

# FERTILITY BOOSTING MEAL PLAN

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# INTRODUCTION

Infertility in women of childbearing age has become quite common in recent years. Women are either diagnosed with primary or secondary infertility. Primary infertility is defined as the inability to conceive due to recognisable as well as unrecognisable causes within a 12-month period. It is estimated that approximately 15% of couples will share this diagnosis. Although this is a US-based statistic, it is very likely, just from looking at the people we know personally, that around the same percentage would have a problem conceiving, wherever we are in the world. Secondary infertility is defined as the inability to become pregnant or carry a pregnancy to term following the birth of one or more biological children.

If you plan to have a baby, whether you have been battling with infertility or not, then this book is for you. If you've been battling infertility, then I understand the pain and loneliness you feel. If you've had several failed assisted reproductive therapies, then my heart goes out to you...my eyes are tearing up as I write these words. I've been there and my wish is that no woman ever has to go through these invasive treatments.

As women we are tough... we can handle more stress than men (**sorry guys, but it's true**). This usually means that we take on the full responsibility of not getting pregnant. We blame ourselves. We feel like failures for not being able to do what millions of women are able to do so easily. We worry about the months and years passing by, and our ever decreasing chances of getting pregnant as we get older.

The only thing we should take responsibility for, is putting ourselves through this mental torture! Don't do it. I will talk more about stress and its effect on your chances of getting pregnant in the Lifestyle Changes chapter. But I'm telling you, from now on, this book is the starting point for you to stop the guilt and shame roller coaster you are on. Get support from family and friends. Join a Facebook group for women in your situation...sometimes it's easier to talk to strangers...I've been there! I wouldn't even talk to my mom or my husband...which is a mistake I don't want you to make. This was also 10 years ago.

Now there are more support groups and coaches specialising in infertility. Get help. You deserve it. This ebook is just the starting point of your natural health journey, wherever it may lead.

If you just recently got married, and have no fertility problems, then I'm so glad you are reading this book. It's important for all women of childbearing age to understand the importance of preconception care and diet to boost fertility.

I'm proud of you for taking this step to take control of your fertility and your health. I believe in you. You are stronger than you think. You can do this!

*Arwa*  
AL TURKAIT



**MY**

*Story*



Many people are surprised by the age gap between my two daughters.

When my eldest daughter, Lulu, was between four and six years old, I would bump into well-meaning friends or family members and I would get the dreaded question “What are you waiting for? When are you going to have your second child?”. Since I have a child

already, they automatically assume that getting pregnant again should not be a problem. But little did they know the agony and frustration of secondary infertility.

Fast-forward nine years, my second daughter, Noura, is now eight years old. I don't want anyone to go through the pain I went through...whether it's not being able to conceive at all or, like me, not being able to get pregnant a second time (or even a third time!). I wished that the doctor could have told me that something was wrong so it could be fixed. Termed “unexplained infertility” in conventional medicine, a naturopath, holistic nutritionist or functional doctor, however, would call it something else.

I'm grateful to have found Iva Keene, a naturopathic doctor and founder of the **natural-fertility-prescription.com** by working with Iva and devouring articles and books, I realised how many diseases in this day and age remain unexplained. Rather, only the symptoms are treated instead of dealing with the underlying cause.

Stepping away from conventional medicine and taking matters into my own hands was empowering. I want you to feel empowered too. Conventional medicine has its place, and can certainly have its benefits and even be a necessity. But we don't have to solely rely on it.

I improved my diet and switched to eating more plant-based food, avoiding dairy and gluten. I refrained from eating my beloved desserts in favour of healthier alternatives, which I now enjoy more.

I had acupuncture sessions almost weekly in the four-month preconception period. And most importantly, I prayed really, really hard.

I used to feel guilty for asking God for another child. As if asking for more meant that I wasn't grateful for having Lulu. But I changed my thinking. It was Ramadan the month before getting pregnant with Noura, and I took advantage of the nights

and prayed until I cried, believing in my heart that God will answer my prayers.

Ramadan ended in August 2010, and I was pregnant by the end of September 2010. My prayers were answered.

My focus in this book is on the lifestyle and dietary changes that can assist you physically and mentally to get pregnant. But depending on your particular situation, there is more you can do. You may need In-Vitro Fertilization (IVF), you may need supplements from a naturopathic doctor, you may need to stop smoking, or you may need to see a therapist to help you deal with stress.

There is no single solution. This rarely ever the case. Almost nothing ever is. Take a holistic view of your health - the physical, the mental, and the spiritual. Some parts may need more attention than others. But don't ignore any of them.



# COMMON CAUSES OF INFERTILITY AND THE MEDICAL APPROACH



## The following are considered signs of infertility:

- Not getting pregnant despite having frequent, unprotected sex for at least a year.
- Irregular or absent menstrual periods.
- Painful and heavy periods.
- Multiple miscarriages.

## Some of the common contributing factors are:

### **1** Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS)

This is one of the most common causes of hormonal imbalances affecting women today and is closely linked to poor thyroid function and excess oestrogen. It is considered the leading form of endocrine disruption in women of reproductive age.

### **2** Endometriosis

This is when the lining of the uterus grows outside of the uterus, causing cysts, heavy periods and infertility. It is linked to poor thyroid function and excess oestrogen.

### **3** Luteal Phase Deficiency

The luteal phase in a woman's cycle begins after ovulation and represents the second half of the menstrual cycle. When this phase is short, usually characterised by days of spotting before periods, the pregnancy is not supported and can lead to miscarriage if the pregnancy does occur. Low progesterone is cited as one of the main causes of luteal phase deficiency.

## **4 High FSH**

The higher the level of the follicle-stimulating hormone, the poorer the egg quality and the lower the ovarian reserve.

## **5 Hypothyroidism**

This is linked to many fertility problems as the thyroid gland doesn't produce important hormones that are crucial for egg quality and ovulation.

## **6 Weight extremes (excess weight or underweight)**

The ideal Body Mass Index (BMI) for women is between 20-24. Weight extremes are linked to hormonal imbalances and irregular periods.

## **7 Over-exercising**

Excessive exercise may increase demand on the adrenal glands which can disrupt a woman's hormonal balance.

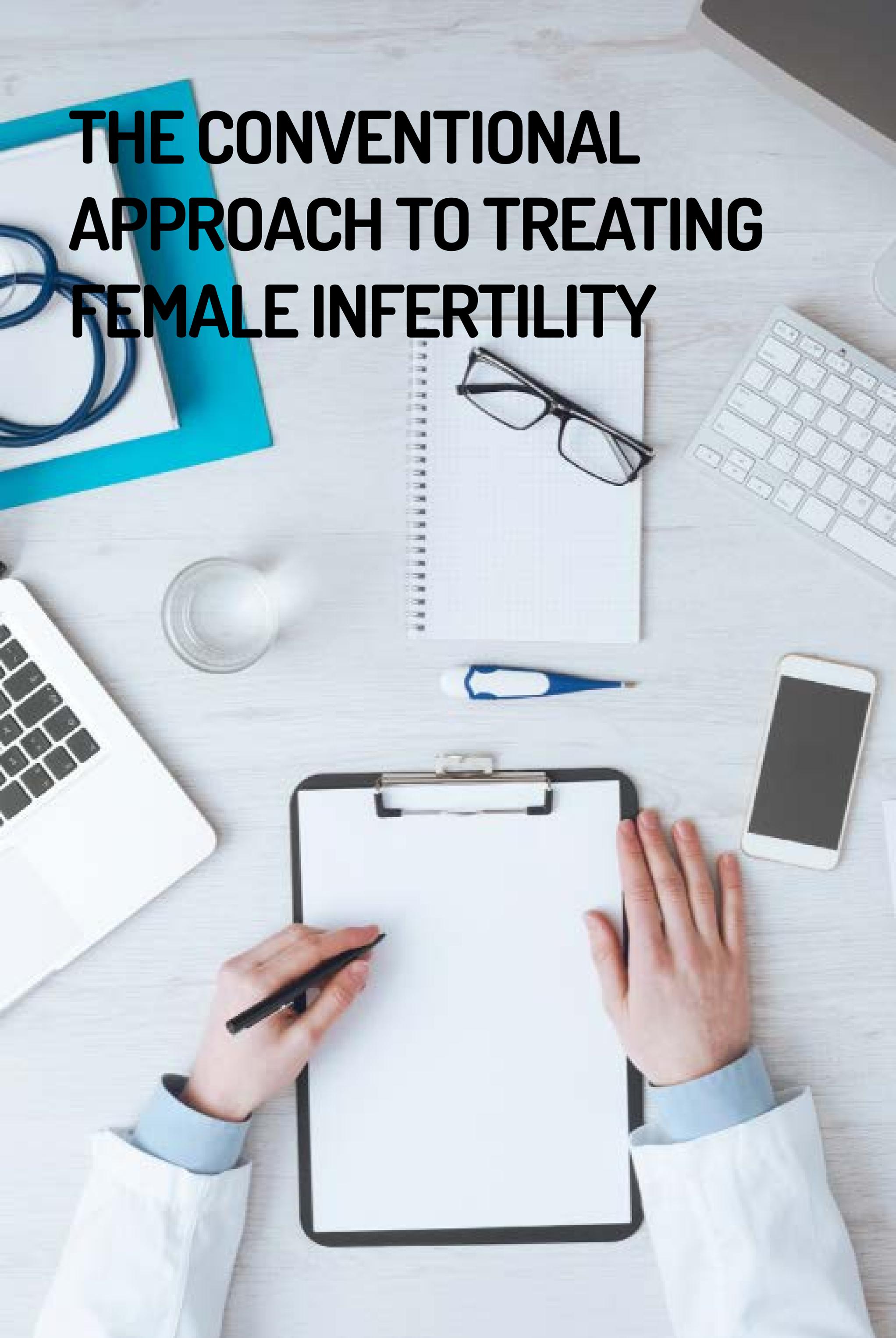
## **8 Heavy metals exposure**

Heavy metals, especially mercury, can lead to hormone and immune system disturbances that can reduce fertility.

## **9 Women's Age**

Women over 38 years old can face a more difficult time getting pregnant as hormonal imbalances become more common with age.

# THE CONVENTIONAL APPROACH TO TREATING FEMALE INFERTILITY



The conventional approach varies depending on the identified underlying cause for infertility. It therefore ranges from the simple to the more invasive. Unfortunately, the more unrecognisable the cause, the more invasive the treatment can be. For example:

**Overweight women** are asked to reduce their body weight to reach a BMI of 20-24, which is recognised as optimal for fertility. The same applies to **underweight women** as they need to increase their body weight.

**Ovulation disorders** such as infrequent menstrual periods, PCOS or high FSH levels may be treated with certain drugs to address the hormone imbalance that could be causing the problem.

**Hypothyroidism** is treated with thyroid drugs that commonly last a lifetime.

**Recurrent Pregnancy Loss (RPL)** or repeated miscarriages can be treated using blood-thinning medication, surgery to the uterus, or other treatments depending on the identified causes, which could be abnormal sugar levels, thyroid dysfunction, or hormonal imbalances.

**Unexplained infertility** essentially means there is no identifiable cause especially with conventional tests or with doctors who don't know what to look for. Also, for women who are older than 38 years, more invasive ART (assisted reproductive technology) is recommended. This includes IUI (artificial insemination) or IVF (manually combining the egg and sperm in a lab for implantation into the uterus).

All of the above conditions may lead to **ART** if less invasive methods have not succeeded, or to "save time".

# THE IMPORTANCE OF PRECONCEPTION CARE



We make the effort to prepare for many things we embark on in life... going on holiday, running a marathon, a big dinner party...but when it comes to preparing our bodies for pregnancy, we take it for granted that it will just be “ready”. This may have been true for our grandmothers, but these days – where women are getting married later, our food is depleted of its nutrients, and stress levels are at their highest – it’s no longer the case.

In short, if you fail to plan, you plan to fail. Your body needs to be prepared for pregnancy. Even if you have not had any problems getting pregnant yet, don’t take it for granted, as the healthier you (and your husband) are, the healthier the pregnancy and baby will be. Yes, pregnancy is a natural process for the body, but it’s not vital for survival. God has created a smart body that wants you to survive, and if any part of your body is not functioning optimally, your body will focus on that instead of on the less important function of fertility.

Men are also part of this process. I suspect that 99% of those reading this book will be women. And we take it on ourselves to fix this issue. But the healthier the sperm is, the more likely that a pregnancy will occur. Even if your husband doesn’t have any problems with sperm count or mobility, preparing for conception by going through the advice in this book will increase your chances of pregnancy.

w w w . a n a a r w a . c o m



# **LIFESTYLE CHANGES**

The main focus in this book is dealt with in the next section, which is all about food with a meal plan to help you. However, there are lifestyle changes that are just as important and need to be addressed:

## **1. Exercise Regularly and Moderately**

A healthy dose of exercise has a positive physical and mental effect that can promote fertility as it helps you to achieve a healthy weight, improve sleep and even reduce stress. However, it is best not to do any intense activity as your body may perceive the excess exercise as stressful and try to protect you by discouraging ovulation. Think walking, Zumba, Pilates and yoga, 30 minutes a day or one hour three times a week.

## **2. Avoid Toxin Exposure**

Environmental pollutants such as pesticides found in non-organic foods and unfiltered tap water, formaldehyde found in many cleaning products, and dry-cleaning chemicals to name a few, have a negative effect on your fertility and should be avoided or replaced by a more natural alternative.

## **3. Switch to Natural Body Care**

Perfumes and chemicals widely used in cosmetic and beauty products are linked to changes in reproductive hormones and an increased risk of miscarriage and birth defects. It's time to switch to natural brands for your body care and makeup, during the conception period and going forward. There are so many high-quality options available. But don't be fooled by the words "natural" or "organic" on the label. To make sure, check the ingredients label – if you have no clue what you are reading, then don't buy it. Another way is to check the product on the Environmental Working Group website.

## 4. Stop Smoking

Smoking ages your ovaries and depletes your eggs prematurely. Even if conception occurs, it has been linked to premature birth and sudden infant death syndrome.

## 5. Get Enough Sleep

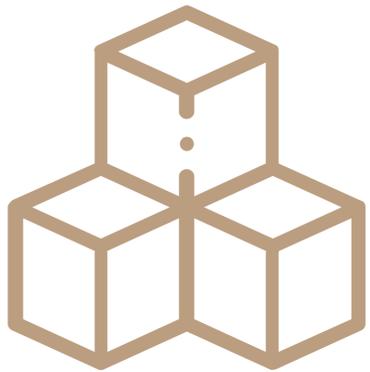
Although there is no proven link between sleep and infertility, poor sleep can directly impact weight and stress levels, both of which can lead to a disruption in hormonal balance and an irregular menstrual cycle.

## 6. Reduce Stress

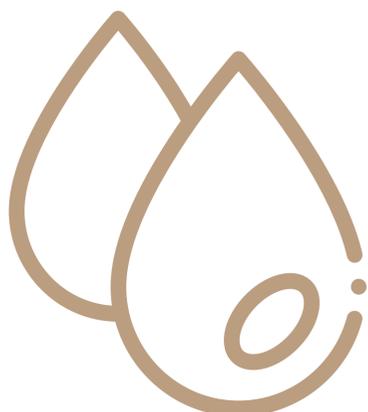
The levels of anxiety and even depression among women with infertility is a source of stress. And since many couples choose to struggle silently, stress levels increase further. Seeking help from a health coach or joining a support group, will help you through this period and reduce stress levels.

The above changes need to be applied throughout the four-month preconception period and hopefully become part of a permanent lifestyle. Additionally, these lifestyle changes promote one another and can even help with healthy eating. For example, exercise helps to reduce stress and improve sleep.

Better sleep equally reduces stress, but can also help you to stay away from caffeine and to make healthier food choices. By stopping smoking, you will sleep better, have more energy for exercise, and an improved sense of smell will make your meals more enjoyable.



# FOODS TO AVOID



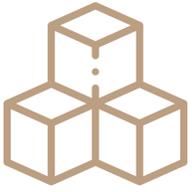
It is recommended that you abstain from consuming the following foods for at least four months leading up to any attempts to get pregnant. Many of these foods are generally best avoided to achieve optimal health. However, during the preconception period, it's of primary importance to avoid them completely.



## 1. Gluten

Although the link between gluten and infertility is not concrete, it is important for people with unexplained infertility, especially since many people with celiac disease or high gluten intolerance are undiagnosed. It is vital, therefore, to remove gluten from your diet for a minimum of three months before trying to conceive for the following reasons:

- Gluten causes inflammation in your small intestines which reduces nutrient absorption.
- Gluten reduces your body's immune system due to the lack of nutrient absorption, which can lead to miscarriages and implantation failure.
- Many gluten-containing foods, such as bread and pasta, raise your blood sugar levels which can lead to hormonal imbalances.
- Gluten consumption, especially for those with a higher intolerance, can lead to excess weight which can contribute to infertility.
- By removing gluten, you will also be cutting out wheat, which contains the carbohydrate Amylopectin A that has been shown to elevate blood sugar levels higher than pure sugar. This is especially harmful if the cause of infertility is PCOS or excess weight. Wheat can also lead to leptin resistance which can lead to weight gain.
- Avoiding gluten helps your body better absorb vitamin D.



## 2. Sugar and Refined Carbohydrates

These foods include processed flours and sugars present in conventional cereals, bread, pasta, sweets, sugary drinks, etc. They can lead to insulin resistance that can contribute to hormonal imbalances in the body and are especially linked to PCOS. They also reduce immune system function, may cause nutrient depletion, and contribute to obesity, all of which work against the body's reproductive system.



## 3. GMO Foods

Genetically modified foods are herbicide-tolerant crops grown with large amounts of herbicides, a class of pesticide. They have been linked to many diseases and the body's ability to function efficiently, and therefore can negatively affect both male and female fertility.



## 4. Alcohol

The consumption of alcohol is damaging to eggs, the developing embryo and can lead to miscarriage. It increases inflammation and reduces immune function. It is also high in sugar and has especially been linked to PCOS.



## 5. Dairy

Although the Harvard University Study behind the Fertility Diet recommends consuming whole-milk dairy (as low-fat can contribute to infertility), it is best to avoid dairy completely. Hormones, pesticides and herbicides are known for being endocrine disruptors, and are present in high levels in non-organic dairy products. Excess oestrogen and chemical exposure have been linked to PCOS and Endometriosis.



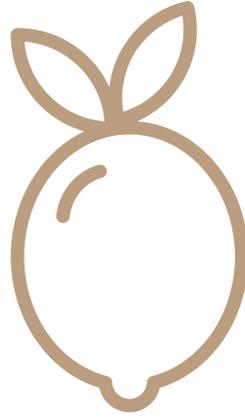
## **6. Trans Fats**

Commonly referred to as hydrogenated fat, hardened vegetable fat or vegetable fat are present in processed foods to extend their shelf life. It's common knowledge that they are bad for our health, and therefore not good for fertility.



## **7. Unfiltered Tap Water**

Tap water is polluted with industrial waste, pharmaceutical drugs, pesticides, herbicides, and commercial cleaning products. All of these chemicals affect our health and consequently our reproductive system.



# FOODS THAT HEAL



Gone are the days where the focus was on women eating well only once they have conceived. We now understand the importance of a healthy well-balanced diet to aid in conception and to give babies the best start in life. The most critical period for a baby's organ development occurs before many women even know they are pregnant.

We should all be eating a diet rich in whole foods with lots of fruits, vegetables, good sources of protein and healthy fats. But it's even more important while preparing to conceive.

Listed below are 10 foods that will help your body prepare for pregnancy. Try your best to incorporate them into your meals during the four-month preconception period.



## 1. Dark Leafy Greens

Dark leafy greens are anti-inflammatory foods that can promote weight loss and hormonal balancing, especially in women who are overweight or suffering from PCOS. They are also rich in folate, a B vitamin that helps the body build new cells and prevent birth defects. Spinach, in particular, is high in folic acid, with more folic acid available when the spinach is cooked.



## 2. Cruciferous Vegetables

These are also referred to as super-veggies, thanks to being high in vitamins, fibre, and disease-fighting phytochemicals. They include broccoli, cauliflower, kale, cabbage and bok choy. Their high fibre content is healthy for the gut, while the presence of calcium, iron, folate, and vitamin C in high amounts helps optimise fertility. Broccoli is especially important as it contains some of the highest levels of folic acid.



### 3. Lemons

They are a great source of fibre, limonene, bioflavonoids, beta carotene, folate, pectin, magnesium, potassium, calcium and vitamin C. All of these nutrients are required for healthy eggs and hormone production. Although other fruits may have a higher nutritional profile, lemons have the added benefit of being lower on the glycemic index scale and are available year-round. Starting your day with freshly squeezed lemon juice in warm water will kick-start your digestion, help with elimination and detoxify the liver – all processes that are vital for a healthy body and fertility.



### 4. Brazil Nuts

These are one of the best sources of selenium, a mineral important for thickening the uterine wall and increasing blood flow to the uterus and ovaries, thus increasing the chance of conception. Selenium is also an antioxidant which helps create a healthy environment for the developing egg.



### 5. Seeds

Seeds such as flax, chia, hemp, sesame, sunflower, and pumpkin are great sources of fibre, protein and healthy fats and should be consumed daily. Flax seeds are excellent for progesterone production, extending the short luteal phase, and improving egg quality. This is all thanks to high levels of omega 3s, lignans, and ALA (alpha lipoic acid) and their antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Chia seeds contain all the essential amino acids and are a great source of plant-based protein. They are high in omega 3 which is needed for good egg quality. They help reduce bad LDL cholesterol and increase the good HDL cholesterol. Omega-3 fatty acids are also anti-inflammatory and help balance hormone levels.



### 6. Avocados

They provide many nutrient benefits that are important for overall and reproductive health such as potassium, vitamin K, vitamin E, fibre, magnesium and monounsaturated fat. They also contain all the B vitamins (except B12), including the most important for fertility, folic acid. In addition, the healthy fats in avocado help keep you full and are believed to aid in weight management as well as blood sugar regulation and insulin control, all important for hormonal balance.



## 7. Coconut

This tropical plant is high in zinc, iron and protein which are crucial for egg (and sperm) survival. Coconut oil contains medium-chain triglycerides (MCTs) which have been shown to reduce insulin resistance that can disrupt hormonal balance in females. Fats are also a great source of energy and have a role in assisting the body to absorb vitamins A, E, D and K.



## 8. Legumes

They are an excellent source of plant-based protein as well as fibre that protect the body from insulin resistance. Legumes, in general, are also rich in folate which is important for a healthy pregnancy, with black-eyed peas being the richest source.



## 9. Quinoa

Quinoa is a complete protein and filled with fibre, iron and magnesium. It's a great option while on a gluten-free eating plan. A diet deficient in magnesium can result in higher cortisol levels which contribute to stress and an increased chance of miscarriage.



## 10. Wild Caught Salmon

They are rich in protein and an excellent source of omega-3s which play an important role in reproductive health. They also contain relatively low levels of mercury than other types of fish. Furthermore, it has been shown that Vitamin D improves the chances of pregnancy in women with higher levels and salmon is a good source of this essential vitamin. If you don't eat fish, flax seeds and chia seeds are both excellent sources of omega-3s. However, it's better to get omega-3 fatty acids from fish sources which contain more bioavailable forms of DHA and EPA.

# TIPS FOR EATING OUT



In general, try your best to have homemade meals during this period. It's the only way to know what you are eating. But I understand that it can get boring and a little anti-social.

The main foods to avoid while eating out are gluten, dairy and refined sugar. I would sometimes take my own bread, crackers or treats with me if I know I won't have any options. I would also have herbal or decaffeinated tea stashed away in my bag just in case.

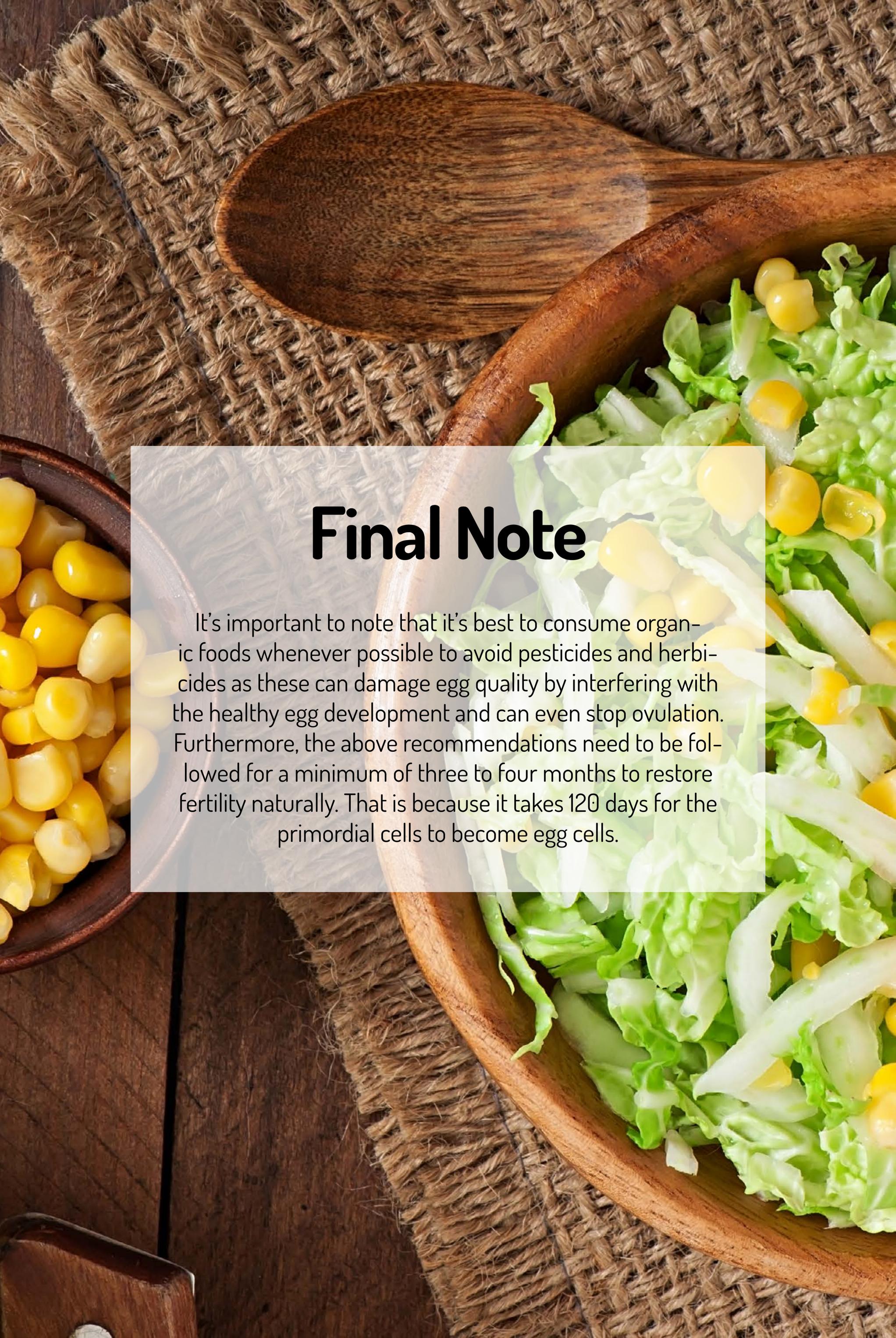
So here are some tips to help you along:

**1. Lebanese food** is ideal as there is so much to enjoy just in the mezze! Hummus, mutabel, taboule, waraq enab, loubya bil zeit, etc. But what about the bread? Take your favourite bread or crackers with you. In Kuwait, I would get the gluten-free Arabic bread from AlRaha and toast it before going to a restaurant. It would be nice and crispy and perfect for dipping into hummus. The Zaater crackers are also a great option.

**2. Brunch:** This is a tough one, especially if you are vegan. The best option would be to choose a place with smoothie bowls or ask in advance if you can bring your own bread with you. If you are not vegan, a delicious combination of eggs, sautéed mushrooms and greens with baby potatoes would be a healthy option.

### **3. Parties & Family Gatherings:**

- If possible, bring a dish to make sure you have something suitable to eat. Explain to the host that you are avoiding gluten and dairy and ask if it's okay to bring a dish (or two...a healthy dessert won't hurt!). Most of the time, they will either welcome your contribution or assure you that they will have plenty of options to choose from.
- Don't go hungry! Have a snack before you go to make it easier if the options at the event are limited. And always have healthy snacks on hand, party or not. Bliss balls, nuts, and seeds are always a great portable option.



# Final Note

It's important to note that it's best to consume organic foods whenever possible to avoid pesticides and herbicides as these can damage egg quality by interfering with the healthy egg development and can even stop ovulation. Furthermore, the above recommendations need to be followed for a minimum of three to four months to restore fertility naturally. That is because it takes 120 days for the primordial cells to become egg cells.

# MEAL PLAN TO BOOST FERTILITY



Below is a meal plan to boost your fertility. It is made up primarily of whole foods with a focus on plants, and excluding dairy, gluten and caffeine.

The 5-day meal plan is followed by all the recipes you need.

The meals are predominately vegan with a couple that include egg and salmon. If you are vegan, on those days you can replace the egg/salmon with your favourite protein source such as organic tofu or beans. It's not intended that you follow the exact meals and days, but more to give you an idea of what your days could be like and some recipes to get you started.

Each day includes three meals and two snacks. You may feel satisfied with three meals a day and exclude the snacks. And some days you may be hungrier and want a snack. You may also combine snacks to make a meal or include them with your meal. For example, on day 1 you may want to have the crackers with your lunch salad, or the crudités and hummus with your dinner. Feel free to mix and match.

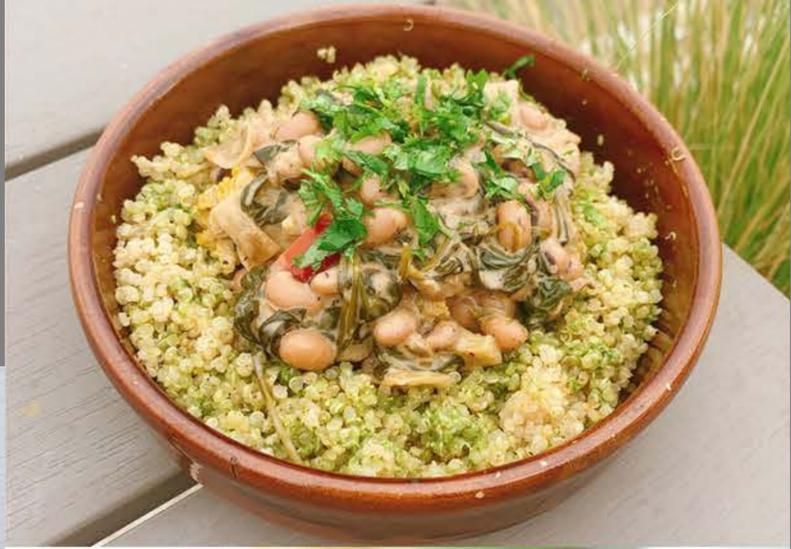
Listen to your body and do what's best for you.

## FERTILITY BOOSTING -5DAY MEAL PLAN

	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5
Breakfast	Quinoa Pumpkin Bread + Avocado Egg Salad	Coconut Chia Pudding	Quinoa Pumpkin Bread + Zaatar + Sliced Tomatoes	Sweet Potato Toast (choose your favourite)	Chocolate Banana Pancakes
Snack	Zaatar Date Crackers	Cashew Cheese Kale Chips	Dairy-Free Hot Chocolate	Fertility Boosting Green Smoothie	Rooibos Chai Almond Frappe
Lunch	Sweet Potato Kale Salad	Quinoa Zucchini Bread + Smashed Avo + Teriyaki Salmon	Lemony Coconut Black-Eyed Peas with Boiled Egg	Protein Kale Salad	Roasted Vegetable Pesto Quinoa Salad
Snack	Green Hummus + Crudités	Bliss Balls + Herbal Tea	Banana Date Granola Muffin	Chai Rooibos Tea with Almond Milk	Banana Date Granola Muffin
Dinner	Teriyaki Salmon + Stir-Fried Veggies	Lemony Coconut Black-Eyed Peas with Pesto Quinoa	Vegi-ful Lentil Soup + Quinoa Zucchini Bread + Green Hummus	Cauliflower Pizza	Baked Sweet Potato + Black-eyed Peas + Smashed Avocado



RECIPIES



# BREAKFAST RECIPES

The recipes in this section are very versatile. The “toast” recipes are great for breakfast or dinner, and can be enjoyed sweet or savoury. The chia pudding and pancakes are amazing as breakfast or dessert. So feel free to mix things up.



# QUINOA PUMPKIN TOAST



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This is a great grain-free toast that will help curb any cravings for bread while avoiding gluten. Although simple to make, you do need to plan ahead to account for the overnight soaking of the quinoa, which is essential for the recipe to work. Once the bread is completely cooled, I slice it and freeze half of the slices to enjoy in later weeks. Make sure to toast it well, and it is best if used for open-faced sandwiches.

Prep Time: 10 minutes + overnight soaking of quinoa, pumpkin and chia seeds

Cooking Time: 100-140 minutes

Makes 1 loaf (about 10 slices)

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ cups + 2 tbsp (300g) quinoa
- 300g pumpkin or butternut squash, peeled and grated
- 1/3 cup (60g) chia seeds
- 4 small dates
- 1 tsp dried oregano (optional)
- ½ tsp baking soda
- 1 tbsp tamari (or ½ tsp salt)
- ¼ cup (60g) coconut oil, melted
- 2 tbsp apple cider vinegar or lemon juice

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place the quinoa in a bowl and cover completely with water. Cover the bowl and place in the fridge for 8 hours or overnight.
2. In another bowl, add the grated pumpkin with the chia seeds and mix well. Cover and transfer to the fridge and leave for 2 hours or overnight.
3. When you are ready to bake the bread, pre-heat the oven to 350F or 175C. Line a 12cm x 23cm loaf tin with parchment paper.
4. Rinse and drain the quinoa. Then place in a food processor together with the pumpkin, chia seeds and remaining ingredients. Process until well combined and almost smooth, about 2 minutes. Pour into the loaf pan and

place on a baking sheet (for more even baking). Transfer to the hot oven and bake for 1½ hours until the top is brown and crispy. This loaf is quite dense and takes a long time. In my oven, it took almost 2 hours.

5. Transfer the loaf to a wire rack to cool. After 30 minutes, take the loaf out of the tin and let it cool on the rack.

6. To serve, slice 1cm thick slices and toast in the oven or in a toaster until crunchy. Enjoy toasted in one of the following ways:

- with nut butter and a drizzle of honey
- with zaatar mixed with olive oil and sliced tomato. Add the zaatar mix before toasting
- with smashed avocado, sea salt, black pepper, lemon juice and seeds
- with hummus and mixed herbs.



# COCONUT CHIA PUDDING



Get a dose of healthy fats from the chia seeds and coconut milk in this pudding. Enjoy it for breakfast or dessert!

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Rest Time: 3 hours

Makes 1-2 servings

## INGREDIENTS

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (200ml) full-fat coconut milk
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tbsp maple syrup or honey
- a pinch of salt
- 2 tbsp chia seeds
- 1 scoop protein or collagen powder (optional)
- Toppings: Fresh berries, coconut flakes

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a small bowl or glass jar, mix the milk with the vanilla, maple syrup, and salt. Stir in the chia seeds and mix well. Cover with plastic wrap or the jar lid and transfer to the fridge for a minimum of 3 hours or preferably overnight.
2. Serve with berries or your choice of toppings.

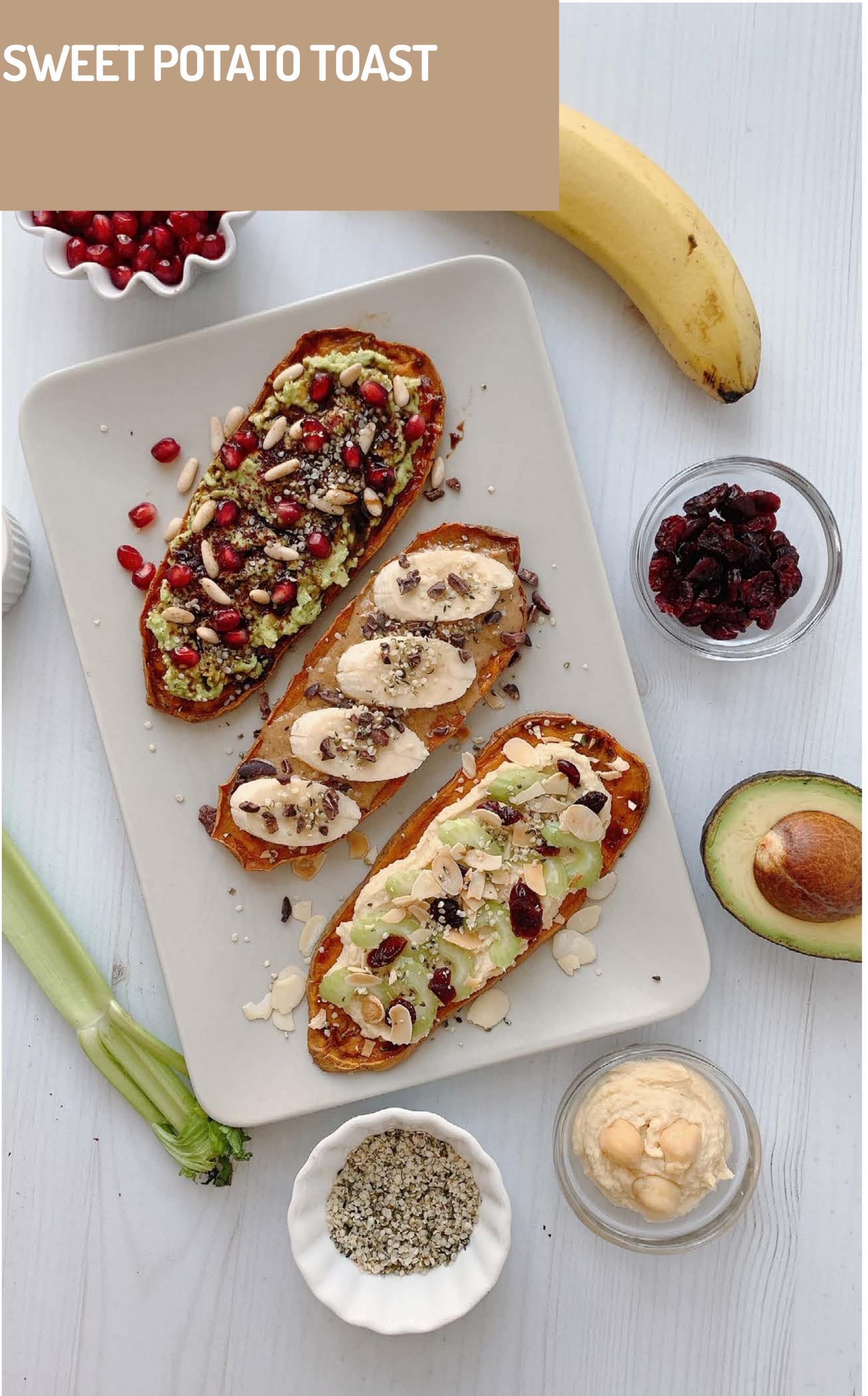
## NOTE

If you prefer to use a different milk with a thinner consistency, the pudding will be on the thinner side.

For a Middle Eastern twist, replace the vanilla with  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon orange zest, use honey and not maple syrup, and add  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon of orange blossom water if you have it. Top with chopped dates.

If using protein or collagen powder, and if it's sweetened, you may need to omit the maple syrup.

# SWEET POTATO TOAST



Another grain-free option to enjoy with your favorite toast toppings.

Prep Time: 5 minutes  
Cooking Time: 30 minutes  
Serves 2

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 medium sweet potato
- 1 tsp olive oil
- Salt and black pepper to taste

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. After washing your sweet potato, carefully slice off the rounded sides lengthways. I use these offcuts to make fries. Then cut lengthways to get 1cm thick slices. Depending on the size of your sweet potato, you should get between 2-4 pieces.
2. To cook the toast, you can either place them in your toaster until done, which is a good quick option. I prefer to bake them for a softer and sweeter result. To bake, preheat your oven to 400F/200C. Place the sweet potato slices on a baking tray, spray or brush with oil (I use avocado oil) and sprinkle with salt on both sides. Bake for 15 minutes, turn over, then bake for another 15 minutes. And that's it!
3. You can store in the fridge and use cold, or add your toppings and enjoy while it's still warm.

Here are some of my favourite ways to enjoy sweet potato toast:

- Smashed avocado, pomegranate seeds, pine nuts, sumac and a drizzle of pomegranate molasses.
- Nut or seed butter, sliced banana and cacao nibs - the perfect sweet breakfast.
- Hummus, celery, dried cranberries and sliced almonds.
- Sautéed spinach or kale and a fried or poached egg with a sprinkle of chilli flakes.

AND for an extra boost in protein, sprinkle some hemp seeds on top!

# CHOCOLATE BANANA PANCAKES



A delicious and fun breakfast for the weekend. You can serve with the chia jam below or with a drizzle of honey or maple syrup. If you don't consume eggs, use 60ml (1/4 cup) of aquafaba (chickpea brine) instead. Another egg replacement option is to mix 1 tablespoon of flaxseed meal with 3 tablespoons of water and leave for 5 minutes to gel (enough for one egg).

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Makes 12 mini pancakes or 6 regular size pancakes

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 small ripe bananas
- 2 eggs
- 2 tbsp nut or seed butter
- 1/4 cup (60g) date paste\*
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1/2 cup + 2 tbsp (60g) oat flour
- Maple syrup and berries to serve (optional)
- 2 tbsp organic cocoa powder
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp baking soda
- 1/8 tsp salt
- Coconut oil or butter
- Chocolate chips (optional)

### **Berry Date Chia Jam:**

- 1/4 cup (50g) soft pitted dates, about 6 small dates
- 1/2 cup (70g) raspberries (can use frozen)
- 2 tbsp chia seeds
- 1 tbsp water, lemon juice or maple syrup

\*to make date paste, pour hot water over de-stoned dates, let soften, then drain the water and mash with a fork.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Make the jam by placing all the ingredients in a small food processor and blend just until a jam is formed. Set aside while you make the pancakes.
2. In a blender, mix together the banana, eggs, nut/seed butter, dates (drained from the water) and vanilla.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together the oat flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Set aside.
4. Pour the wet ingredients over the dry and fold the ingredients together until no more flour is visible (you can also make the batter totally in the blender, your choice). Leave the batter to rest for about 10 minutes for all the chemical reactions to take place resulting in fluffier pancakes.
5. Heat a frying pan over medium heat with your choice of oil or butter. Once hot, fry the pancakes - about 1/4 cup each for the regular size, and 2 tablespoons for mini. Add some chocolate chips before flipping. Once you see those lovely bubbles, turn them over to continue cooking the other side.
6. Serve the pancakes stacked and topped with the jam and a drizzle of maple syrup and fresh berries.

# SNACKS AND SWEETS

The recipes in this section can be enjoyed as snacks, dessert, or combined for a light meal or breakfast on the go. For example, the crackers, hummus and kale chips combined make a perfect take-to-work lunch, while the green smoothie with a handful of walnuts is a delicious option for a quick breakfast.



# ZAATAR DATE CRACKERS



This is one of the most popular recipes on AnaArwa.com. These crackers are always available in my home to enjoy as a snack or quick breakfast.

Prep Time: 10 minutes + 2 hours resting

Cooking Time: 30 minutes

Makes 1 tray of crackers

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup (90g) rolled oats
- 1/4 cup (45g) flaxseeds
- 1/2 cup (65g) sunflower seeds
- 2 tbsp sesame seeds
- 1/3 cup (50g) pine nuts
- 3 tbsp zaatar
- 2 tbsp psyllium husk or 1 1/2 tbsp psyllium powder
- 1 tbsp chia seeds
- 1 tsp salt
- 2/3 cup (180ml) water
- 1/2 tbsp date molasses
- 1 1/2 tbsp olive oil
- 1/2 cup packed (100g) pitted dates, chopped

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a food processor, combine the oats, seeds, pine nuts, zaatar, psyllium, chia seeds and salt. Pulse a couple of times just to combine – we don't want to turn anything into a powder. Add the water, molasses and olive oil and again pulse just to combine and moisten the ingredients. Add the dates one third at a time, separating them if they are sticky. Pulse a couple of times in between each addition until the dates are distributed evenly. You can also make it in a bowl, I just find it easier to blend in the dates using the processor.
2. Transfer the mixture onto a large sheet of parchment paper or a sili-

cone mat. You will need to spread out the mixture to approximately 30cm by 50cm so try and use parchment or a silicone mat that is the same size or larger. If your baking sheets are smaller than that, use two, dividing the dough between the two sheets and rolling it out thinly. First spread out the dough with moistened fingers and then place another parchment paper on top and use a rolling pin to spread it out more thinly. Score the cracker dough with a sharp knife to make the cracker shapes you like.

3. Now you wait...a minimum of 2 hours or overnight before baking.

4. Pre-heat the oven to 350F or 170C. Slide the crackers on the parchment paper onto the baking sheet. Bake for 20 minutes, then remove from the oven and flip the crackers upside down onto the same baking sheet (be careful and protect your hands), then peel off the parchment. Return to the oven and bake until crispy and golden.

5. Let it cool and break the sheet into your preferred cracker shapes. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 weeks...although I would be amazed if they lasted that long!



# GREEN HUMMUS



We all know hummus is a delicious way to get some plant-based protein in your daily diet, but by adding some spinach, you get a good dose of folate and a boost to your fertility.

Prep Time: 5 minutes  
Cooking Time: 5 minutes  
Makes 2 cups of hummus

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup (50g) packed spinach
- 5 tbsp lemon juice
- 3 tbsp tahini
- 3 tbsp chickpea brine
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 1/2 cups (375g) cooked chickpeas (if canned, keep some of the brine aside, then drain and rinse)
- 1-2 garlic cloves
- 1/2 tsp salt or to taste

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine the spinach, lemon juice, tahini, chickpea brine and olive oil in a blender and blend until smooth.
2. Add the remaining ingredients and blend until smooth. Test to see if you would like to add more salt or lemon juice.
3. Alternatively, after blending the spinach with the liquid ingredients, transfer the remaining ingredients with the spinach mixture to a food processor. Process until you have your hummus.
4. Transfer to a container and store in the fridge until ready to serve.

# CASHEW CHEESE KALE CHIPS



These are so addictive you will say bye-bye to all the unhealthy store-bought chips.

Prep Time: 3 hours

Cooking Time: Oven 60-70 minutes, dehydrator 20 hours

## INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup (70g) raw cashews
- 1/2 cup (65g) sunflower seeds
- 4 packed cups (150g) de-stemmed curly kale
- 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp garlic powder
- 1/4 tsp onion powder
- 1 tbsp nutritional yeast

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Soak cashews and sunflower seeds in filtered water. If you have a high-speed blender, 1 hour is enough. Otherwise, soak for 3 hours.
2. Wash and dry the kale leaves very well. Place in a large bowl, and set aside to make the sauce.
3. Strain the cashews and seeds and then place in the blender. Add the remaining ingredients except for the kale and blend until smooth.
4. Add the sauce in batches to the kale and coat very well, make sure all the sauce is distributed evenly.
5. Dehydrator Method: Turn on the dehydrator to the 125F-52C setting. Place the kale onto lined dehydrator sheets. You will need two sheets for this amount. Keep the leaves close together. Dehydrate for 2 hours. Then reduce the heat to 115F or 46C, and continue to dehydrate for 18-20 hours. The chips

will be very dry and crispy. Store in an airtight container.

6. Oven Method: If using an oven, pre-heat to 250F or 120C. Place the chips slightly apart on 2 lined baking sheets. Bake for 60-70 minutes until crispy. It's best to eat the chips on the same day as they will retain their crispiness. Also, avoid placing in an airtight container.



BLISS BALLS



The easiest healthy treat you can ever make. Feel free to replace the dates with other dried fruit such as raisins or figs, and exchange the cinnamon for cardamom powder for a different flavour.

Prep Time: 10 minutes  
Cooking Time: 0 minutes

Makes 12 balls

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup (50g) packed spinach
- 5 tbsp lemon juice
- 3 tbsp tahini
- 3 tbsp chickpea brine
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 1/2 cups (375g) cooked chickpeas (if canned, keep some of the brine aside, then drain and rinse)
- 1-2 garlic cloves
- 1/2 tsp salt or to taste

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a food processor, combine dates with the oats and coconut and process until ground.
2. Add the remaining ingredients (except for the sesame seeds) and process until everything is mixed well.
3. Pinch off a level tablespoon amount of the mixture and roll it into a ball, making about 12 in total. Roll each ball in sesame seeds until it is completely covered.
4. Store in the fridge. Enjoy with a cup of herbal tea.

# DAIRY-FREE HOT CHOCOLATE



If you are avoiding caffeine, then this will help reduce your coffee cravings. Enjoy it any time of the day as a delicious and guilt-free chocolate treat. I like to use oat or almond milk in this recipe. If you are using homemade almond milk, don't overheat to avoid curdling.

Prep Time: 5 minutes  
Cooking Time: 5 minutes

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup (240ml) non-dairy milk
- 1 tbsp coconut sugar
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 2 tbsp raw or organic cocoa powder

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Warm up the milk with the cinnamon and sugar. Then turn off the heat and let the milk cool down and take on the flavour of the cinnamon.
2. When you want to make the hot chocolate, place the cocoa powder in a small saucepan and add a few tablespoons of the cinnamon milk and whisk well to make sure the cocoa powder is dissolved properly. Add the rest of the milk (without the cinnamon stick) and whisk properly.
3. Heat the mixture over medium-low heat until it starts to simmer. If using homemade almond milk, don't let it simmer as it will separate.
4. If you have a frother, go for it. Then pour into cups and sprinkle with some cocoa powder or cinnamon.

# BANANA DATE GRANOLA MUFFIN



This recipe was originally just the granola without the date filling, but I encourage you to try making both. You spread out the granola mixture on a parchment-lined baking sheet and bake for 10 minutes. Then turn over and bake for about 5-10 minutes more. Be careful as this granola bakes faster than other granola. Once cool, break up into pieces.

I like the portable nature of muffins, but if you don't have a muffin pan, you can make them into bars. Use a 9-inch square baking dish (or a similar sized rectangular dish), lined with parchment paper. Spread half the oat mixture on the base, top with the date filling, then top with the rest of the oat mixture, pressing down firmly. Bake for about 20 minutes until golden.

Prep Time: 15 minutes  
Baking Time: 35 minutes

Makes 12 standard size muffins

## INGREDIENTS

### **For the date filling:**

- 1/3 cup tightly packed (200g) pitted dates
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp ground cardamom

### **For the granola:**

- 3/4 cup (90g) rolled oats
- 1/2 cup (100g) buckwheat groats (or more oats)
- 1 cup (100g) sliced almonds
- 1 cup (90g) coconut flakes
- 2 tbsp hemp seeds (optional)
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 small ripe banana
- 1/4 cup almond butter
- 4 small dates
- 2 tbsp coconut oil, melted
- 1 tbsp ground flaxseed
- 1 tsp vanilla

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. For the date filling, soak the dates (if they are not already soft). Then drain the water, and mash with a fork or blend, if preferred, with the spices. Set aside.
2. Pre-heat the oven to 350F or 160C. Prepare a standard-sized muffin pan with 12 paper liners and place it on a baking sheet.
3. In a medium bowl, mix the oats, groats, almonds, coconut, hemp seeds, cinnamon and salt. Set aside.
4. Place the banana, almond butter, dates, coconut oil, flax meal, and vanilla in a blender and blend until smooth.
5. Pour the blended banana mixture over the dry ingredients and mix well.
6. Add 1 1/2 tablespoons of the granola mixture in each muffin case, pressing down firmly with your thumbs. Top with a scant tablespoon of the date filling. Then cover with the remaining granola mixture, dividing it equally between all muffins. Continue until all muffin cups are filled.
7. Bake for 15-18 minutes, until the granola is golden brown. Set aside to cool before enjoying with a cup of coffee.



# FERTILITY BOOSTING GREEN SMOOTHIE



This is a delicious smoothie for any time of the day. If you don't have a juicer, place the juice ingredients in a blender, and then strain to remove the pulp.

Serves 1

## INGREDIENTS

### Juice:

- 1 celery stick, roughly chopped
- 1 small cucumber, roughly chopped
- 1 lemon, de-seeded and peeled

### Smoothie:

- Juice from above
- 1 cup (50g) of packed spinach
- 1 cup (120g) banana slices OR pineapple chunks, frozen
- ½ cup (120ml) coconut water\*
- ½ an avocado
- 1 tbsp hemp seeds
- 1 tbsp grated fresh ginger
- 1 tsp greens powder (barley grass, spirulina, chlorella - optional)
- 2 small dates or 1 tablespoon honey for sweetness (optional)

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Juice the celery, cucumber and lemon.

2. To make the smoothie, add the frozen juice, spinach, pineapple, coconut water (optional), avocado, hemp seeds, and ginger. Blend until almost smooth adding the greens powder of choice halfway through. Taste and add dates or honey if more sweetness is desired and blend again. Pour and enjoy!

\*You may not need to use coconut water. It depends on your preferred smoothie consistency. Coconut water helps add sweetness, so if you use it, you may not need to add the dates or honey.

# HOMEMADE ALMOND MILK



Use in your favorite hot beverage, or to make smoothies, oatmeal and chia pudding.

Prep Time: 8 hours for soaking almonds

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Makes 4 cups

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup (140g) raw almonds
- 3-4 cups (750-1000ml) filtered water
- 4 dates (optional)
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp vanilla (optional)

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Soak almonds in water for 8 hours or overnight.
2. Drain and place in a blender with the rest of the ingredients.
3. If you want the milk to be more creamy, use less water.
4. Blend for about a minute. Strain using a cheesecloth or nut milk bag.
5. Store in the fridge for 4-5 days or transfer to an ice cube tray and store in the freezer for a month.

# CHAI ROOIBOS SYRUP



This is a great alternative to caffeinated drinks as rooibos tea is naturally caffeine-free. Make this syrup and use with hot or cold milk. See serving suggestions below.

Prep Time: 10 minutes  
Cooking Time: 40 minutes  
Makes 4 servings

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 3/4 cup (440ml) water
- 3 tbsp coconut sugar
- 3 tbsp fresh ginger, chopped
- 5 cardamom pods
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 6 cloves
- 2 tbsp rooibos tea (or black tea leaves)

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a medium saucepan, mix all the syrup ingredients except for the tea. Bring the mixture to a gentle boil and then reduce the heat and let simmer for 15-20 minutes. We want the liquid to reduce by about 30% so that you are left with about 1 cup of syrup.
2. Remove from the heat and add your tea. Let it steep for 20 minutes. Then strain and you have your syrup ready to use.
3. Store any leftovers in a jar in the fridge. To use in hot drinks warm up the syrup first. For a chai latte, I would use about a third of syrup with two-thirds of milk. The tea taste will not be very strong, so you can always add an extra tea bag to the cup when making the latte.

### **To make Chai Rooibos Tea:**

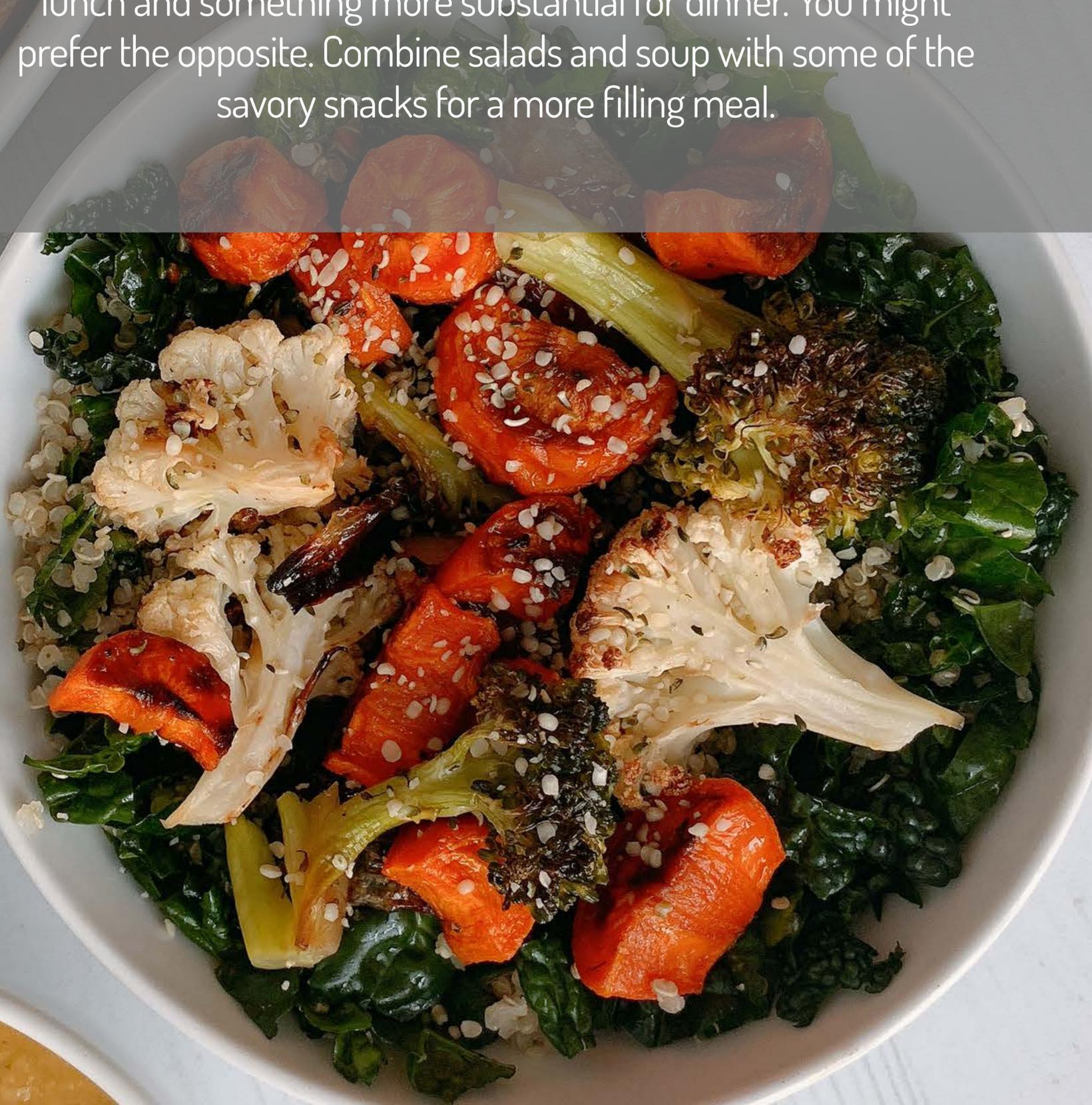
Use 1/3 cup syrup with 2/3 cup almond milk. Place the syrup and almond milk in a small saucepan to heat it up and then serve.

### **To make Rooibos Chai Almond Frappe:**

Add 6 almond milk ice cubes to a blender with 1/2 cup cold almond milk and 1/3 cup chai syrup. Blend until the ice is crushed. Pour into tall glasses or jars and enjoy on a warm afternoon.

# LUNCH AND DINNER

Use the recipes here for lunch or dinner. I usually prefer salads for lunch and something more substantial for dinner. You might prefer the opposite. Combine salads and soup with some of the savory snacks for a more filling meal.



# SWEET POTATO KALE SALAD



Prep Time: 10 minutes  
Cooking Time: 45 minutes

Serves 2-3

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 medium sweet potato
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- pinch of salt, pepper, garlic powder
- 1 cup (50g) curly kale
- 1 cup (50g) rocket (or more kale)
- 1 stick celery, sliced
- 1/4 cup (40g) hemp seeds
- 1/4 cup (30g) sunflower seeds
- 2 tbsp dried cranberries (optional)

### **Lemon Tahini Dressing**

- 1/4 cup (60ml) tahini
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 cup (60ml) water
- 2 tsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp tamari (or soy sauce)
- 2 tsp maple syrup

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Pre-heat the oven to 375F or 190C. Wash and peel the sweet potato. Chop into chunks and place in a bowl. Add the olive oil and spices and mix well. Transfer to a baking sheet and bake until cooked through, around 45 minutes. Let it cool.
2. Prepare the dressing by mixing all the ingredients, and set aside.
3. Shred the kale into smallish pieces, and roughly chop the rocket. Place in a bowl and add celery and half the seeds. Mix in about half of the dressing. Sprinkle on the cranberries and drizzle on more of the dressing. Enjoy!

# TERIYAKI SALMON + STIR-FRIED VEGGIES



Prep Time: 30 minutes to make the sauce + 1 hour marinating of salmon

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves 3

## INGREDIENTS

- 3 x 240g wild caught salmon fillets
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and roughly chopped
- 40g (3½ tbsp) fresh ginger, peeled and roughly chopped
- 30g (2½ tbsp) red chilli, roughly chopped
- 15g (3 tbsp) green onion, chopped
- 50ml (3 tbsp + 1 tsp) avocado oil
- ½ cup (125ml) tamari
- ½ cup (125ml) orange juice
- ¼ cup (60ml) honey
- ½ tbsp sesame oil
- ½ tbsp coconut oil
- 240g (about 1 cup each) mix of broccoli florets, thinly sliced sweet red peppers, and asparagus
- Cooked brown rice or quinoa to serve

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. To make the marinade, place the garlic, ginger, chilli, green onion and oil in a food processor and blend until you get the consistency of a paste with some small chunks.
2. In a small bowl, mix together the tamari, juice, honey and sesame oil.
3. Warm up a frying pan over low heat and add the spice paste. Let it cook for 10 minutes to release the flavours. Make sure it's on low heat. Add the liquid mixture and let it simmer for about 25 minutes. Allow it to cool completely. It will be thick and syrupy like molasses.

4. Place the salmon fillets in a pyrex dish and pour over about half of the marinade. Cover and store in the fridge for an hour.

5. Pre-heat the oven to 425F or 220C. Prepare a baking tray with parchment paper. Place the salmon fillets skin-side down on the baking tray and then bake in the oven for 6-8 minutes.

6. While the fillets are baking, quickly make your veggies. In a medium frying pan or wok, add the coconut oil and when it's hot add the broccoli and stir-fry for 2 minutes. Add the asparagus and stir-fry for 1 minute, followed by the red peppers (also for 1 minute). Then add about a ¼ cup of the marinade and stir-fry to warm up and distribute the sauce. Taste and add more of the sauce if desired.

7. Once the salmon and veggies are done, serve with some cooked brown rice or quinoa.



# LEMONY COCONUT BLACK-EYED PEAS



A quick and simple nutritious meal that can be served alone or with pesto quinoa and/or topped with a soft-boiled egg and sliced avocado.

A few notes on the recipe:

Use a spice mix you prefer to replace the curry powder or you can even leave it out. A North African, Ethiopian, Thai or Indonesian spice paste/blend will work well.

The amount of black-eyed peas is about 380g, almost a full can. If using canned, make sure to rinse and drain. If you would like to use dried beans, soak 1 cup of beans for about 4-6 hours, drain and rinse, and then simmer in 3 cups of water for approximately 45-50 minutes. Chickpeas are also a good alternative if preferred.

Prep Time: 10 minutes  
Cooking Time: 15 minutes  
Serves 4

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp coconut oil
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tbsp fresh ginger, minced
- 1 tbsp curry powder
- 1 cup (100g) broccoli florets
- 1 sweet red pepper, sliced into 1-inch cubes
- 1 tsp lemon zest
- 2 cups (540g) cooked black-eyed peas\*
- 1/2 tsp chilli flakes
- 3 cups packed (150g) fresh spinach, chopped (if baby spinach, leave as is)
- 1 x 400g can of full-fat coconut milk
- 3-4 tbsp lemon juice, freshly squeezed
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 1 small handful of cilantro, to garnish

## To serve (recipes to follow)

Activated Quinoa

Brazil Nut Pesto

## Other Serving Suggestions:

Soft boiled egg per person

Sliced avocado

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a medium saucepan or dutch oven, heat the coconut oil. Add the onions with a generous pinch of salt, and sauté until translucent, about 5 minutes. A little browning is okay.

2. Add the garlic and ginger and stir for about a minute. Then add the curry powder or spice mix of choice, stirring to combine, followed by the broccoli, red pepper and lemon zest. Stir-fry for a couple of minutes.

3. Add the black-eyed peas and chilli flakes and stir-fry for 2 minutes. Then add half the spinach and fold in until wilted before adding the rest of the spinach.

4. Add the coconut milk and 3 tablespoons of lemon juice, with salt and pepper to taste. Stir to heat up all the ingredients. Taste and add more seasoning and lemon juice if desired.

5. Stir some of the Brazil nut pesto into the warm quinoa and divide into individual bowls. Top with a big ladle of the coconut, peas, and garnish with some chopped coriander. Or serve family-style with boiled eggs, and sliced avocado on the side for added protein and healthy fats.

# ACTIVATED QUINOA

Prep Time: overnight soaking

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves 4

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups (250g) quinoa, soaked overnight
- 250ml water or broth

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Bring the water or broth to a boil in a medium saucepan. Once the liquid is boiling, add the quinoa and let it simmer for about 12 minutes until all the water is absorbed.

2. Leave covered for 10 minutes, then remove the lid and fluff with a fork. If using this dish for the Lemony Coconut Black-Eyed Peas or the Roasted Vegetable Salad, add a few tablespoons of Brazil nut pesto to taste while it's still warm.

# BRAZIL NUT PESTO

Makes 1½ cups

## INGREDIENTS

- 60g raw Brazil nuts (about 15), soaked overnight
- 100g basil leaves (about 3 handfuls)
- 2 garlic cloves
- 3-4 tbsp lemon juice, freshly squeezed
- 2/3 cup (180ml) extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/8 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp nutritional yeast (optional)

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Drain the Brazil nuts from the water and place in a food processor with the rest of the ingredients and process until smooth. Check the consistency and taste, adding more or less olive oil or lemon juice to suit your taste. Add it to the quinoa and serve with the Lemony Coconut Black-Eyed Peas. This pesto is especially delicious drizzled over roasted veggies.

2. Store in a jar in the fridge for up to 1 week.

# VEGI-FUL LENTIL SOUP



This lentil soup is not only protein-rich, but also a powerhouse of nutrition, thanks to the addition of lots of veggies. It's a well-balanced meal that will leave you satisfied and feeling your best.

A couple of important points regarding the ingredients:

- Using tamari or soy sauce adds a depth of flavour you can't get from salt alone. However, if you don't have it, then adjust the quantity of salt accordingly.
- Kombu is a seaweed that adds flavour. It also helps make legumes more digestible when added during the cooking process. It's not essential, so just leave it out if you don't have it. If you cook a lot of beans at home, I recommend that you get hold of some. It's usually available on iHerb.
- If your lentils are not sprouted, soak them in advance for 3-4 hours to help them cook faster and become easier to digest.

Prep Time: 10 minutes  
Cooking Time: 30 minutes  
Serves 4

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp coconut oil or olive oil
- 1 small onion, diced (about 160g)
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
- 1 medium carrot, chopped (about 110g)
- 2 celery sticks, sliced (about 120g)
- 1 cup cubed butternut squash or pumpkin (about 160g)
- 3/4 cup (120g) brown lentils, preferably sprouted (see note above)
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/4 tsp chilli flakes
- 2 cups (500ml) vegetable stock
- 2-3 cups (500-750ml) water

- 1/2 tbsp tamari
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 piece Kombu (optional)
- Salt and pepper
- 2-3 cups (50-75g) shredded kale, spinach or collard greens

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a medium to large saucepan, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the onion and sauté for about 5 minutes until translucent, then add the garlic and sauté for just 30 seconds until fragrant.
2. Add the carrot, celery, squash, lentils, bay leaf, chilli flakes, stock, 2 cups water, tamari, lemon juice, and Kombu (if using). Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer. Let simmer for 20-30 minutes until the vegetables are cooked through (the carrots will take the longest).
3. Add salt and pepper to taste. Before serving, add the greens and warm up just until the greens are wilted but still bright green.

### **Other serving suggestions:**

- Puree the soup before adding the greens, but keep it a little chunky. Serve with rice and dairy-free yoghurt.
- Puree the soup before adding the greens, then warm it up adding your choice of greens, and serve with cooked quinoa and a boiled egg.

# PROTEIN KALE SALAD



Prep Time: 15 minutes  
Cooking Time: 15 minutes (for the quinoa)  
Serves: 2-3

## INGREDIENTS

### Salad:

- 1 cup (120g) cooked quinoa
- 4 cups (150g) kale, shredded (dino or curly)
- 1/4 cup (30g) sunflower seeds
- 1/4 cup (40g) hemp seeds
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 1/2 cup (80g) grapes, sliced in half
- 1/4 cup (40g) pine nuts, toasted

### Dressing:

- 2 tsp minced shallot
- 1 small garlic clove, minced
- 1 tbsp honey or maple syrup
- 2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1/2 tsp lemon zest
- 1/4 cup (40ml) extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 tsp salt
- pinch of black pepper

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Mix all the dressing ingredients together and set aside. Taste and adjust for seasoning.
2. Mix the dressing into the shredded kale and let the kale soak up the dressing. Then add the quinoa and seeds, and mix. Taste to check if it needs more dressing. Then add most of the bell pepper and grapes, keeping some for garnishing the top of the salad.
3. Transfer the mixed salad to a serving bowl. Top with the remaining bell pepper and grapes and sprinkle on the nuts.

# ROASTED VEGETABLE QUINOA SALAD



Prep Time: 15 minutes  
Cooking Time: 45 minutes  
Serves 4

## INGREDIENTS

- 450g vegetables of choice such as carrots, sweet potato, beetroot, and onions
- 2 tbsp coconut oil
- Salt and pepper

### To Serve:

- Greens of choice (kale\*, spinach, rocket leaves), roughly chopped
- Cooked quinoa
- Brazil nut pesto
- Herbs of choice (parsley, cilantro, basil), finely chopped
- Hemp seeds
- Sunflower seeds

**\*If using kale, massage to soften before using.**

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Pre-heat the oven to 425F or 220C.
2. Chop the vegetables into cubes about 2cm in size. Slice the onions into quarters. Toss with the oil, salt and pepper and spread out on a baking sheet. Place in the oven and bake until cooked through. Remove any vegetables (such as the onions) earlier. It will take between 25-45 minutes depending on the vegetables used.
3. In a serving bowl, add the greens followed by the quinoa and roasted vegetables. Drizzle the pesto on top and sprinkle on the fresh herbs and seeds.

# CAULIFLOWER PIZZA



This recipe makes 1 large or 2 medium bases. You can double the recipe and make extra to store in the freezer. Warm it up before adding your toppings, using whatever you have in the fridge.

I don't want you to expect this pizza to emulate regular pizza. It's not the same at all in terms of looks or flavour. But it's still delicious. And the pizza base is just the start...the toppings are what will make it extra special. I would recommend you stay away from the traditional tomato sauce and cheese as that is more likely to make you expect the pizza taste you are used to. Instead go for something different like:

- Pesto and roasted veggies
- Caramelised onion and roasted beetroot
- Hummus and roasted red peppers
- A tapenade of sun-dried tomato, olives and harissa paste topped with sautéed kale and mushrooms
- Grilled aubergines with a drizzle of tahini, pomegranate molasses, chopped parsley and a sprinkle of pumpkin seeds

You will need about 1/2 a head of a medium-sized cauliflower to make the recipe below. Any remaining cauliflower can be used in salads or added to smoothies.

Prep Time: 30 minutes  
Cooking Time: 30 minutes  
Serves 2

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups (200g)\* cauliflower florets
- 2 tbsp ground flaxseeds
- 1/3 cup (90ml) aquafaba
- 1/2 cup (50g) almond flour (or any gluten-free flour of choice)
- 2 tbsp nutritional yeast (optional)
- 1 tsp ground psyllium (optional)
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/8 tsp black pepper

\*weight after squeezing out the water

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Steam the cauliflower for about 5 minutes. You want it to only soften slightly but still hold its shape. Meanwhile, mix the ground flax with the aquafaba to make a “flax egg” and set aside.
2. Pre-heat the oven to 400F or 200C. Prepare a baking tray with parchment paper or use a silicone baking sheet.
3. Finely chop the cauliflower in a food processor using the s-blade or the chopping attachment. Transfer 1 1/2 cups to a cheesecloth or nut milk bag and squeeze out as much water as you can (if there's any extra, add it to a salad or smoothie). You should have about 200g once all the water has been removed.
4. Transfer the cauliflower to a bowl and add the almond flour, nutritional yeast psyllium if using, oregano, salt and pepper, and mix well. Add the flax egg mixture and mix to get a moist dough.
5. Use all the dough or divide to make two smaller pizzas. Transfer the dough to the parchment paper or silicone mat. Then, using a second sheet of parchment paper, flatten out the dough to about 0.5cm thickness. Remove the parchment and with your hands create the shape you like for the pizza, making the edges slightly higher all around.
6. Bake for 20-25 minutes until it starts to turn golden brown. Take it out of the oven and carefully flip the pizza, returning it to the oven for 5 more minutes.
7. Add your toppings and then return it to the oven for the toppings to warm up or for the cheese to melt - about 5 minutes.
8. If you don't plan to use it straight away, you can store it in the fridge for 3 days or in the freezer for a month.