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VICTORY! Find out
how vegetarian
diets spark weight
loss whilst keeping
hunger at bay

by Amanda Woodvine, BSc Nutrition,
Health Campaigner, Vegetarian & Vegan Foundation (VVF)

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Obesity: The Expanding Epidemic

Obesity in Britain is soaring. The UK has some of the worst figures in Europe with almost two-thirds of English adults either overweight or obese. And it's not just adults – children are getting heavier too, with more than a quarter of under 11s carrying more fat than they should.¹

Being overweight isn't just about how you look because as waistlines get bigger so does the risk of heart disease, strokes and some cancers. It's the same for children, with evidence that their cholesterol levels are increasing. Sadly, overweight kids also risk getting picked on and the result can be low self-esteem, which can continue into adulthood.^{2,3} Children who carry too much fat can also face disability (including blindness, chronic pain and limb amputation) as they get older and their lifespan might be shortened.⁴

Slim Fast?

As obesity has gone up so has the number of diet products which claim to help. On average, women now spend a whopping £1,137 or thereabouts on slimming every year.⁵ It doesn't seem to have done much good, though, because obesity has increased four-fold in the last 25 years. Amazingly, it's about to overtake smoking as the leading cause of early death.⁶

If fad diets worked, we would all be precisely the weight we want to be. Truth is, these diets might knock some pounds off but after a few months, most people find the weight has simply crept back on. The only certain way to stay slim and healthy is to get to grips with what causes you to put on weight and then change your eating habits permanently.

Just imagine for one glorious moment that you're not having to count calories or worry about portion sizes – and you're not tortured with thoughts of all the things you would like to eat because you're having to survive on starvation rations.

Think how satisfying it would be to know that what you're eating is cutting your risk of dying from Europe's biggest killer – heart disease (one league table Britain wished it didn't top). And what if you knew that you stood a good chance of lowering the damaging cholesterol in your body by a whacking 29 per cent simply through what you ate – a better result than any of the drugs on offer?

Knowing you were likely to lower your blood pressure, cut your risk of strokes and improve your chances of avoiding some cancers might even make you feel a bit on the smug side!

You'd feel even happier when you discovered that you also stood less chance of developing diabetes – with all its horrible complications such as blindness, heart disease, kidney failure and the risk of having to have limbs amputated.

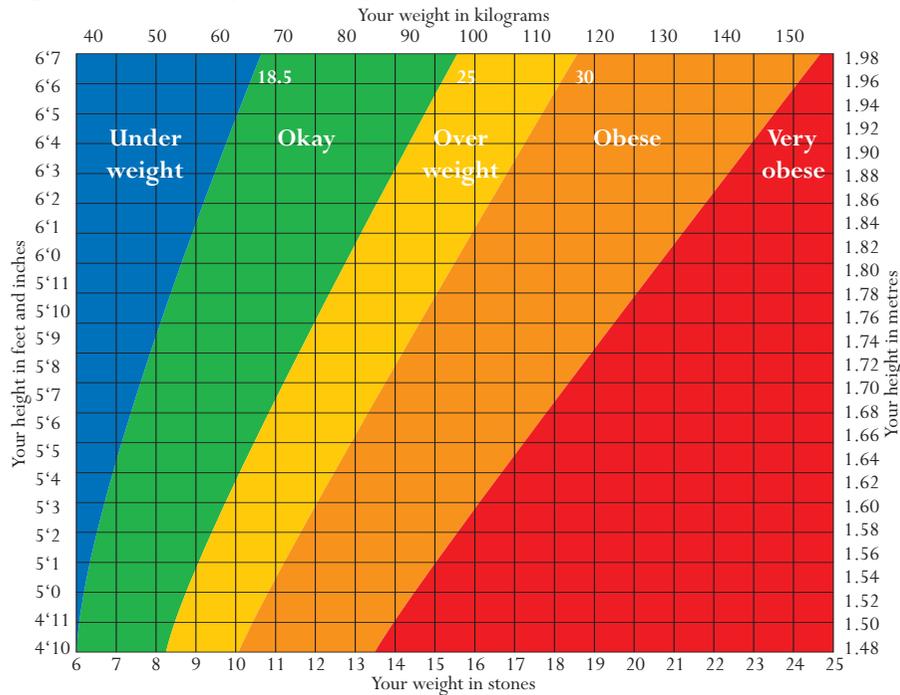


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Figure 1. How Healthy is Your Weight?



Imagine being the correct weight, full of vitality and still being able to enjoy your food. Well, all this can be yours!

What is Overweight?

The usual way of working out if someone is overweight or obese is with something called the ‘body mass index’ (BMI) calculation. You divide your weight in kilograms (kg) twice by your height in metres (m). A much easier way is to look at our chart in Figure 1.

If your BMI is between 18.5-24.9 then your weight falls within the normal range. The World Health Organisation reckons that adults should stick within this range and avoid weight gain of more than 5 kg (11 lb). If your BMI is below 18.5 you’re classed as underweight, a BMI of over 25 makes you overweight and a BMI of over 30 makes you officially obese (see Figure 2).

Be warned: the BMI calculation isn’t particularly accurate for determining whether children and teenagers are overweight or obese.

Obesity isn’t strictly about too much body weight but too much body fat – to a point that seriously endangers your health. And it isn’t solely about weight or fat but shape, too. The way that fat is distributed around your body can influence your risk of developing certain diseases.

Those who have the highest risk are people who put on weight around their middle. It has the lovely title of ‘abdominal obesity’ (AO) and is linked to high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes and various cancers, including those of the breast, colon and kidneys.

You can work out if you have AO by

Figure 2. Who’s Overweight and Who’s Obese, According to WHO. (World Health Organisation, Using BMI for White Adults)

Classification	BMI (kg/m ²)	Risk of weight-related diseases
Underweight	<18.5	Low for the non-communicable diseases associated with obesity, but increased death rates due to cancer and other infectious diseases
Normal range	18.5 - 24.9	Average
Overweight	25.0 - 29.9	Mildly increased
Obese		
Class I	30.0 - 34.9	Moderate
Class II	35.0 - 39.9	Severe
Class III (morbid)	>40.0	Very severe

measuring your waist circumference – place a tape around your waist just above your hipbone and take the measurement immediately after breathing out. A waist circumference of 102 centimetres (cm) (about 40 inches) or more for men, and 88 cm (about 34½ inches) or above for women is defined as AO.⁷

Everyone should try to keep their waist size at less than half their height.⁸ This does work for children and is a simple way of keeping track of their weight.

Obesity - the Toll

Being overweight or obese can open the door to a whole raft of health problems. Some won’t kill you but they can be very debilitating – difficulty in breathing or engaging in physical activity, incontinence or even sexual problems, both psychological and physical.^{9,10}

Simple little pleasures such as energetic games with your children or grandchildren, walking long distances or having an active sex life might desert you. Heat discomfort, increased sweating and skin

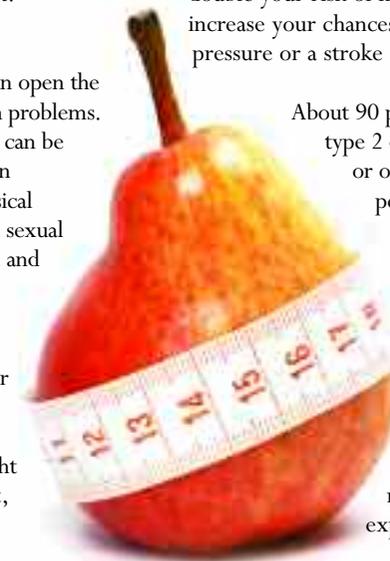
problems might also be part of the cost – and none of those will improve your sex life, either.^{9,10}

As with children, there are also links between being overweight and low self-esteem – even self-loathing and phobias.⁹ And to top it all off, too much fat can lead to infertility and birth complications.

That’s the good news! The bad news is that a large waist measurement can more than double your risk of heart disease and increase your chances of having high blood pressure or a stroke six-fold.⁹

About 90 per cent of people with type 2 diabetes are overweight or obese¹⁰ and if you’re 40 per cent heavier than you should be, your risk of cancer goes up by 50 per cent.⁹ The longer you carry the weight, the greater your risk.¹¹

Being obese from the age of 40 could reduce your life expectancy by about





seven years, which compares with smoking 20 cigarettes a day.¹¹

The Genuinely Good News!

By losing even a small amount of weight you can reduce your blood pressure and cut the need for drugs.¹² Lose fat and protect your heart, cut your risk of type 2 diabetes, cancer of the oesophagus, colon, kidney, gallbladder, breast, cervix, endometrium and prostate.^{9,10} Losing weight could add 10 years to your life.

Obesity and Children

A frighteningly large number of children are suffering ill health because of obesity and not always from the kinds of diseases you would expect to see in children. Adult diseases are now appearing in younger and younger people and the problem is getting worse.¹³

Children are facing high blood pressure, raised cholesterol levels and type 2 diabetes – even those considered ‘only’ mildly obese.¹⁴ There is now a real chance that today’s kids will die before their parents.

Just as worrying are the massive psychological and social problems that result. Obese children often become targets of discrimination and many six to 10 year

Slimmer children tend to be more active and are less at risk of killer diseases in adulthood



olds already associate obesity with such negative views as laziness and sloppiness.¹⁵

Studies claim that 10 to 11-year-olds would sooner befriend a child with a whole range of disabilities than become mates with someone who is overweight.² In adolescents, obesity can produce a negative self-image that seems to last into adulthood.³



Overweight children face high blood pressure, raised cholesterol and diabetes. Both diet and lack of exercise play a part

Pat Doyle/Corbis

SUMMARY & ACTION POINTS

- Obesity rates are soaring and open the gate to heart disease, stroke, diabetes and some cancers. Children face low self-esteem.
- The size of your waist will tell you if you’re overweight.
- Lose a little weight and feel a lot better.

Diets for Healthy Weight Loss

There are two ways to lose weight – either deliberately limit the amount of food you eat to cut your calorie intake, or change your eating habits.

Some people seem to prefer the discipline of counting calories and having strict limits on which foods can be eaten each day. The problem is, once you ‘come off’ the diet and go back to your usual eating habits, the weight creeps back on.

The Vegetarian & Vegan Foundation gives a big thumbs down to fad diets and instead supports a ‘healthy eating for life’ approach, which is what the *V-Plan Diet* is about. It means moving away from high-calorie junk foods that are low in good nutrients and embracing foods which are packed with nutrients but relatively low in calories.

The kind of foods we’re talking about are fruits and vegetables, the whole range of beans, peas, lentils and other pulses and wholegrains. Even nuts can be added to the list because although high in calories, the science shows that they may actually help you lose weight, probably because they satisfy your hunger.¹⁶ Of course, these foods are staples in a veggie diet.

Western vegetarians tend to eat a healthier diet than meat eaters, with healthy foods such as soya and other pulses, nuts and vegetables replacing meat.¹⁷ US vegetarians eat more wholegrain products, dark green and deep yellow vegetables, wholegrain bread, brown rice, soya milk, tofu, meat substitutes, pulses, lentils and nuts.¹⁸

Although vegetarians eat the same amount of food as meat eaters – about 1,000 kg a year – they’re usually slimmer.¹⁹ This means that to lose weight, you needn’t eat less food, simply different foods. Plant foods tend to be low in both fat and calories and are high in fibre – which is why they are naturally filling. And this reduces your appetite for high-calorie, fatty foods.

Lower Cholesterol

Vegetarians (see definition, page 39) eat about one-third less saturated fat and half the cholesterol of meat eaters. Vegans eat even less of both these nasties – half the harmful saturated fat and no cholesterol at all.^{20,21}

“Since becoming vegetarian I have lost over two stone and have given up cake and chocolate. I am losing weight at a rate of one or two pounds per week. I find my new diet filling and delicious and I have a lot more energy.” L Burgess

Staple foods in a vegan diet, such as nuts, soluble fibre from oats and barley, soya protein and things called plant ‘sterols’ (waxy substances found in the fatty parts of the plant) improve the fat (lipid) levels in your blood.²² It’s why

vegans tend to have very low levels of harmful cholesterol (LDL) in their blood.^{23,24}

Diabetes

A healthy vegetarian diet made up of all the kinds of foods we’ve mentioned increases your intake of vital fibre, ‘antioxidants’ that shield against disease and protective plant nutrients known as phytochemicals.²⁵ All of these natural substances help in the control of diabetes.²⁵

A bonus is that eating soya or other vegetable protein rather than animal protein cuts the risk of developing kidney disease (nephropathy) for those with type 2 diabetes.



Live Longer

Everyone seems to have a different view on vegetarians but the science is clear – they have remarkably good health with low rates of obesity,^{26, 19} diabetes,²⁷ heart disease²⁸⁻³⁰ and cancer²⁶ and can expect to live years longer.^{17, 31} That's some difference!

Be Slimmer

The biggest study of European vegans to date³² compared over 1,000 of them to tens of thousands of meat eaters and vegetarians. The meat eaters, on average, were significantly heavier than the vegans. Even allowing for differences in exercise, smoking and other lifestyle factors, vegans came out slimmer in every age group. Less than two per cent of vegans were obese compared to 20 per cent of English adults.³³

The truth is – obesity is much less common in vegetarians and vegans than it is in meat eaters.^{34, 35} On average, veggies' BMI is lower by two,⁴³ which means that for any given height, vegetarians weigh

less and are likely to have less body fat than meat eaters.

Perhaps it's not surprising then that most overweight people shed

pounds when they switch to a vegetarian diet.⁴⁴ On

American medical expert, Dr Dean Ornish's near vegan programme, designed primarily to reverse heart disease not produce weight loss, people have lost

more weight than those on Atkins, Weight Watchers and Zone diets.⁴⁵

Most people on the Ornish diet lost 24lb in the first year despite "eating more food, more frequently than before without hunger or deprivation."⁴⁶ And they kept much of the weight off even after five years and improved their long-term health.⁴⁷

Amazingly, a study carried out by the Physicians

Committee for Responsible Medicine⁴⁸ showed that low-fat vegan diets lead to significant weight loss without having to restrict calories, carbohydrates or portion sizes and without even having to exercise.

The 64 overweight women in the study went on either a low-fat vegan diet or a low-fat diet recommended by the US National Cholesterol Education Programme and were asked not to change their normal exercise pattern during the trial.

The 'cholesterol diet' group lost just over half a-pound per week while the vegans lost about one pound a week – results similar to those you would expect with a low-calorie diet but with one big exception – these women had no limit on calories or portion sizes.

The vegans' weight loss was attributed to the food being lower in calories but more filling. Low use of oils and a complete absence of animal fat (as vegans eat nothing from animals!) ensured the diet was low in overall fat.

The vegans also showed a 16 per cent increase in after-meal calorie burning speed (the thermic effect of food) which was probably due to their bodies' ability to pull

glucose out of the bloodstream much more quickly – a good thing!

The researchers in this study said that although, "At first glance, a vegan diet sounds like a challenge... research participants rate the acceptability of the vegan approach very similarly to that of other therapeutic diets. And while typical diets demand cutting calories and leave the dieter with nothing to assuage hunger pangs, a low-fat vegan approach provides plenty of choices to make up for whatever is missing. Hunger is not part of the equation."⁴⁹

Don't be a Junk-Food Veggie

Of course, some people don't lose weight on a plant-based diet and the reason is often too great a reliance on processed junk foods, usually very high in fat. Says Colin T. Campbell, Professor Emeritus of Nutritional Biochemistry at Cornell University and Project Director of the China-Oxford-Cornell Diet and Health Project, the biggest study of nutrition ever undertaken:

"These foods are not part of a plant-based diet that works to reduce body weight and promote health. Some people become vegetarian only to replace meat with dairy foods with added oils and refined carbohydrates, including pasta made with refined grains, sweets and pastries. I refer to these people as 'junk-food vegetarians' as they are not eating a nutritious diet."⁵⁰

Time is Everything

Treating weight loss as a race doesn't work; it only makes you even more eager to go

back to eating the foods that put the weight on you in the first place. A healthy weight loss is around one to two pounds per week. Don't be fooled by fad diets that claim to shed weight faster than this because they are almost certain to fail in the long run.

Weight usually creeps on over months and years so don't expect to shed it in weeks and still be healthy. Every pound of fat contains 3,500 kcal³¹ so if you eat 500 kcal less than you use up in energy each day, you'll lose one pound of fat a week. More than this and it's likely to be water not fat.

Going it alone without medical supervision, men should eat at least 1,500 kcal per day and women 1,200 kcal.³¹ The *V-Plan Diet* (see page 22) contains an average of 1,500 kcal per day. Skipping meals and eating less calories than this is unlikely to increase your weight loss (prolonged hunger can slow down your body's metabolic rate in defence) and may damage your health because you're missing out on vital nutrients.

"I used to suffer with irritable bowel syndrome and severe constipation – nice! Whatever my doctor prescribed didn't work, but what did work was going vegan. Since then, my stomach feels great; I am no longer bloated and have slimmed down in the process!"

J Roberts

One very large study of 21,105 vegetarians and vegans⁴¹ found that BMI was lower in those who stuck to their diet for five or more years compared to those who had been on the diet for less than five years.

Be Vigorous

Some people may have a family tendency to being

overweight, which can obviously make the challenge of losing weight more difficult. If you're not active (see *Getting Physical*, page 20) that may also make it even more difficult. If this is you then being strict about your diet and exercise is important.





Says Professor Campbell, “In rural China, we noticed that obese people simply did not exist, even though Chinese immigrants in Western countries do succumb to obesity. Now, as the dietary and lifestyle practices of people in China are becoming more like ours, so too have their bodies become more like ours. For those with a genetic predisposition, it doesn’t take much bad food before their change in diet starts to cause problems.”⁵⁰

Get Fruity Every Day!

In her book, *Eating Thin for Life*,⁵¹ dietician Anne Fletcher looked at the habits of hundreds of successful ‘dieters’ – people who had lost an average of over four-and-a-half stones and who had kept it off for over a decade. When asked to describe their eating habits, the answers were ‘low fat’, followed by ‘eating less meat’ and eating ‘more fruit and vegetables’.



One study⁵² found that significant weight loss could be sparked simply by eating an additional three apples or pears a day. It was thought to make people feel full while adding very few extra calories.

A Harvard University Study⁵³ of 75,000 women over 10 years again found that the more fruits and vegetables women eat, the less likely they are to become obese. It seems that eating plenty of fruit and vegetables is important for weight loss.⁵⁴

There’s no limit on how much fruit and veg you can eat – the more the better – but aim for *at least* five or six servings every day. To get the maximum health benefits, eat as wide a range as you can. Fresh, frozen, chilled, canned, and dried fruit and vegetables all count.

A glass (150ml) of 100 per cent fruit juice, vegetable juice or smoothie counts as one portion. It’s easy to start juicing at home – check out Juice Producer’s Vitalmax juicer (see www.juiceproducer.com or call 020 8374 5604 for further details). Rawcreation Ltd also stocks a range of juicers and other products (visit www.detoxyourworld.com or call 08700 113 119).

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Figure 3. What Vegetarians and Vegans Should Have Each Day

No. of Servings	Foods	Healthy Portion Size	To Provide
At Least 5	Fruit & Vegetables to include: Dark Green Leafy Vegetables, Orange Vegetables, Fresh Fruit, Dried Fruit		Folate, Calcium, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Fibre & Iron
eg	Fresh Fruit	1 medium piece the size of a tennis ball	
	Dried Fruit	1-1½ tablespoons or 1 golf ball	
	Green or Root Veg	2-3 tablespoons or ½ tennis ball	
	Salad Veg	80g or 1 large cereal bowl	
3-4	Cereals & Grains (eg Wholemeal Pasta, Brown Rice, Oats, Wholemeal Bread etc)		Energy, Fibre, B Vitamins, Calcium, Iron, Protein
eg	Cooked Brown Rice	2-3 heaped tablespoons or ½ teacup	
	Breakfast Cereal	25g or 1 regular sized cereal bowl	
	Wholemeal Pasta	1 cup (cooked) as side dish or 2 cups as main dish	
	Wholemeal Bread	2 slices	
2 or 3	Pulses (eg Peas, all types of Beans & Lentils), Nuts or Seeds		Protein, Energy, Fibre Iron, Calcium, Other Minerals
eg	Peas, Beans and Lentils	½ cup (cooked)	
	Nuts	2 tablespoons or a small handful	
Small amounts	Vegetable Oil (eg Flaxseed or Rapeseed Oil, used cold; Virgin Olive Oil), Margarine		Energy, Vitamin E (Vegetable oils), Vitamins A & D (Fortified Margarine), Essential Omega-3 and Omega-6 Fats (Flax Seed, Soya, Walnut, Hemp)
			
At Least 1	B12 Fortified Foods (essential if vegan), eg Fortified Soya Milk, Fortified Breakfast Cereal, Reduced Salt Yeast Extract		Vitamin B12
			
1-2 litres of water per day (at least 8 glasses) should also be consumed as part of a healthy, balanced diet			

You don't, of course, have to make these changes to your diet suddenly, overnight, and your body may not thank you if you do! Sudden changes can cause bloating and gas.

And don't rush out and buy a mound of fresh fruit and vegetables, most of which will be left to rot. Build up your intake gradually so that it becomes a habit and remember that each extra serving of fruit and veg is a step in the right direction.

Try these *V-Plan Diet* tips for getting more goodies into your diet:

Breakfast

- Sprinkle dried or sliced fresh fruit on your cereal.
- Drink a glass of 100 per cent unsweetened fruit juice.
- Make a delicious creamy smoothie using fresh fruit and soya, rice or oat milk.
- Try a banana sandwich made with wholemeal or granary bread.

Snacks

- Take two pieces of fresh fruit to work with you each day and eat them instead of high calorie snacks.
- Make little sticks of celery, carrot, asparagus tips, baby sweetcorn (crudités) and dip them in reduced-fat hummus.
- Grab individual portions of carrot batons, dried fruit and grapes at the supermarket instead of chocolate or crisps.

Lunch

- Add tomatoes, cucumber and mixed salad leaves to your sandwiches – and try different types of wholegrain bread including bagels, pitta and rolls.
- Toss a selection of fruit, vegetables and salad leaves together, drizzle omega-3 dressing over (see the *V-Plan Diet One Week Meal Plan*, page 24) and eat it with a crusty wholemeal roll.
- Try different varieties of vegetable soup in colder weather.

Dinner

- Always try to include at least one or two vegetables with your evening meal.
- Up your intake of veg in minutes by making a vegetable stir-fry.
- Have fresh fruit salad for dessert.

Healthy Habits

The World Health Organisation reckons the following healthy behaviour will 'encourage, motivate and enable individuals to lose weight': eating more fruit and vegetables, as well as nuts and wholegrains; daily moderate physical activity for at least 30 minutes; cutting down on fatty, sugary foods; and dumping saturated animal fats in favour of unsaturated vegetable oils (*Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health*).¹⁰

Healthy Kids

Much of the advice in this guide applies to children as well as adults. In his book,

Dr Spock's Baby and Child Care,⁵⁵ paediatrician Dr Benjamin Spock reckoned the way to get children to lose weight is to change the type of food they eat rather than the amount.

He encouraged shifting the entire family away from oily fried foods, meats and dairy products and toward low-fat, plant-based foods – grains, pasta, vegetables, pulses and fruit. When this is done, he said: "Weight loss typically occurs without anyone going hungry."⁵⁵

The advice is echoed by the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine in their report, *Weight Control and Obesity Prevention in Children*: "Instead of centring meals around fatty meats and cheese, they should be built from healthy grains, legumes (pulses) and vegetables."⁵⁶

SUMMARY & ACTION POINTS

- Vegetarians are on average up to 20 per cent slimmer than meat eaters.
- Vegans are leaner than vegetarians.
- Vegetarians and vegans eat a healthier diet than meat eaters.
- Vegetarians and vegans enjoy remarkably good health: lower rates of diabetes, heart disease and cancer – and live longer.
- Most overweight people shed pounds when they switch to a vegetarian diet. A vegan diet is even more effective.
- It's easy to change the entire family's diet.
- Turn to page 22 for our delicious, vegetarian/vegan meal planner!



Causes

According to the House of Commons Select Committee on Health: "At its simplest level, obesity is caused when people overeat in relation to their energy needs."⁶

Overeating is, of course, a relative term and simply means taking in more energy than you use up through physical activity. It follows that different people have different energy needs. An energy intake of 3,000 kcal a day might not be enough for an athlete in training but would be far too much for a petite office worker.

If you're a man aged 19 to 50, your average energy need is about 2,550 kcal per day. A woman in the same age range needs only about 1,940 kcal.⁵⁷ Regularly taking in more calories than this – whether consciously or because of subtle changes in food over the past few decades – leads to storing body fat and to being overweight or obese.

Changes in Diet

Obesity in the UK grew slowly from about 1920 but accelerated after the Second World War. Diet isn't the only cause but it plays a





key part, particularly the changes that have taken place in the past few decades.

Our diet today is no longer rich in complex carbohydrates such as grains, wholemeal bread, potatoes, vegetables and pulses, with a reasonably low fat content. It includes much more meat, cheese, butter and other rich milk products and more alcohol.⁵⁸ And the fat content has gone up considerably.

Fat is packed with energy, with over twice the calories of protein or carbohydrate (nine kcal per gram against four kcal per gram). It's not only calorie dense but, along with alcohol, one of the least filling of nutrients⁵⁹ (see *Densely Satisfying*, page 18). In order to feel full, you have to eat much more of it than starchy foods rich in complex carbohydrates.

All major health advisory bodies, including the World Health Organisation, agree that most people in the West eat too much fat to be healthy.⁶⁰ Fat, especially saturated fat – which mostly comes from animals – increases the risk of heart disease, diabetes and some cancers.

High in calories and not very filling, it's no great surprise that fat is a primary cause of weight gain. A low-fat diet, on the other hand, boosts good health and is the best way to control weight.



The main sources of fat are shown in Figure 4, with meat and meat products in poll position. Not only are we eating meat in unprecedented amounts but modern farming methods have ensured that its fat content has doubled.

Professor Michael Crawford, of London Metropolitan University, recently analysed chicken thigh meat from several supermarkets – including organic suppliers. He found they contained more than twice as much fat as they did back in 1940 and had around 100 kcal more.⁶¹

Today's beef was found to contain 30 per cent fat compared with the five per cent in wild beef. The reason is the standardised, industrial feed now given to farmed animals, designed to produce maximum weight gain. Chickens, for example, reach slaughter size almost twice as quickly as they did 40 years ago.

Researchers at the American Cancer Society followed more than 75,000 people for a decade to find out what it was that caused their weight loss and weight gain.⁶² High meat consumption was the food most responsible for them putting on weight.⁶²

Whether men or women, if they had more than a single serving of meat a day, they showed a 50 per cent increase in 'abdominal obesity' – they put on the pounds around their middles.

From the 1980s onwards, it became common for butchers and processors to trim from meat any visible fat as part of the demand for leaner meat. It

didn't have much effect as people's fat intake from meat has dropped by a mere five per cent since 1983.^{63,64}

As Professor Crawford explains: "Rapid growth [in intensive, factory farming], achieved through a high-energy, cereal-based diet has changed the lipid (fat) composition of the chicken meat itself, and you cannot escape that – even by removing the skin and scraping away the subcutaneous fat stuck to the meat."⁶⁵

Meat and meat products are the leading source of fat in people's diet while milk and milk products, such as cheese and semi-skimmed milk, are not far behind, making up 14 per cent. Animal fat from butter and milk is also a major ingredient of cakes, pastries, biscuits and chocolate. Vegetable oils, and often harmful hydrogenated oils, are also used.

Perhaps it's not surprising that cereals and cereal products, especially manufactured goods such as pizza, biscuits, buns, cakes and pastries, make up just under one-fifth (19 per cent) of fat intake.

Are All Fats Created Equal?

Your body can't function without some fat – but it's the right kind that's important. We

don't need saturated animal fat as it causes higher levels of cholesterol, hardening of the arteries, heart disease and strokes. Figure 5 shows where most saturated fat comes from – animal products!

The fats which are essential are linoleic acid (omega-6) and alpha linolenic acid (omega-3). Called 'essential' fatty acids,

Figure 4. Where Fat Comes From

Source of total fat	% contribution to total fat intake
Meat and meat products of which	23
Bacon and ham	2
Beef, veal and dishes	3
Lamb and dishes	1
Pork and dishes	1
Coated turkey and chicken	1
Chicken, turkey and dishes	4
Burgers and kebabs	2
Sausages	3
Meat pies and pastries	4
Cereals and cereal products of which	19
Pizza	2
White bread	2
Biscuits	3
Buns, cakes and pastries	4
Milk and milk products of which	14
Whole milk	3
Semi-skimmed milk	3
Cheese (including cottage cheese)	6
Fat spreads of which	12
Butter	4
Margarines	1
Reduced fat spreads (60-80% fat)	5
Low-fat spreads (40% fat or less)	1
Potatoes and savoury snacks of which	10
Chips	5
Other fried or roast potatoes	1
Savoury snacks	3
Vegetables excluding potatoes	4
Fish and fish dishes	3



they are vital to cell structure, regulate the way cholesterol is carried, broken down and excreted and are also involved in hormone functions. Seed oils such as linseed (flax), rapeseed (canola) and walnut oil are rich sources, as are the seeds and nuts themselves.⁶⁶ Green leafy vegetables are also a source.⁶⁷

As part of a healthy diet, the Food Standards Agency encourages people to reduce the amount of hydrogenated and saturated fat they eat and replace them with unsaturated fats.⁶⁸ It means cutting down on fatty meat, dairy products (cheese, cream, chocolate etc) crisps, rich cakes and biscuits.

Dairy milk can be replaced by calcium-enriched soya, oat, nut or rice milks. Use small amounts of olive or rapeseed oil in cooking instead of butter or lard and switch to dairy-free margarines.

Not only is it important to cut back on these types of fat but also to reduce the total amount of fat that you eat. One to two handfuls of nuts and seeds (flax, walnuts, hemp) or one teaspoon of flaxseed oil each day should provide you with all the omega-3 fats that you need.⁶⁹

Figure 5. Where Saturated Fat Comes From⁶³

Source of saturated fat	% contribution to saturated fat intake
Milk and milk products of which	24
Whole milk	4
Semi-skimmed milk	5
Cheese (including cottage cheese)	10
Meat and meat products of which	22
Bacon and ham	2
Beef, veal and dishes	4
Lamb and dishes	1
Pork and dishes	1
Coated turkey and chicken	1
Chicken, turkey and dishes	3
Burgers and kebabs	2
Sausages	3
Meat pies and pastries	4
Other	1
Cereals and cereal products of which	18
Pizza	2
White bread	1
Biscuits	4
Buns, cakes and pastries	4
Fat spreads of which	11
Butter	6
Margarines	1
Polunsaturated reduced fat spreads (60-80%)	1
Reduced fat spreads (60-80% fat)	2
Low-fat spreads (40% fat or less)	1
Potatoes and savoury snacks of which	7
Chips	3
Other fried or roast potatoes	1
Savoury snacks	3
Chocolate confectionery	5

If you want to use an essential fatty acid supplement you could contact Savant Health (visit www.savant-health.com or call 08450 606070). They produce an organic blend of omega-rich oils from seeds. Alternatively you could try Rawcreation who stock a vegan DHA supplement derived from algae (www.detoxyourworld.com or call 08700 113119).



The Vegetarian & Vegan Foundation sells 'Well-Oiled' – a blend of omega-3, omega-6 and omega-9 fats manufactured by a medical herbalist based in South Wales. The VVF also sells Organic Hemp Seed Oil, which contains the same essential fats but in capsule form. Donations from the sale of these two products support the VVF's vital campaigns. Call 0117 970 5190 or visit www.vegetarian.org.uk for details.

Sugar, Pop and Alcohol

There has been an increase in the consumption of sugary drinks and there is growing evidence that they may be fuelling the increase in obesity.⁷⁰ Rather than replacing other foods, they add to them, increase the risk of eating too many calories and are a particular problem for children, who drink the most.^{63,71} Instead of these sugary drinks, drink up to two litres of water each day. Water contains no calories!

Table sugar, sweets and syrup are rich in a type of carbohydrate called simple carbohydrate (or simple sugar). In contrast, starchy foods like brown rice, oats, barley and rye contain complex carbohydrate. The role of both types of carbohydrate in obesity has been looked at^{72,73} and it's been found that when either type replaces fat in the diet, it could help weight loss.

The problem is that sugary foods quickly release their sugar into the bloodstream and can reduce the levels of HDL (good) cholesterol and increase levels of LDL (bad) cholesterol.⁷⁴ They can also increase your

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Now it's your turn

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risk of diabetes and heart disease.⁷⁴ Even glucose, the main sugar in your blood, has the ability to damage blood vessel cells⁷⁵ so complex carbohydrates (which release their sugars more slowly) are a better choice than simple carbohydrates (such as white and brown sugar).

To get your share of complex carbohydrates, eat three or four servings of grains each day, such as pasta, rice, oats and bread and choose wholegrain varieties rather than the refined, white versions, which are best avoided as a lot of the nutrients have been stripped out.

The effect that alcohol has on weight isn't clear-cut. It contains many more calories than carbohydrates (seven kcal per gram compared with four kcal) and some alcoholic drinks also contain sugar or are served with other drinks that contain it, such as mixers.

Alcohol consumption in the UK has doubled between 1960 and 2002.⁷⁶ Like soft drinks, alcohol obviously doesn't cut the number of calories you take in⁷⁷ but despite this, the Health Survey for England showed that non-drinkers are more likely to be obese than those who booze!

Most of what's known about alcohol's effect on weight isn't very scientific and doesn't answer some obvious questions. For example, is smoking tobacco at the same time as drinking responsible for the 'slimming' effect? If you do drink, the advice is to limit it to less than two drinks a day for men and one for women.

Densely Satisfying

'Energy density' refers to the amount of calories that different foods contain, weight for weight (kcal/100g). For instance, traditional African diets contain approximately 108 kcal per 100g and as a species this is probably the level we have evolved to best cope with when it comes to regulating our weight.⁸³

Most plant foods, such as boiled grains, lentils or beans, provide under 120 kcal per 100g and most fruits and vegetables provide much less than this.⁸⁴ Together, these foods are pretty close to the optimum for density.

'Energy dense foods' and 'energy dense diets' have been blamed for the global obesity epidemic.⁷⁸⁻⁸² These high-calorie foods are less filling and so encourage snacking, leading to overeating and weight gain.⁸⁵ They also tend to be low in essential nutrients.⁸⁵

Compared to protein and carbohydrate, fat is the most energy dense (or highly calorific) and the least filling.⁸⁶ To feel full, you need to eat more than if you were eating a low-fat, high-carbohydrate food.

When people are offered foods in which the fat content has been secretly pumped up, they eat more of it than a similar food that has a low fat content.⁸⁷ The body simply appears not to recognise that it is eating more calories and as a consequence, weight gradually increases. On a low-fat, much lower calorie diet, despite eating as much as they want and never feeling hungry, people still tend to lose weight.⁸⁷

Satisfying Fibre

The amount of fibre in foods has a direct link with feeling full.⁸⁶ It requires longer chewing, expands the stomach more, hangs around there for longer and leads to a slower, steadier release of nutrients.⁸⁶ Prolonged chewing slows the rate at which you eat and gives the body a chance to recognise how much food it is taking in and curb it.

As the stomach stretches, natural receptors trigger the feeling of being full to slow your eating down. It's been shown that every 14 grams of extra fibre in the diet – the amount in an average portion of bran cereal plus a small can of beans – reduces calorie intake by 10 per cent.⁸⁸

High-Protein Diets

Protein is the most filling nutrient of all^{89,90} which is why high-protein diets such as Atkins came into being. But there's no absolute proof that it's protein per se that's responsible for weight loss in Atkins-style diets – monotony (boredom from the tight restrictions on what you can eat) and 'ketosis' may play a part.⁸⁶ Ketosis happens when the body is short of glucose – the fuel needed to power the breakdown of body fat. Lacking glucose, the liver releases acidic substances (ketones) into the blood, much as happens in type 2 diabetes. But careful studies have shown that ketosis is unrelated to weight loss. In other words, low-carb diets do not trigger weight loss any more effectively than low-fat, vegetarian diets do.

While a few studies show that high-protein, low-carbohydrate diets do produce some weight loss early on,⁹¹⁻⁹³ the long-term health consequences can be very serious.

Most of these diets contain less than 10 per cent carbohydrates, 25 to 35 per cent protein, and 55 to 65 per cent fat.⁹⁴ Most of the protein comes from meat, meat products and dairy, which are high in unhealthy saturated fat and cholesterol. As they contain so much more fat than protein, a better name would be 'high-fat' diets.⁹⁴

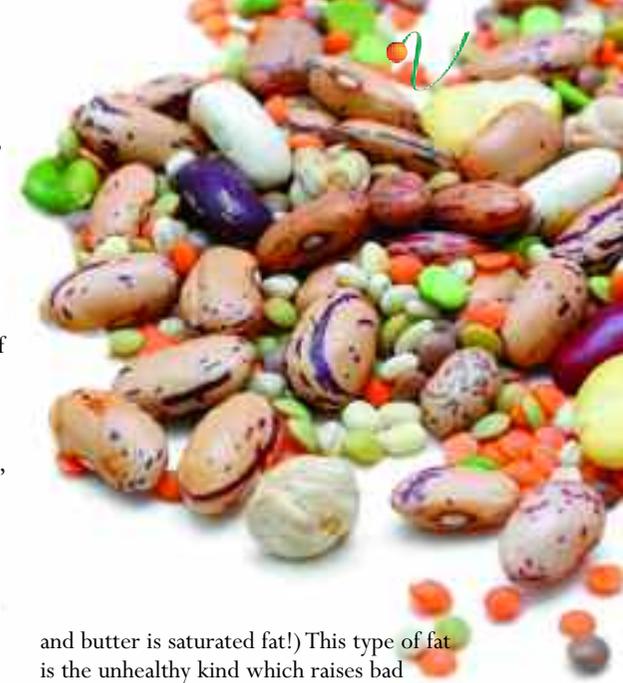
Over 400 people who followed one of these diets listed their health problems in an online registry.⁹⁵ They included constipation, loss of energy, bad breath, difficulty concentrating, kidney and heart problems, including heart attack, bypass surgery, irregular heart beat (arrhythmia) and raised cholesterol.⁹⁴

Of course, plants also contain protein, but plants rich in vegetable protein are low in the harmful saturated fat that increases the risk of heart problems. Good protein sources include pulses such as baked beans, peas, lentils and soya products, grains, nuts and seeds. They have the added bonus of being rich in fibre and eating two to three servings of these foods each day is recommended.

Dairy and Weight Loss

When nine scientific studies were looked at by researchers to see if dairy or calcium supplements could reduce weight,¹⁰⁰ they found no evidence. In fact two showed they increased weight and the other seven showed they had no effect. A recent huge study involving 12,000 children over a three-year period found that those who drank the most milk gained the most weight.¹⁰¹

Dairy products such as cheese, butter and cream are exceptionally high in saturated fats (over 60 per cent of the fat in cheese



and butter is saturated fat!) This type of fat is the unhealthy kind which raises bad cholesterol levels, increases the risk of heart disease and strokes, and which can obviously lead to weight gain.

SUMMARY & ACTION POINTS

- Obesity happens when people eat more calories than they need.
- Men need about 2,550 kcal a day – women 1,940 kcal.
- Minimum intake should be 1,500 kcal for men and 1,200 for women.
- Animal products are the main source of fat – and particularly bad saturated fat.
- One serving of meat a day can put on weight around your waist.
- Children who drink the most milk gain the most weight.
- Lose weight by replacing meat and dairy with plant foods.
- Jettison junk foods.
- Dump foods that contain saturated animal fat or damaging hydrogenated vegetable fat.
- Get your 'essential' fats easily from nuts and seeds or their oils.



Get Physical on the V-Plan

We all know that most of us don't take as much exercise as we should, mostly because our jobs don't require it. Information technology, the car, labour-saving devices, lifts, automatic doors, TV and computer games and warmer houses all play a part.⁶ And it's much the same for children.

A huge government survey in the year 2000 should have shocked the nation. *The National Diet and Nutrition Survey* showed that most young people between the ages of seven and 18 were inactive and spent little time on even moderate, let alone vigorous, activities.⁷¹

In the 1970s, 90 per cent of primary school children in the UK walked to school, compared with 10 per cent today.¹⁰² And in 2002, less than half of English children met the government's target of two hours PE (exercise) a week.⁶

It's blindingly obvious to say that more activity helps with weight control. People who exercise the most are the least likely to be obese.¹⁰³ Just as importantly, people who are the most physically active gain less weight as they get older than those who are sedentary.¹⁰⁴

Figure 6. Are You Getting Enough Exercise?

If your current number of steps per day is...	Your activity level is...
Less than 5,000	Sedentary
5,000 to 7,499	Low active
7,500 to 9,999	Somewhat active
10,000	Active
Over 12,500	Highly active

Adapted from: Reference 107

The Chief Medical Officer recommends that adults get at least 30 minutes exercise a day; it should be at least moderately-intense and it should be on at least five days every week.¹⁰⁵ Young people need even more than this – a minimum of 60 minutes every day – and should include bone-strengthening exercises at least twice a week such as walking, running and climbing.¹⁰⁵ Older people should keep moving and keep mobile through daily activity, including improving strength, coordination and balance.¹⁰⁵

These targets can be achieved in one session or in several shorter bouts of 10 minutes or longer each.

10,000 Steps

You needn't don lycra and sweat it out at the gym, particularly if the mere thought of it is enough to bring you out in a cold flush! Walking can be a great way of keeping fit and improving your health – and you can use it to meet the Chief Medical Officer's recommendations.

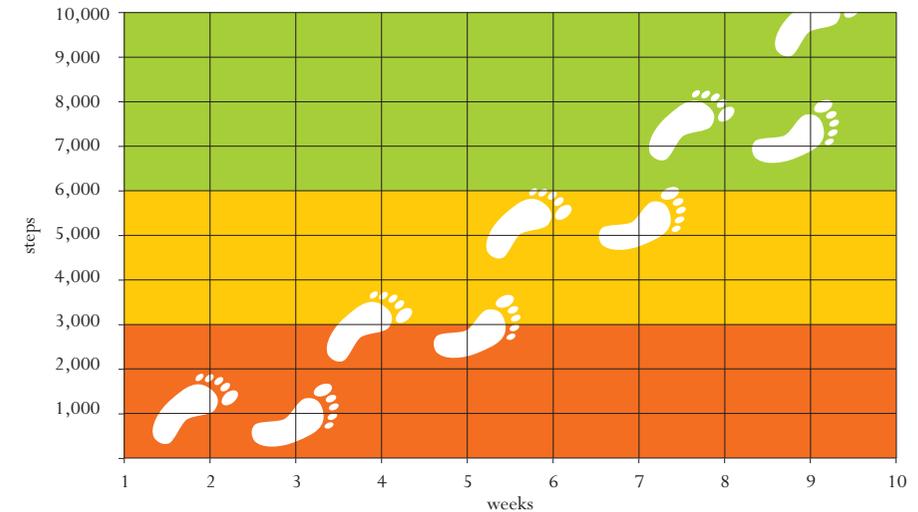
There is one big 'but' – you need to take 10,000 steps a day. If you notch up this total you are likely to have less body fat^{106, 107} and lower blood pressure.¹⁰⁶

A pedometer is a great motivator and helps you keep score. Clipped to your waistband, it not only counts your steps but can measure the calories you've burnt off and the distance you've walked.

For young people, 10,000 steps a day is probably too low and girls should aim at 11,000 while 13,000 is the goal for boys on at least five days a week.¹⁰⁸

You can check your level of activity with the table in Figure 6. If you're way short of the 10,000 steps a day target, build up slowly, adding 500 to 1,000 steps a day. Easing into the changes makes it more

Figure 7. Walk Your Way to 10,000 Steps a Day



likely you'll stick to them and less likely you'll do yourself an injury.

Work to notch up the extra steps:

- Park at the far end of the car park when shopping.
- If you need only a few things from the shop, use your legs instead of the car.
- Don't go round the supermarket or shops in a logical order – you'll be amazed how far you can walk by going back and forth.
- Take the stairs instead of the lift or escalator.
- Get up from your desk at work little and often.
- Give the dog an extra 5 minutes walk – or borrow a neighbour's dog if you don't have one!
- At work, walk to get your lunch or to find somewhere to eat it.
- Walk to the corner shop instead of driving.
- Hop off the tube or bus a stop early.

Average out over seven days the steps you have walked each week and monitor your progress until you reach your target (Figure 7).

The Vegetarian & Vegan Foundation sells its own **pedometer with FM radio** to help you walk your way to health and fitness whilst singing along to your favourite tune! Donations from its sale support the VVF's important campaigns. Call 0117 970 5190 or visit www.vegetarian.org.uk for further details.

The next section is our *V-Plan Diet One Week Meal Plan*. Enjoy losing weight the healthy way and let us know how you get on. Write to the VVF (address on page 3) or email us at info@vegetarian.org.uk. Soon the V for a Veggie Victory will be yours!

SUMMARY & ACTION POINTS

- Exercise is essential but many people don't get enough.
- Exercise helps control weight and can reduce body fat and blood pressure.
- Walking can be as good as a work out – but you need to take 10,000 steps a day.
- If you're short on steps, there are simple ways of increasing your walkabouts.



The V-Plan Diet

Monday

Breakfast – Cinnamon-Raisin Porridge

Serves 4. 10-15 minutes

Per serving: **Calories (kcal)** 275, **Fat (g)** 4.6

Rolled oats – which look like big squashed flakes – will keep you going longer than porridge oats. However, both are rich in fibre, complex carbohydrates and protein.

Top Tips

- If you're making just one portion of this, it's easy – 1 cup water to half a cup oats.
- Get your Five A Day! Add any fruit to this recipe – defrosted frozen berries, fresh or dried fruit. Mix in when porridge is ready to serve.
- For more sweetness try a couple of teaspoons of date, maple or agave (type of cactus) syrup – date syrup is half the price of maple. You'll find them in supermarkets or health stores.

Ingredients

960ml/34 fl oz/4 cups water

200g/8oz/2 cups rolled or porridge oats

75g/5oz/1/2 cup raisins or chopped dried apricots

1/2 tsp cinnamon

1/4 tsp salt

Soya or rice milk (optional)

Date or maple syrup to taste (optional)

1. Soak oats and water overnight in a bowl if possible.
2. Cover and leave in fridge.
3. In the morning, place all ingredients (except milk and syrup) in a saucepan.
4. Bring to the boil, lower heat and cook for 10 minutes or longer, depending on how you like it.
5. Stir occasionally.
6. Serve plain or with soya/rice milk and syrup, if desired.

Snack – Organic Dried Fruit & Nuts

Per serving: **Calories (kcal)** 246, **Fat (g)** 17.1

Our *V-Plan Diet One Week Meal Plan* is a collection of nutritious breakfast, lunch, dinner and snack ideas, providing an average of 1,500 kcal per day.

Lunch – Hummus, Tomato & Alfalfa Sprouts in Pitta Pockets

Serves 1. 5 minutes (10 if making hummus)

Per serving: **Calories (kcal)** 352, **Fat (g)** 6.4

Keeps 2-3 days in a sealed container in the fridge. You can buy hummus in supermarkets but it is easy and cheap to make your own – and it won't be so high in salt! Alfalfa sprouts are tiny green shoots full of vibrant vitamins and minerals. They are found in plastic bags in the chill section of health stores or delis.

1-2 dollops of hummus

2 small wholemeal pitta pockets or 1 large wholemeal pitta

1 tomato, sliced

Handful of alfalfa sprouts

1. Lightly toast pitta bread.
2. When warm, slice a little bit from the top if it's a pocket or slice in half if it's a large one.
3. Open pitta carefully.
4. Spread inside of pitta with hummus.
5. Add alfalfa sprouts and tomato.
6. Serve.

Hummus

Serves 4. 5 minutes

If you have leftover chickpeas, use them in a salad, soup or stew. They also freeze well.

1 tin chickpeas



Corin Jeavons

1 tbsp tahini

1/2 tbsp olive oil

1-2 cloves garlic depending on taste

Juice 1/2-1 lemon depending on juiciness

Juice from chickpea tin

Salt and ground black pepper to taste

1. Drain chickpeas, retaining juice.
2. Blend first five ingredients.
3. Add some juice from tin if necessary – traditional hummus is quite runny.
4. Season and serve.

Dinner – Stir-Fried Vegetables, Rice & Tofu with Mustard Peanut Sauce & Multi Bean Salad

Serves 4. 35-40 minutes

Per serving: **Calories (kcal)** 652, **Fat (g)** 23

Gorgeous – a favourite with everyone who's tried it.

Rice

350g/12oz long grain brown rice

700ml/1 1/4 pints water

2 tsp vegan bouillon powder

Stir Fry

12 spring onions, sliced

200g/7oz baby sweetcorn, halved

2 red peppers, thinly sliced

1 medium carrot, sliced into thin sticks

200g/7oz oriental greens such as Pak Choi or Chinese leaves, shredded

1 pack medium-firm tofu (eg Cauldron), sliced lengthways into 2 'steaks'

2 tsp olive oil

Sauce

60g/4 level tsp/1/4 cup smooth peanut butter

2 tbsp fresh lemon juice

1 tbsp prepared English mustard

Large handful of parsley (curly or flat-leaf), thick stalks removed

2 tsp water

1 tsp maple/date syrup

1 small clove garlic, crushed

Pinch salt

Bean Salad

1 tin mixed beans, drained and rinsed

1 stick celery, finely diced

2 tbsp sweetcorn

1 small red onion, finely diced

1 tbsp fresh parsley, finely chopped

2 tbsp Omega-3 vinaigrette (page 24)

1. Put rice on to cook with water.
2. Bring to boil and simmer for 25-35 minutes until rice is tender and water is absorbed.
3. Meanwhile, chop vegetables for stir-fry and put aside.
4. Fry 2 tofu 'steaks' in a little oil in a non-stick pan until golden brown on each side.
5. Add a little shoyu (soy sauce) until the tofu is coated. Drain on kitchen paper and put aside.
6. Make bean salad – place all solid ingredients in a bowl and mix.
7. Add vinaigrette and toss everything so it's well coated.
8. Make sauce by blending all ingredients together – then warm through gently.
9. Stir-fry the vegetables in the oil.
10. Chop cooled tofu into bite-sized pieces and heat through with vegetables.
11. Place cooked, drained rice on plates, top with the vegetable-tofu mix, then the sauce.
12. Serve bean salad in separate bowls on the side.

Dessert – Banana Fool

Serves 4. 5 minutes plus chilling time

Per serving: **Calories (kcal)** 121, **Fat (g)** 3.2

1 pack firm silken tofu (blue package)

1 large ripe banana, mashed

4 tbsp/1/4 cup maple, agave or date syrup

1 tbsp fresh lemon juice

1 tsp vanilla extract

1. Place everything in blender or food processor.
2. Process for several minutes until the tofu has lost its grainy texture and the whole thing is very creamy.
3. Serve at once or transfer to a covered container and chill.

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Tuesday

Breakfast – 1) Fruit Smoothie 2) Toast with Vegetable Spread & Reduced Salt Yeast Extract

Serves 4, 5-10 minutes

Per serving: *Calories (kcal) 425, Fat (g) 17.8*



Frozen berries are a brilliant way to vary your fruit intake, especially in winter. Most supermarkets sell frozen raspberries, blueberries and mixed berries...

- 2 frozen or fresh bananas, broken into chunks
- 720g/25 fl oz/3 cups unsweetened fruit juice – any type
- 140g/5oz/1 cup sliced fresh fruit or defrosted frozen berries
- 240ml/8 fl oz/1 cup soya yoghurt, plain or flavoured (optional)

1. Blend all ingredients together until very smooth and creamy.
2. Serve immediately.

Lunch – Superbowl Salad with a Choice of Two Dressings

Serves 4, 40 minutes from scratch, 10 if using cooked grains

Per serving: *Calories (kcal) 529, Fat (g) 26.7*

This is a creative and lovely way to use up cooked wholegrains – brown rice, quinoa (pronounced 'keen-wah') or millet are particularly good. Before cooking quinoa, rinse thoroughly in cold water in a large sieve – this gets rid of the naturally bitter coating.

Cook these grains in one of two ways:

1. Fry a little onion, garlic, herbs/spices in a teaspoon of oil first – you can also add diced red pepper, celery or other veggies of your choice. Fry until onions are soft, then add the grains and 'fry' for a few

minutes, stirring constantly to avoid burning. Then add water or stock and cook according to packet instructions.

2. Just add water/stock and a few herbs/spices of your choice and simmer until cooked, according to packet instructions.

Either of these gorgeous dressings will top up your omega-3 levels a treat! This dish is chock full of fibre, vitamins, protein, minerals... This is a recipe to start you off – next time, let your imagination flow and try different combinations of nuts, seeds, salad vegetables – more possibilities below.

- 450g/1lb cooked wholegrains (approximately ½ this quantity if cooking from raw)
- 2 tbsp toasted sunflower seeds
- Large handful Pak Choi or Cos lettuce, shredded
- 1 red pepper, diced
- 2 sticks celery, diced
- 1 large carrot, grated
- 1 tin beans – kidney or flageolet – drained and rinsed
- 30g/1oz walnuts, chopped or halved

Other options:

- Chopped avocado
- Rocket leaves, chopped with scissors
- Pumpkin seeds
- Almonds
- Chopped dates or chopped unsulphured apricots
- Sprinkling of nutritional yeast flakes
- Thinly sliced smoked tofu
- Deep-fried tofu pieces
- Grilled tempeh

Basic Omega-3 Dressing

8-10 servings, based on 1 tbsp per salad portion. 5 minutes, 20+ to marinate

Rich in linseed, this dressing is an easy way to increase your intake of omega-3.

- 60ml/4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 110ml/7 tbsp mixed omega-3 oil or linseed (flax) oil
- 90ml/6 tbsp Balsamic vinegar

- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- ½ tsp date or maple syrup
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and sliced into 2-3 chunks
- 1 dspn nutritional yeast flakes or powder (optional)
- Salt and black pepper

1. Mix ingredients in a jar with lid, making sure mustard and syrup are dissolved.
2. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper.
3. Store in fridge and shake before use.
4. Pour enough dressing over salad so that when you toss it, most of ingredients are lightly coated.

Oriental Style Dressing

8-10 servings, based on 1 tbsp per salad portion. 5 minutes
This will keep for a few days in the fridge.

- 60ml/4tbsp/¼ cup rice vinegar or ½ each cider vinegar & water
- 1 tbsp shoyu (a type of soy sauce)
- 2 tbsp light miso
- 1 tbsp sweet chilli sauce
- ½ tsp maple syrup
- 2 tbsp fresh ginger, grated or 2 tbsp pickled ginger, chopped
- 60ml/4 tbsp toasted sesame oil
- 110ml/7 tbsp mixed omega-3 oil or linseed (flax) oil

1. Blend or whisk everything until smooth.
2. Pour into a jar with lid.
3. Store in fridge and shake before use.

Snack – Roasted Veggie & Green Leaves Sandwich with a Dab of Hummus

Per serving: *Calories (kcal) 239, Fat (g) 6.2*

Dinner – Red Bean Burritos

Makes 2-4, 10-15 minutes

Per serving: *Calories (kcal) 706, Fat (g) 9.8*

So very easy, quick – and surprisingly good!

- 4-8 flour tortillas
- 1 tin pinto beans

- 115ml/4 fl oz/½ cup ready-made salsa (available in tubs or jars)
- 1 red pepper, finely diced
- ¼ - ½ tsp chilli powder, according to taste (or use a dash of Tabasco sauce)
- ½ tsp garlic granules
- ½ tsp ground cumin
- ½ tsp oregano

Toppings

- 40g/1½oz/½ cup shredded lettuce such as Cos or Little Gem (not Iceberg)
- 1 ripe tomato, chopped
- ½ avocado, cut into chunks
- 1 medium carrot, grated
- 1 tbsp fresh coriander, chopped
- Handful of green or black olives, pitted
- 1-2 spring onions, sliced
- 2-3 tbsp Plamil mayo or homemade vegan mayo dressing
- 2 tbsp red onion, finely chopped

1. Warm tortillas in oven or microwave and keep warm.
2. Combine beans, salsa, red pepper and seasonings in a medium saucepan.
3. Bring to boil, reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes, adding a little stock if necessary to stop drying out.
4. Mash beans slightly with back of spoon or a potato masher.
5. Assemble each tortilla: dab a portion of bean mixture with other toppings and mayo. Don't put too much in or it'll squish out the sides!
6. Roll up carefully and enjoy!

Dessert – Fresh Fruit Salad

Per serving: *Calories (kcal) 113, Fat (g) 2.2*



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Wednesday

Breakfast – Nutty Walnut Granola Crunch

Serves 20 – keeps well. 70 minutes

Per serving: Calories (kcal) 284, Fat (g) 11.1

Start the day as you mean to go on with this lovely, crunchy-style cereal. Unlike commercial types, it isn't laden with refined sugar. Serve with soya/rice milk and fresh fruit!

If you have a good health store and are short of time, you should be able to buy a sugar-free crunchy granola-type cereal.

600g/1½lbs/6 cups rolled oats

150g/5oz/1 cup barley or brown rice flour

125g/scant 5oz/1 cup coarsely chopped walnuts

125g/scant 5oz/1 cup raw sunflower seeds

½ tsp salt

240ml/8 fl oz/1 cup apple juice concentrate

120ml/4 fl oz/½ cup date or maple syrup

2 tbsp rapeseed oil

2 tbsp water

2 tsp vanilla extract

150g/generous 5oz/1 cup raisins

1. Preheat oven to 170°C/325°F/Gas Mark 3.
2. Combine oats, flour, walnuts, sunflower seeds and salt in a large bowl.
3. In a separate bowl, whisk together juice, syrup, oil, water and vanilla.
4. Pour over dry ingredients and mix thoroughly until evenly moistened.



5. Divide mixture between two large oven trays, spreading out into a 2cm/1 inch thick layer.
6. Bake until golden brown, stirring well every 15 minutes – use a timer.
7. Cooking time total 50-60 minutes.
8. Remove from oven and stir in raisins while mixture is still hot, to plump up the raisins.
9. Let cool completely and then store in airtight containers in fridge or a cool cupboard.

Snack – Fresh Fruit, eg Grapes, Slice of Melon, Cherries, Apple

Per serving: Calories (kcal) 84, Fat (g) 0.1

Lunch – 1) Black-Eyed Bean Paté with Salad in Wholemeal Wheat or Rye Bread 2) Fruit

Serves 4-6. 5-7 minutes

Per serving: Calories (kcal) 338, Fat (g) 4.2

1 tin black-eyed beans, drained

Piece fresh ginger, grated (approx 1-2 tsp, according to taste)

1 tbsp fresh lemon juice (or more to taste)

Shoyu to taste

2 tsp rapeseed or sesame oil (optional)

Salad – grated carrot, salad leaves, tomato, alfalfa sprouts, watercress or a combination.

1. Blend everything together – only 1 tsp grated ginger to start with.
2. Add more lemon juice/shoyu/ginger according to taste.
3. Spread thickly on each side of bread.
4. Add salad of choice.

Very good as a dip, also – or with oatcakes.

Dinner – Vodka Pasta Sauce with Marinated Cauliflower Salad

Serves 4. 35-40 minutes.

Per serving: Calories (kcal) 493, Fat (g) 23.5

Salad: make Part I the night before if possible (20-25 minutes) so flavours blend

or before the rest of the cooking.

Add Part II ingredients just before you want to eat (5-10 minutes).

Sauce and Pasta: 10-15 minutes – 10 minutes preparation and to cook garlic plus blending time (the pasta cooks meanwhile).

Sauce and Pasta

2 tbsp olive oil

3 cloves garlic, crushed

10 black olives, without stones

¼ tsp chilli flakes or pinch chilli powder

2 tbsp vodka or dry sherry

450ml/16 fl oz/2 cups pasta sauce from a jar or home made

115g/4oz/½ cup silken tofu, drained

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

450g/1lb wholemeal penne pasta

1. Cook pasta in boiling water according to packet instructions.
2. Sauté garlic in olive oil until cooked but not brown.
3. Add vodka and stir for a minute or so.
4. Blend all ingredients (except pasta!) until smooth.
5. Drain pasta and keep warm.
6. If sauce too thick, add a little soya milk.
7. Heat through, serve on pasta and sprinkle with freshly ground black pepper.

Chilled Marinated Cauliflower Salad

Serves 4-5. 30-35 minutes

Sophisticated but very easy

Part I

60ml/4 tbsp olive oil

60ml/4 tbsp red wine vinegar

120ml/8 tbsp water

2 medium cloves crushed garlic

½ tsp salt

½ tsp whole black peppercorns

2 bay leaves

1 medium (6"-9") cauliflower, broken into bite-sized florettes

1. In a large saucepan, combine all ingredients.
2. Bring to boil, reduce heat and simmer for approximately 10-15 minutes, or until cauliflower is tender, but not soft.
3. Transfer to a serving bowl and allow to cool a little. Cover and chill in fridge.

Part II

1 small red onion, diced finely

½ cup freshly minced parsley – flat leaf or ordinary OK

2-3 fresh basil leaves, minced (or ½ tsp dried)

1 medium/large carrot, grated

1. Add Part II ingredients to Part I, mixing in well so the dressing coats all ingredients.
2. Serve.

Dessert – Chocolate Mousse

Serves 4-6. 5 minutes

Per serving: Calories (kcal) 173, Fat (g) 7.5

Don't let the words 'healthier' or 'reduced fat' put you off. Less rich than Sunday's mousse but still utterly gorgeous – and quick. Our sceptical friends tried it and fought over who got to lick the bowl!

Blueberries or raspberries make a good addition and look beautiful scattered on top.

1 pack firm silken tofu (389g), crumbled
60-120ml/4-8 tbsp/¼-½ cup of date, agave or maple syrup – add smaller quantity to start with then gradually add more if necessary

130g/4½oz/½ cup cocoa powder – Green & Blacks or something of similar quality is best (not drinking chocolate)

2 tsp vanilla extract

Pinch salt

1. Blend tofu until creamy.
2. Add rest of ingredients and blend until it's all incorporated.
3. Chill before serving.

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Thursday

Breakfast – Wheat Biscuit Cereal & Fresh Fruit

Serves 1. 1 minute

Per serving: Calories (kcal) 257, Fat (g) 3.7

2 wheat biscuits (eg Biobix or Weetabix)
Calcium enriched soya or rice milk to taste
Fresh fruit of choice – eg ½ banana and ½ grated apple/handful of defrosted berry fruits

Simply pour milk over biscuits, top with fruit and enjoy!



Lunch – VSLT (Veggie Sausage, Lettuce & Tomato Sandwich with Mustard & Mayo)

Serves 4. 15 minutes

Per serving: Calories (kcal) 285, Fat (g) 8.5

8 veggie sausages
French or English mustard, according to taste
Shredded lettuce
4 tomatoes, sliced
Plamil mayonnaise
8 slices good quality wholemeal bread

1. Grill sausages according to instructions.
2. Spread mayo on each side of bread, cover with lettuce and tomato.
3. When sausages are cooked, slice each one in half and lay in sandwich.
4. Slice sandwich in half.
5. Eat while warm if possible.

Snack – Crudités & Reduced-Fat Hummus

Per serving: Calories (kcal) 55, Fat (g) 2.4



Dinner – Middle-Eastern Nutty Millet Pilaf

Serves 4. 25-30 minutes

Per serving: Calories (kcal) 425, Fat (g) 18.9

Light and fresh tasting; also very quick. Soya yoghurt is available from large supermarkets and health stores. The suggested brands come in plain or flavoured varieties.

1 tbsp olive oil
1 medium onion, chopped fine
1 red pepper, deseeded and chopped into bite-sized pieces
1 tsp cumin
1 tsp turmeric
225g/8oz millet
600ml/21 fl oz vegetable stock
225g/8oz frozen peas
85g/3oz hazelnuts or slivered almonds
Juice of 1 lemon
1 tbsp chopped fresh mint
Dairy-free yoghurt such as Yofu or Sojasun

1. Heat oil in large, heavy based pan and cook onion and red pepper for 5 minutes over moderate heat.
2. Add spices and fry for 1 minute, stirring continually.
3. Add millet and vegetable stock.
4. Bring to boil, cover and simmer for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally.
5. Meanwhile, place nuts in a frying pan over a medium-high heat and toast till golden brown for 2 minutes or so – keep turning gently with a wooden spatula so they don't stick or burn.
6. Add peas during last 5 minutes of cooking time.
7. When all liquid has been absorbed and millet is light and fluffy, it's cooked!
8. Stir in nuts, lemon juice and mint.
9. Serve on warm plates – place dollop of yoghurt on top if using.



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Dessert – Fruit Smoothie

Serves 4. 5 minutes

Per serving: Calories (kcal) 271, Fat (g) 7.4

As we've said, frozen berries are a brilliant way to vary your fruit intake, especially in winter.

Top Tip

Frozen bananas are a great way to chill a smoothie without using ice. Peel, bag and freeze!

2 frozen or fresh bananas, broken into chunks
720ml/24 fl oz/3 cups unsweetened fruit juice – any type
100g/4oz berry fruit, fresh or frozen
250ml/9 fl oz/1 cup soya yoghurt, plain or flavoured (optional)

1. Blend all ingredients together until very smooth and creamy.
2. Serve immediately.

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Friday

Breakfast - Creamy Cashew-Cardamom Shake

Serves 2. 5-10 minutes

Per serving: Calories (kcal) 428, Fat (g) 21.3

- 75g/2½ oz raw cashews
- 240ml/8 fl oz soya or other dairy-free milk
- 2 tbsp pure maple syrup (start with ½ tbsp and add gradually, according to taste)
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- ½ tsp ground cardamom
- 1 medium-sized ripe banana, peeled, cut into chunks and frozen*

1. In a blender, grind cashews to a fine powder.
2. Add soya milk, maple syrup, vanilla and cardamom and blend till smooth.
3. Add banana chunks and blend until thick and creamy.
4. Pour into 2 glasses and serve at once.

*Can be made without freezing the banana and it's still delicious – just blend banana at stage 2, then add a bit of ice to the shake.



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Lunch - 1) Italian Tomato & Bean Soup with Bread or Outcakes 2) Fruit

Serves 4. 20 minutes

Per serving: Calories (kcal) 575, Fat (g) 8.2

This is a very quick and easy recipe which is cheap and freezes well! Some 'fresh' supermarket tomato soups are good, just make sure there is no added dairy such as cream or whey powder.

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 1 large clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1 stick celery, finely chopped
- 1 carrot, finely chopped
- 2 tins chopped tomatoes
- 1 tsp oregano
- 1 tsp basil
- 1½ tsp vegan bouillon powder mixed with 425ml/¾ pint hot water
- Salt and black pepper
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- 1 tin white beans – eg borlotti, haricot – drained and rinsed
- Wholemeal rolls x 4

1. Sauté onion, celery and carrot in a medium pan for a few minutes.
2. Boil water for soup.
3. Add garlic to pan and stir until onion translucent.
4. Put bouillon powder in a jug and add hot water – stir well.
5. Add tomatoes, herbs and hot stock to pan.
6. Simmer for 10 minutes.

7. Add more water if soup too thick.
8. Blend soup.
9. Add beans and parsley, stirring into soup well.
10. Let soup come to boil, then simmer another few minutes.
11. Season to taste and serve.

Dinner - Lentil & Frankfurter Stew with Greens

Serves 4-6. 20-30 minutes

Per serving: Calories (kcal) 132, Fat (g) 4.6

A smoky-flavoured and filling dish that can be thinned down to a soup if desired.

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 medium carrot, chopped
- 200g/7oz/1 cup yellow mung lentils or orange lentils
- 720ml/1¼ pints/3 cups water
- 1 large bay leaf
- 2-3 tsp vegan bouillon stock powder
- Salt and pepper
- 2 large or 4 small vegan frankfurters (hot dogs), sliced into small chunks (Taifun or Fry's are very good, available from health stores or online)
- 1-2 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 450g/1lb shredded cabbage

1. Heat oil in heavy saucepan.
2. When hot, add carrot and onion and sauté until soft.
3. Add lentils and water.
4. Bring to boil then simmer, stirring until lentils are cooked and soft – 15-20 minutes.
5. Add water if too thick or the mixture is sticking.
6. Add 2 tsp bouillon powder, whisking in well so there are no lumps.
7. Cook for a further 5 minutes.
8. Meanwhile, put on greens to steam.
9. Add lemon juice and chopped frankfurters to stew.
10. Season as necessary (if you use low-salt bouillon you'll need a little more salt

- and vice versa).
11. Thin with extra hot stock if you want it as a soup.
12. Stir, then place cooked greens at bottom and spoon soup/stew on top, reserving a few green strands for garnish.

Dessert - Raspberry & Almond Syllabub

Serves 4. 5-10 minutes plus chilling time

Per serving: Calories (kcal) 120, Fat (g) 6.2

- 110g/4oz silken tofu (red packet)
- 225g/½ lb soya cream (approx 1 small tub)
- 225g/½ lb raspberries
- 15g/1 tsp caster sugar
- 1½ tsp ground almonds
- flaked almonds to decorate

1. Beat the tofu into the cream.
2. Blend two-thirds of the raspberries and add to cream together with sugar.
3. Stir in the ground almonds followed by whole raspberries.
4. Put in the fridge to chill. To serve, decorate with toasted, flaked almonds. (Place flaked almonds on tin foil under grill, stirring occasionally. Don't take your eyes off them – they brown suddenly!)

Snack - Guacamole or Hummus & Crudités

Per serving: Calories (kcal) 62, Fat (g) 5.1



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Saturday

Breakfast - 1) Nutty Banana Spread & Toast 2) Fruit

Serves 4. 3 minutes

Per serving: *Calories (kcal)* 389, *Fat (g)* 12.9

A delicious, creamy spread without any of the baddies. Fantastic on bagels, wholemeal toast... you choose!

2 large ripe bananas

80g/3oz 1/2 cup sunflower seeds

1 tbsp nut or seed butter (peanut, almond, cashew etc)

1 tbsp raisins, dried cranberries or currants

1. Mash banana well.
2. Stir in remaining ingredients.
3. If you prefer a completely smooth spread, blend everything together.
4. Serve at once on bread, toast, rice or oatcakes.

Lunch - Lentil & Coconut Soup

Serves 4. 60-65 minutes

Per serving: *Calories (kcal)* 168, *Fat (g)* 6.8

30ml/1 fl oz/2 tbsp rapeseed oil

2 red onions, finely chopped

1 small green chilli, seeded and finely sliced

2 garlic cloves, chopped

2.5cm/1 in fresh lemon grass, outer layers removed and insides finely sliced

200g/7oz red lentils, rinsed

1 tsp ground coriander

1 tsp paprika



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400ml/14 fl oz coconut milk

900ml/2 pints water

2 tsp vegan bouillon powder or 1 vegan stock cube

Juice of 1 lime

3 spring onions, chopped

20g/3/4oz fresh coriander, finely chopped

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. Heat oil in a deep frying pan or wok, then add onions, chilli, garlic and lemon grass.
2. Cook for 5 minutes or until lentils have softened.
3. Add lentils, spices, coconut milk and 900ml water and stir.
4. Bring to boil, stir, reduce heat and simmer 40-45 minutes, until lentils mushy.
5. Add bouillon powder, stirring in well.
6. Add lime juice, spring onions and fresh coriander, reserving some for garnish.
7. Season and serve with garnish.

Snacks - Fresh Fruit

Per serving: *Calories (kcal)* 67, *Fat (g)* 0.2

Dinner - Tofu Lasagne

Serves 4. 50-80 minutes, depending on whether you use sauce from a jar or make your own.

Per serving: *Calories (kcal)* 240, *Fat (g)* 9.1

Top Tip

It's easy to make the homemade lasagne sauce in double quantities - freezing half for another day.

Sauce (if making own)

1/2 tsp olive oil

1/2 medium onion, chopped quite small

1/2 tsp minced garlic

450ml/16 fl oz/2 cups passata (sieved tomatoes - usually sold in cartons or glass bottles and found in supermarkets and other food outlets)

1/2 tsp dried basil

1/2 tsp dried oregano

1 bay leaf

3/4 tsp salt

1/4 tsp freshly ground black pepper

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Or

450ml/16 fl oz/2 cups of vegan herby tomato sauce in a jar, such as *Meridian*, *Dolmio*, *Ragu* or *Loyd Grossman*

Filling

338g/3/4lbs/1 1/2 cups firm tofu (such as *Cauldron*), drained and crumbled

3.5g/1/4oz/1/4 cup finely chopped fresh parsley or 1 tsp dried

100g/4oz lasagne no-cook sheets

50g/2oz/1/2 cup grated dairy-free cheese - use

Redwood's Cheezly Melting Mozzarella or

Melting Cheddar style if possible

1. If using ready-made sauce, ignore steps 5-6 and 9!
2. Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat.
3. Add onion, cover and cook 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
4. Add garlic and cook, covered, for a few minutes. If using ready-made sauce, go to no. 7.
5. Remove saucepan lid, add garlic, passata, basil, oregano, bay leaf, 1/2 tsp of salt and 1/2 tsp of pepper.
6. Simmer 20-30 minutes to allow flavours to blend.
7. 5-10 minutes before end of sauce cooking time, preheat oven to 190°C/375°F/Gas Mark 5.
8. In a large bowl, combine crumbled tofu with parsley, remaining 1 tsp salt, remaining 1/2 tsp pepper, mixing until well combined.

9. When sauce has cooked, discard bay leaf.
10. If using ready-made sauce, add this to the cooked onions.
11. Spread a thin layer of tomato sauce in bottom of a shallow rectangular baking dish.
12. Arrange a layer of lasagne sheets on top.
13. Spread layer of tofu mixture.
14. Repeat with alternating layers, ending with tomato sauce.
15. Top with 'cheese' and bake for 30-40 minutes, or until heated through.
16. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving.

Dessert - Rhubarb & Ginger Fool

Serves 4. 20-25 minutes, plus chilling time.

Per serving: *Calories (kcal)* 188, *Fat (g)* 6.1

Refreshing and light - a sophisticated but very easy pud.

450g/1lb rhubarb

130g/4 1/2oz/1/4 cup dried dates

1 tsp fresh ginger, grated

60ml/2 fl oz/1/4 cup water

290g/10oz silken tofu

Toasted slivered almonds

Mint leaves to decorate

1. Slice rhubarb into 2.5cm/1 inch pieces and stew in a pan of boiling water for 1 minute, then strain.
2. Finely chop the dates and place in a saucepan with rhubarb, grated ginger and water.
3. Bring to boil and simmer until rhubarb and dates are soft.
4. Allow mixture to cool.
5. Blend or food process the rhubarb mixture with silken tofu until smooth.
6. Divide the fool between 4 individual dishes and decorate with toasted almonds and mint leaves.
7. Chill before serving.

Top Tip

You can use up any leftover silken tofu in a breakfast smoothie - just add fruit, soya milk and blend until smooth.

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Sunday

Breakfast – Scrambled Tofu & Baked Beans

Serves 4. 10-15 minutes

Per serving: Calories (kcal) 402, Fat (g) 13.5

A great alternative to scrambled eggs and the quantities can be halved or quartered. Opened tofu can be kept in the fridge for a few days, in water in a plastic box with a lid. Great in stir-fries.

2 blocks tofu

2 tbsp oil

1 large onion, finely chopped

Large pinch of turmeric

Large pinch of chilli or 1-2 drops of Tabasco/hot pepper sauce (only if you like hot, spicy food!)

2 chopped spring onions, including green parts

Salt and pepper

1 tin organic sugar-free or low sugar baked beans
Bread for toast – 4-8 slices wholemeal, depending on how hungry everyone is!

1. Remove the tofu from its wrapper and drain all the water out.
2. Pat dry using a clean tea towel and then squash it between two plates so that the excess water drains out.
3. Add oil to a frying pan and heat gently.
4. Add chopped onion.
5. Meanwhile, heat up the baked beans gently.
6. When the onion is beginning to soften and brown (after about five minutes) crumble in the tofu – it should be in small pieces about the size of peas.
7. Gently fry for a couple more minutes and add some turmeric, chilli and spring onion if you want them and a little bit of salt & pepper.
8. Serve with toast and any other breakfast things you fancy!

Lunch – Watercress & Potato Soup

Serves 4. 40 minutes

Per serving: Calories (kcal) 182, Fat (g) 4.9

Watercress and potato soup is one of those elegant classics that is surprisingly simple to prepare. And given that it contains nutritional goodies such as potatoes (vitamin C) and watercress (rich in minerals including calcium and iron) you can't go wrong! Use your own vegetable stock if you have any left over, otherwise use vegan bouillon or stock cube. Marigold and Kallo are two good makes, or use Oxo vegetable.

1 onion, peeled and chopped

15g/½oz vegan margarine

700g/1½lb potatoes, peeled and diced

900ml/1½ pints vegetable stock – either home-made or with vegan bouillon powder/stock cube

1 bunch watercress

Salt and black pepper

Dash of freshly-ground nutmeg (optional)

3-4 tbsp soya cream

1. Sauté the onion in margarine in a large saucepan for 5 minutes until onions are translucent, but not browned.
2. Add potatoes, cover and cook gently for 5-10 minutes.
3. Stir from time to time and ensure that the vegetables do not brown.
4. Add stock, bring to boil then cover.
5. Simmer for about 20 minutes, or until potatoes are tender.
6. Liquidize the soup with the watercress.
7. Season to taste with salt, pepper and nutmeg.
8. Reheat without boiling.
9. Serve with a swirl of soya cream.

Snacks – Nuts & Seeds, eg Walnuts, Cashews, Almonds, Sunflower Seeds (lightly toasted and coated in Shoyu), Pumpkin Seeds

Per serving: Calories (kcal) 376, Fat (g) 33.2

Dinner – Rice Pilaf with Red Pepper & Pine Nut Sauce plus Baked Squash

Serves 4. 40-45 minutes

Per serving: Calories (kcal) 179, Fat (g) 2.9

A lovely combination of flavours. The sauce is particularly delicious and very simple to make with a stick blender.

1 medium onion, finely chopped

1 clove garlic, minced

½ tsp olive oil

1 tsp ground cumin

¾ tsp fennel seed

Pinch black pepper

½ tsp salt

300g/10oz brown basmati rice (or use long grain brown if you can't get it)

¼ tsp saffron steeped in 30ml/2 tbsp warm water

560ml/1 pint light vegetable stock

450g/1lb butternut or similar squash, chopped into small chunks

1. Preheat oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4.
2. In a medium sized heavy saucepan, sauté the onion and garlic in oil over a medium heat until just softened.
3. Add the cumin, fennel seed, pepper and salt.
4. Sauté for 1 minute.
5. Add the rice and stir constantly for about 2 minutes or until the rice smells fragrant.
6. Add the saffron and stock, bring rice to the boil and cover.
7. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer for about 20-25 minutes, or until the liquid is absorbed.
8. Lightly steam squash until just cooked – 5-10 minutes. Test with thin skewer.
9. Place squash on a heatproof dish and bake in oven.
10. Check rice and add a little more liquid if beginning to stick.
11. Remove rice from heat and let sit for 10 minutes before serving.
12. Make sauce and gently warm through.
13. Serve pilaf with squash and sauce.



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Dessert – Chocolate Mousse II

Serves 6-10. 25 minutes, plus chilling time.

Per serving: Calories (kcal) 238, Fat (g) 12.3

The Big Mama of all mousses! Try this on any of your friends who believe that being vegan is about 'giving up' and being a martyr... and watch the smiles of pleasure on their chocolate-smearing chops! This recipe halved will give 4 small but very rich portions.

455g/1lb silken tofu (red or blue packet) – available in good supermarkets or health stores.
285g/10oz dairy-free chocolate chips or dairy-free dark chocolate such as Green & Blacks/Divine
3 tbsp maple, date or agave syrup
1 tsp vanilla extract
Pinch salt

1. Blend tofu in a food processor or blender until just smooth.
2. Soften chocolate with syrup in a double boiler (or bowl over pan of hot water), set over a low heat.
3. Stir gently with a rubber or plastic spatula until the mix has melted and combined.
4. Pour chocolate mixture with vanilla extract and salt into processor with the tofu.
5. Mix until creamy, scraping down sides once or twice to ensure everything well mixed in.
6. Refrigerate in individual serving dishes of your choice for an hour or so.

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What's a Vegetarian?

A person who avoids eating red and white meats, fish and all other water creatures such as prawns and lobsters; and who also avoids slaughter by-products such as gelatine (made from horns, hooves, bones etc), lard and cochineal (crushed insects). A vegetarian may or may not eat dairy products, free range eggs or honey.

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