water. This will prevent a dark ring forming around the yolk. Peel and cut into quarters when completely cool.
2. Cut the broccoli into florets and put in a saucepan of salted cold water. Bring to the boil and allow to simmer for 5 minutes. Drain & allow to cool.
3. Put the broccoli florets and quorn pieces over the bottom of a greased lasagne dish.
4. Mix together the soup, lemon-juice, mayonnaise, curry powder and salt & pepper and pour over the quorn & broccoli.
5. Place the quartered hard-boiled eggs around the sides of the dish and use a teaspoon to partially cover each egg with the sauce.
6. Cover the top with grated cheese and sprinkle over the seeds.
7. Bake for 30-40 minutes at 200°C until golden brown.
8. Serve with jacket potatoes, roasted tomatoes, sweetcorn & carrots.

# Mince Pies

*I don't usually bother making my own pastry, but even using ready-made ingredients, these taste far better than shop-bought ones. For best results, stir a tablespoon of a sweetish strong alcoholic drink (eg port, green ginger wine, sloe gin etc) into the mincemeat before using.*



## INGREDIENTS

- 1 packet ready-made unsweetened shortcrust pastry.
- 1 jar good quality mincemeat
- 2-3 tablespoons brown sugar
- sloe gin
- cinnamon
- dash of milk

## METHOD

1. Roll out the pastry on a floured board and use a pastry cutter larger than the holes on your pie tin.
2. Grease the pie tin and put the pastry circles into each hole.
3. Add the sloe gin to the mincemeat and mix well. Add approx. 1 tablespoon of mincemeat to each pastry case.
4. Cut out smaller pastry tops (I like to use a star cutter). Alternatively, top with pecans.
5. Brush the pastry lids with milk and sprinkle well with brown sugar and cinnamon.
6. Bake for approximately 15-20 minutes until golden brown.
7. Can be frozen when cooked. Serve warm or cold.

# Curry & Cocktails

At some point over the festive season, we usually have a large family get-together. Curry & Cocktails has become quite a popular theme, as usually people are looking for a change after all the rich Christmas food and the work (and expense) can be shared. Divide out the following dishes/bottles between your family members and hold it at the home with the most room!

## INGREDIENTS

- slow cooker quorn curry (see previous recipe on page 44)
- a home-made fish curry
- a home-made chicken or meat curry
- bombay potatoes (very easy to make with new potatoes, the Swartz spice mix and canned tomatoes)
- supermarket chilled produce – pilau rice, Indian mini snacks, and naan breads
- bottle of gin
- bottle of vodka
- cranberry juice
- small bottle of lime juice and fresh limes
- bottle of dry martini

This will create a very nice Indian buffet and enable you to make Dry Martinis, Sea Breezes, and (non-alcoholic) Gentle Sea Breezes. Afterwards, I suggest a family game of Trivial Pursuit – Boys against Girls for added drama!



# Fricassée of Wild Mushrooms and Chestnuts with Port & Stilton

This makes an ideal vegetarian centrepiece for a Christmas meal, particularly if you are hosting vegetarians and non-vegetarians at the same meal. Served in an individual Yorkshire pudding with its own sauce, it means vegetarians can easily share all the traditional accompaniments. Although I usually make my own Yorkshire puddings, I recommend using the ready-made medium-sized ones to ensure you get a consistent shape and depth for the filling.



## INGREDIENTS

- 100g wild mushrooms
- 25g dried porcini mushrooms
- 100g sliced chestnut mushrooms
- 25g butter plus a dash of olive oil
- 1 shallot, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 180g cooked whole chestnuts
- 220g stilton cheese, grated
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- a good dash of lemon juice
- 1 vegetarian stock cube
- 3 tablespoons port
- 250 ml milk
- 1 tablespoon of red wine mixed with 1 tea spoon of cornflour
- 2 tablespoons crème fraîche
- 1 tablespoon flour + 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon chopped parsley
- salt & pepper

## METHOD

1. Soak the dried porcini mushrooms in 250ml boiling water for 30 minutes.
2. Clean and thickly slice the wild and chestnut mushrooms.
3. Add a dash of olive oil to the saucepan and add the 25g butter and gently simmer. Add the wild and chestnut mushrooms, garlic and shallot, dried thyme and salt & pepper and simmer gently until all the liquid has evaporated.
4. In another pan, and a dash of olive oil and 1 tablespoon butter on a low heat. When the butter has melted, add 1-1 ½ tablespoons flour, and simmer for 3 minutes to make a roux.
5. Remove the dried mushrooms from the soaking water and add to the other mushrooms.
6. Reheat the soaking water to nearly boiling in the microwave and add 1 vegetarian stock cube. Add the hot stock gradually to the roux until absorbed.
7. Add 250 ml milk to the sauce along with all the grated stilton, and 2 tablespoons crème fraîche.
8. Add all the mushrooms and chestnuts to the sauce and gently warm. Add one tablespoon red wine mixed with 1 teaspoon of cornflour, along with the freshly chopped parsley.
9. Check the seasoning and turn off the heat. The fricassee will improve in flavour if it is allowed to stand for a few hours before serving.
10. To serve, reheat gently and serve in an individual Yorkshire pudding along with roast potatoes and other seasonal vegetables.

# *Christmas Pudding Ice-cream*

*I find that most people are generally too full for Christmas pudding, but this lighter version is very popular in my family.*



## **INGREDIENTS**

- 1 small Christmas pudding
- 2 litres good quality vanilla ice-cream
- 1 empty plastic Christmas pudding bowl

## **METHOD**

1. Cook the Christmas pudding in the microwave according to packet instructions.
2. Allow the ice-cream to partially defrost at room temperature.
3. Break up the cooked pudding into small pieces and mix into the ice-cream. You should be aiming for 2/3rd ice-cream to 1/3rd pudding.
4. Place the mixture quickly into the Christmas pudding bowl and freeze for at least 12 hours.
5. Remove from the bowl by placing the frozen pudding into a larger bowl of hot water. Turn onto a small plate and place immediately back in the freezer.
6. Serve directly from the freezer, decorated with a sprig of holly and cut into wedges.

Other

# Lentil Scotch Eggs

Scotch eggs are classic British picnic food. This vegetarian version has a savoury lentil layer to replace the traditional sausage meat. These are delicious served with salad. For best results, chill before cooking, handle as little as possible and deep fry.



## INGREDIENTS

- 7 hen's eggs (or 12 quail's eggs and 1 hen's egg)
- 250g red split lentils
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 pint of water
- 3 vegetarian stock cubes
- 4 slices of bread
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoon fresh snipped chives
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 100g mature cheddar
- salt and pepper
- flour for dusting
- Vegetable oil for frying

## METHOD

1. Place 6 hens' eggs in a saucepan and cover with salted cold water. Bring to the boil and then turn down to a simmer. Hens' eggs will need about 8-10 minutes and quails' eggs about 3-4 minutes. Remove from the heat and immediately put the eggs into a large bowl of cold water. Remove the shells and place the hardboiled eggs back in the bowl, refreshing the cold water.
2. Place the lentils in a saucepan along with the bay leaf, dried thyme and the three stock cubes. Cover with cold water and bring to the boil. Turn down and simmer for 10-15 minutes, stirring regularly. Keep adding a little water at a time, until the lentils are fully cooked and have formed a thick paste. Remove from the heat.
3. Remove the bay leaf from the lentils and stir in the grated cheese. Put the mixture in the fridge to chill for 30 minutes.
4. Process the bread in a food processor to make fresh breadcrumbs.
5. Beat the remaining hen's egg in a bowl and add to the lentil mixture along with the breadcrumbs, snipped chives and salt and pepper.
6. Dry the hardboiled eggs thoroughly and dust with flour.
7. Using well-floured hands, shape the lentil mixture around each egg, and dust the outside with flour. Chill well for 30 minutes.
8. Deep-fry in small batches for 3-4 minutes until golden brown and then drain on kitchen paper. If shallow frying, turn carefully once, and cook until golden brown.

# Low-Carb Frittatas

Also ideal for a picnic! Makes 12

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 small turnip, peeled and diced
- ½ red pepper, finely diced
- 1 courgette, finely diced
- 1 red onion, peeled and finely diced
- 4-6 mushrooms, finely diced
- 6 sundried tomatoes
- 9 eggs
- 100ml milk
- ½ teaspoon English mustard
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 tablespoon snipped fresh chives
- salt & pepper
- 2 large handfuls grated mature cheese
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 silicon muffin tray, lightly greased

## METHOD

1. Fry the onion, pepper, courgette, mushrooms, very gently in a tablespoon of olive oil. After about 5 minutes, add the dried thyme and salt and pepper, and cook gently stirring regularly until soft and sweet. Take off the heat.
2. Put the turnip in a saucepan and cover with slated water. Bring to the boil and simmer for 5-7 minutes until tender, but not squashy!
3. Drain the turnip and mix into with the fried vegetables.
4. Divide the turnip and vegetable mixture between the 12 muffin spaces.
5. Quarter the sundried tomatoes and place 2 quarters in each muffin space.
6. Grate the cheese on a fine setting and divide between the 12 muffins spaces.
7. Put the mustard in a large glass jug. Add the milk and whisk until the mustard is dissolved.
8. Add all the eggs to the milk and mustard and whisk. Season generously and add the snipped chives.
9. Carefully pour the egg mixture into each muffin space. Fill to just below the rim.
10. Bake at 200° for 20-20 minutes until a skewer comes out clean, and the tops are golden brown. Use a knife to loosen each frittata and leave in the tray to cool. Then transfer onto a cooling rack. Can be enjoyed hot or cold.

# Barbecue Ideas

*There are now plenty of good vegetarian burgers and sausages in the freezer section of your local supermarket. Remember though, that they do not need as much cooking time as meat and may need to be brushed with a little oil as well. My stuffed mushroom recipe can be finished off on the BBQ, if you have part-cooked it in the oven, and many of the salad recipes are also suitable.*

*Here are a few other ideas:*

## **Quorn Tikka Kebabs:**

Cut up two red peppers into approx 2 cm squares and place in a bowl with a 350g packet of quorn 'chicken pieces' and 200g baby button mushrooms, washed and trimmed, but left whole. Cover with a jar of tikka paste. Mix well and leave to marinate for at least an hour. Thread alternately onto kebab sticks and grill on the BBQ.

## **Barbecue Sausage & Red Pepper Kebabs:**

Cut each quorn sausages into three pieces and place in a bowl with a red pepper cut into approx 2 cm square pieces and the same amount and size of red onion. Coat in jar of barbecue sauce (I like the 'Jack Daniels' one) and leave to marinate for at least an hour. Thread the bottom part of the sausage onto the kebab, followed by a slice of red pepper and red onion. Place the middle part of the sausage onto the kebab and repeat, followed by the top slice of the sausage. Grill on the BBQ.

## **Roast Potato Kebabs:**

Par-boil some waxy new potatoes, drain and place into a bowl to cool along with some red onion cut into approx 2x2cm pieces. Cover with just enough olive oil to coat, along with 2-3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar, 1 teaspoon dried thyme or herbes de provence, and a generous season of salt & pepper. Mix thoroughly and leave to marinate for at least an hour. Thread the potatoes and onion alternately onto kebab sticks and grill on the BBQ.

## **Barbecue Sweetcorn:**

Remove any husks and 'hair' from the corn on the cobs. Place in a bowl and coat with olive oil, salt & pepper, dried thyme and chilli flakes. Leave to marinade and grill until well-charred on the BBQ. Serve with extra knobs of butter.

## **Halloumi & Tomato Salad:**

Slice vine tomatoes (removing any core) and arrange in concentric rings on a serving dish. Sprinkle generously with salt & pepper and a little dried oregano. Top with finely cut rings of red onion and a little torn basil. Slice the halloumi into approx 1cm slices and brush with a little oil to reduce the chances of sticking. Grill well on both sides, on the BBQ and serve immediately on top of the tomato and onion salad.

## **Barbecue Beans:**

Fry one large onion gently in olive oil for 5 minutes and then add one diced green pepper. Sweat for a further 5 minutes. Add two tins of baked beans and two tablespoons of barbecue seasoning and warm gently. Season to taste.

## **Baked Bananas & Chocolate:**

*This is a family recipe from my brother-in-law, Jamie Bradley's family.*

Choose ripe, but not squashy, bananas, and your choice of milk or plain chocolate squares. Using a sharp knife, make slits through the skin of the banana, and insert the chocolate into the flesh. Bake the bananas in their skins on the BBQ until well done on all sides. Slice open carefully in a bowl, and serve with vanilla ice cream, with an alcoholic spirit such as rum poured over as well.

# General Hints & Tips

- Always add salt to vegetable cooking water. Salting the water stops the vegetables leaching out their vitamins and minerals into the water due to osmosis, preserving both flavour, colour and goodness.
- By contrast, never salt the water for poaching eggs. Use a few tablespoons of white wine vinegar instead to improve coagulation.
- Perfect scrambled eggs can be made in the microwave. Break 2-3 eggs into a glass jug and beat well. Season generously with salt and freshly ground black pepper and a large knob of butter. Microwave on high for c. 3 minutes, removing the egg mixture every 20 seconds to whisk. As the eggs start to set, remove every 5 seconds and whisk. Remove from the microwave while still just runny and whisk. The eggs will continue to cook on stirring, so be careful not to overcook! Check the seasoning and serve topped with snipped chives
- Vegetarian food can often be lacking in flavour. Adding a teaspoon of marmite to the stock or sauce, helps to add a rich flavour – even if you don't like it on toast. It goes particularly well with quorn dishes.
- Most vegetarian soups improve on standing and are often far better the next day once the flavours have matured.
- Many savoury dishes, especially those which contain tomatoes, will benefit from a small amount (e.g.  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon) sugar.
- Most sweet dishes e.g. cakes, will benefit from a pinch of salt, or to use salted instead of unsalted butter.
- Vegetable soups need their sweetness tempering either with spice and chilli, or through a little sourness e.g. a dash of lemon juice or white wine.
- Always add a dash of olive oil to the pan when frying things in butter – it avoids the butter burning.
- If you have non-vegetarian children under 11 coming to tea, then give them something that looks familiar to them e.g. quorn hot dogs, & burgers, vegetable fingers, home-made chips or wedges, and peas or baked beans. Most secondary school children will happily eat one of the pasta recipes or baked potatoes.
- Be careful not to overcook frozen peas, which then become wrinkly and lose their texture and flavour. They just need heating sufficiently to be hot – well before the boiling point.

# Babyfood

# Vegetarian Babies



Bringing up a baby or young child as a vegetarian will almost inevitably incur some comment from well-meaning friends, family, or health professionals. Even experienced vegetarians may feel nervous at the prospect of bringing up a small baby as a vegetarian, and therefore some reassurance that it is possible to bring up healthy and happy vegetarian children seems necessary. I have brought up two very healthy daughters (now 25 and 16) on a vegetarian diet, and of course in countries like India where many people follow a vegetarian diet for religious reasons, they have raised healthy children for centuries. So – don't worry. I would also recommend reading Rose Elliot's "Vegetarian Mother & Baby" and Sharon Yntema's "Vegetarian Baby" as very useful source books, particularly on nutritional requirements.

For a young baby the best food is breast milk. There are hundreds of books and leaflets on the subject, so I will not add to them. If, however, you cannot or choose not to breastfeed, you should not feel concerned that you have in some way compromised your baby's development. When my eldest daughter was born, I breastfed her zealously until she was 12 months old, and apart from dairy produce in her food, she did not have cows' milk as a drink until she was 1 year old – in line with the prevailing medical advice. She then promptly refused to drink it as she was not used to the taste, and I had a devil of a job over the next couple of years disguising milk in custards, cereal etc, to get her to consume somewhere near the recommended one pint of milk a day for young children.

Therefore, when my second daughter was born, I introduced a cup of formula "follow-on" milk each day from when she was about six months old, although I also continued to breastfeed her until she was well over a year old. I subsequently had no problems in getting her to drink cows' milk. Incidentally, if you are trying to give a breastfed baby some expressed or formula milk alongside his or her regular feeds, I have found that it is often easier to get a baby (even as young as 4 or 5 months) to accept a soft lidded cup with a spout, rather than a bottle.

Pregnant women and mothers of young children are constantly subjected to conflicting advice, judgemental attitudes, and newspaper headlines that report this week's survey on the pros or cons of vaccination, working mothers, child nutrition and development.

Try to take all this 'wisdom' with a pinch of salt. Use your common sense and trust your instincts – no one knows your baby like you do. Remember that people have been having babies for thousands of years, and all without the aid of sterilisers, growth charts, and organic food. Oh, and they drank alcohol too, as it was often safer than water.

### **Weaning:**

Current Medical Advice (from the WHO) recommends that babies are breastfed exclusively for 6 months before food is introduced. The advice on weaning was to start at 3 months when my eldest daughter was born, and 4 months when my youngest daughter was born, and I know that neither of them would have been satisfied with just milk until they were 6 months. Weaning at six months also reduces the 'window' of time you have to get your baby moving from purées to chewable food, and this needs to be achieved by 12 months if you wish to avoid feeding difficulties later. I suggest you discuss with your health professional and use your own judgement about when your baby is ready. Some advice recommends only introducing one food at a time to check for allergies or intolerance. I think this is sensible for known potential 'triggers' such as eggs, cheese, oranges etc, but I wouldn't go as far as introducing root vegetables one at a time, as the most important thing is to create a tasty purée that your baby will want to open his mouth to eat!

As well as the recipes for the purées below, I would also thoroughly recommend (raw) mashed banana and mashed avocado – these also have the advantage that they can be transported in their own natural packaging and then mashed up when you are ready to feed your baby. A drop of cooled boiled water may be necessary to help smooth the mashing process. When you are making the purées below, freeze the leftovers in ice cube trays, and then decant into labelled ziplock freezer bags. One icecube of purée per meal is probably sufficient in the beginning. All purées are liquidised with the cooking water to retain as many of the vitamins and minerals as possible. Do not add salt.

# First foods 4/5 months +

## Watercress, Potato & Carrot Purée

2 large potatoes

1 ½ carrots

2 large handfuls chopped watercress

Peel and dice the vegetables and put them in a saucepan and cover with just enough water.

Bring to the boil and simmer with the lid on for 10 minutes. Add the watercress and simmer for a further 5 minutes. Cool and liquidise with the cooking water.

## Swede, Carrot & Potato Purée

2 large potatoes

1 ½ carrots

⅓ small swede

Peel and dice the vegetables and place in a saucepan with just enough water to cover. Bring to the boil and then simmer for 15 minutes. Cool and liquidise with the cooking water.

## Sweet Potato & Spinach

2 sweet potatoes

2 handfuls chopped fresh spinach

Peel and dice the sweet potato. Put in a pan of water with just enough water to cover. Bring to the boil and simmer for 15 minutes, adding a little extra water if necessary. Add the chopped spinach and simmer for a further 5 minutes. Cool and liquidise with the cooking water.

## Broccoli, Peas and Carrots with Rice

2 handfuls long-grain white rice

½ head of broccoli

2 carrots

2 tablespoons frozen peas

Put the rice, the finely chopped broccoli and the peeled and diced carrots into a sauce pan and cover with water. Bring to the boil and simmer for 15 minutes, adding extra water if necessary. Add the peas and allow the mixture to stand off the heat for 5 minutes. Liquidise with the cooking water, and thin out if necessary with a little breastmilk or formula.

## **Apricot & Apple purée**

*3 handfuls dried apricots*

*3 small dessert apples*

Place the apricots in a bowl and cover with boiling water. Leave to soak for 15 minutes. Peel, core and slice the apples. Place the apricots and their soaking water in a saucepan, adding more water if necessary and bring to the boil. Turn down to a simmer and add the apple. Simmer for 20-30 minutes. Cool and liquidise with the cooking water.

## **Mixed Vegetable Risotto**

*2 handfuls long-grain white rice*

*½ courgette (diced)*

*1 stick of celery (diced)*

*2 small carrots (peeled and diced)*

*½ red pepper (diced)*

*2-3 florets of broccoli (finely chopped)*

*3 tablespoons canned or frozen sweetcorn*

*2 tablespoons frozen peas*

Put all the ingredients except the peas into a saucepan and cover with water. Bring to the boil and then simmer for 20 minutes. Remove from the heat and add the peas. Allow the mixture to stand for 10 minutes and then liquidise.

## **Drinks:**

While a breastfed baby may not require any other fluid unless it is really hot, it can be useful to have some drinks prepared for travelling, and to enable Dad or other relatives to 'do' something for the baby. I would recommend the use of a soft lidded cup with a spout or a bottle with a silicon teat shaped like a spout. Cooled boiled water should be the preferred option, but many babies (like adults) prefer something with more flavour. Do not add sugar or give your baby anything too sweet to drink

## **Apple water**

Dilute a splash of apple juice in 5-6 parts of cooled boiled water.

## **Fruit Tea**

Choose a fruit (herbal) tea bag such as Peach & Passionfruit, or Strawberry & Blackcurrant, and place in a litre of boiled water. Steep for 1-2 minutes only. Allow to cool.

# 5-6 months

At 5-6 months, I start frying finely diced leek in olive oil when making baby food to increase the food value and flavour of the dish. At 6 months start using a small amount of finely chopped red onion simmered in a little olive oil instead of the leek and use as the basis of most savoury dishes. Whilst it is important not to add salt to baby food, this does not mean that baby food should be bland. Babies like a variety of flavours, and this will encourage them to eat a wider range of food when they are older.

## **Beans and Mash**

Make mashed potato from 2 large potatoes using a knob of butter and formula/breast milk. Liquidise one can of baked beans and mix together with approximately the same amount of mashed potato. This will also freeze well in small portions

## **Tomato and Vegetable Casserole**

*1 can chopped tomatoes with herbs*

*1 leek*

*1 stick of celery*

*1 carrot*

*1 parsnip*

*1 courgette*

*6 french beans*

*1 medium potato*

Peel and finely chop all the vegetables. Simmer the leek in a half a teaspoon of olive oil for 5 minutes. Add the vegetables and simmer for 2 minutes. Add the canned tomatoes and use the can to measure out half a can of water. Bring to the boil and simmer for 15-20 minutes. Cool and liquidise, adding a little more water if necessary.

# 6-9 months

From six months, flavour food with fresh herbs such as parsley, basil and bay leaves, and start to add  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon marmite to at least one pint of cooking water for increased flavour and nutritional value. It is useful to blend food now using a hand blender to enable you to adjust the texture of purées and to start creating lumpier mixes. A baby's inherited store of iron starts to deplete from 6 months onwards, so it is important to include iron-rich food such as lentils, dried apricots, and spinach. From six months, you can also start to introduce canned tomatoes and (if the baby is not celiac) wheat-based products such as pasta. Some dairy products such as grated cheese can also start to be added to food, and most babies also enjoy eating little 'fromage frais' style yoghurts. Toast fingers spread with a little butter can also be introduced from about 6 months onwards. Thinly spread marmite on toast can also be introduced from about 8 months.

## **Tomato and Herb Spaghetti**

*1 can chopped tomatoes with herbs*

*$\frac{1}{4}$  small red onion*

*Approx 20 strands of spaghetti broken up into small pieces*

*25g grated cheese*

Simmer the red onion in approx 1 teaspoon olive oil. Add the canned tomatoes and approx 1/3 can of water. Bring to the boil, and then simmer for 10 minutes. Mash the tomato sauce with a potato masher and allow to cool. Cook the broken spaghetti in unsalted boiled water until cooked through. Drain and add to the tomato sauce. Blend using the hand blender to desired consistency. Serve with a little grated cheese mixed through.

## **Lentil & Spinach Dinner**

*1 carrot (peeled and diced)*

*$\frac{1}{2}$  red pepper (diced)*

*1 medium potato (peeled and chopped)*

*1 stick of celery (diced)*

*$\frac{1}{2}$  red onion*

*2 handfuls of red lentils*

*1 pint of water*

*$\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon marmite*

*2 large handfuls of chopped spinach*

*2 handfuls of grated cheese*

Fry the onion in 1 teaspoon of olive oil for 5 minutes and then add the celery, red pepper and potato and simmer for 1 minute. Add the water, marmite, and lentils and bring to the boil.

Reduce and simmer for 15 minutes, adding extra water if necessary. Add spinach and simmer for 5-10 minutes. Cool and blend with a hand blender. Stir through the grated cheese.

## **Watercress and Mascarpone Dinner**

*½ red onion (diced)  
1 bag watercress (approx 75-100g) (chopped)  
1 stick of celery (diced)  
½ red pepper (diced)  
1 large potato (peeled and chopped)  
1 carrot (peeled and chopped)  
1 pint of water  
½ teaspoon marmite  
3-4 tablespoons of mascarpone cheese*

Fry the red onion in one teaspoon of olive oil for 3 minutes. Add the celery, carrot, red pepper and potato and simmer for another 2 minutes. Add water and marmite and bring to the boil. Reduce and simmer for 15 minutes. Add the chopped watercress and simmer for another 15 minutes. Cool and blend with a hand blender. Add the mascarpone and stir through. Thicken with a little baby rice if necessary.

## *9-12 months*

It is important from this age to start introducing more texture and finger foods eg breadsticks, and raw vegetables such as carrot, cucumber and red pepper. Babies will enjoy 'gumming' food, even if they haven't sprouted any teeth at this point, but never leave a baby alone with finger food, because of the risk of choking.

Additional protein sources should be introduced eg dairy (cheese and yoghurts) egg yolks (hard boiled), tofu, and other legumes and pulses eg beans. My daughters also enjoyed quorn mince from 9 months onwards – use to make simple pasta bolognaise, mince & potato, or quorn supreme.

You can introduce a full range of pasta/rice and fruit/vegetables including citrus fruits from this age. You should not introduce egg whites until after 12 months, or cows' milk as a drink. Also, honey is best avoided until after 12 months, as there is a low risk of botulism. Unless you have a strong family history of allergies and/or specific contra-indications to peanuts; peanut butter should technically be suitable from 6 months and both my girls enjoyed smooth peanut butter stirred into mashed potatoes or other vegetables from 6 months onwards. However, if you are at all concerned, I suggest you follow Nigella Lawson's advice and leave introducing peanut butter to when you can feed your child a peanut butter sandwich in the doctor's waiting room.

My recipes from this age tend to be adapted from the main meals you will find in this recipe book – such as macaroni cheese with spinach and hardboiled egg yolk (to increase protein and iron content), quorn supreme with rice, vegetable risotto, and cheesy lentils.

## 12-18 months

A child of this age can have everything adults eat except for anything too spicy, anything too salty, and whole peanuts. They should be still drinking one pint of milk a day (soya, or cows) Vegetarian children's diets tend to be much higher in fibre than other children's and so it is really important that they consume enough calories before they are full. For this reason, although I would serve wholemeal bread and wholegrain cereals (eg weetabix) for breakfast, I would be cautious about frequently using other kinds of wholemeal versions of products such as brown rice or whole wheat pasta with young children under ten. Keep these foods for filling up adults! Also, for this reason, don't automatically see the odd packet of crisps (high in vitamin c) as a no-no.

**Children aged 1-4 years old** often like a lot of finger food and will often eat raw things that they don't like cooked (e.g. carrots, peppers) 'Picky' meals where you give the child a wide variety of healthy finger food on a small tray are often very popular e.g. choose from a selection of the following and try to balance textures/colours/shapes

### **Protein sources:**

*Canned kidney beans or butterbeans*

*Quorn pieces or quorn slices*

*Hard boiled egg in quarters*

*Cubes of cheese*

*Cooked cooled veggie sausages (quorn and tivall brands tried and tested with young children)*

*Tofu pieces*

*Little fromage frais/yoghurt*

### **Carbohydrates**

*Bread and butter or toast fingers*

*Cooled cooked pasta shapes eg bows*

*Breadsticks*

*Cold new potatoes*

## **Fruit & Vegetables**

*Dried fruit e.g. apricots and raisons*

*Grapes*

*Satsuma segments*

*Apple pieces/banana slices*

*Broccoli and cauliflower spears*

*Carrots/cucumber/red peppers*

## **Also very popular is 'dippy' food:**

*eg soft-boiled egg with soldiers*

*Small pot of hummus with crudités*

*Cheese spread with bread sticks*

*A small bowl of soup with bread and cheese*

However, children aged 1-4 often start to develop dislikes about food (often ones they have previously consumed with enthusiasm) and it can be useful to develop strategies around this. If you need to encourage a reluctant vegetable eater, I would suggest using my tomato with hidden vegetables pasta sauce, served with pasta shapes and topped with cheese. One of my daughters would not eat milk from age 1-3 and I had to disguise it in cheese sauces, fromage frais, home-made ice creams etc. She also wouldn't eat eggs, and I found making French toast, a really helpful way to get her to eat them. The important thing to remember if your child becomes picky about food, is not to try and show them you are concerned about it and continue to offer a wide range of healthy food.

Food popular with my daughters at this age include

*Pasta with butter, peas and sweetcorn*

*Pesto pasta*

*Veggie Sausages, mashed potatoes and beans*

*Cheesy vegetable bake.*

## **Tomato Sauce with Hidden Vegetables**

- *1 can chopped tomatoes with herbs*
- *½ can of water*
- *½ small red onion, finely chopped*
- *2 mushrooms, finely diced*
- *¼ red pepper, finely diced*
- *½ carrot, peeled and finely diced*
- *½ stick celery, finely diced*
- *½ white end of a leek, finely diced*
- *½ courgette, finely diced*
- *½ teaspoon marmite*
- *1 bay leaf*
- *dried or fresh basil (optional)*
- *1 tablespoon olive oil*
- *pasta shapes*
- *grated cheddar cheese*

1. Sauté the onion gently in the olive oil for -3 minutes
2. Add the other vegetables and cook very gently for 5 minutes until soft and sweet.
3. Add the can of tomatoes and use the empty can to measure out ½ can of water.
4. Add the bay leaf and marmite and bring to the boil.
5. Simmer for 15 minutes, stirring regularly. Add the dried basil at this stage if using. If using fresh, leave until the last 2-3 minutes of cooking time.
6. Remove the bay leaf and liquidise using a hand (stick) blender.
7. Serve with pasta shapes mixed well into the sauce and topped with grated cheese.

# Age 4-10

Increase use of flavouring/spices but remember that foods such as mushrooms, aubergines, courgettes, raw tomatoes are often disliked at this age. Again, develop strategies to deal with a 'disliked' vegetable, particularly if the child is now sharing the main family meal. The 'trick' I used with my daughters (contrary to the tactic of 'disguising' that I used when they were younger) was to be open about the fact the meal contained a vegetable they did not like (e.g. mushrooms) but that I would cut it big enough for them to see and pick out, rather than so tiny that they become worried you have 'hidden' mushrooms in everything! My daughters really enjoyed helping in the kitchen from this age, especially: washing vegetables in a colander, mixing fairy cake batter, peeling hard boiled eggs, peeling carrots etc.

## Foods they liked at this age include my recipes:

**Home-made soups** esp. roasted pepper and tomato, broccoli and stilton, Thai style sweetcorn chowder, vegetable and lentil, leek and potato

**Bakes:** cheesy lentil bake, quorn and lentil shepherd's pie, cauliflower and broccoli cheese, braised leeks with tomato and balsamic vinegar, quorn in red wine casserole

**Pasta:** Macaroni cheese with spinach and hardboiled egg, quorn spaghetti bolognaisse, pesto pasta, tomato and mascarpone fettucine, quorn lasagne, lentil and three cheese lasagne,

**Other:** Baked potatoes with cheese and beans, twice baked potatoes with sweetcorn, red pepper, and basil, veggie sausage 'toad' in the hole, mini cheese and broccoli quiche, 'Tival' veggie hotdogs with homemade potato wedges, home-made pizza.



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