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Ramadan Reset

A delicious meal plan with 30+ vegetarian recipes without gluten, dairy or refined sugar to help you feel healthy, energized and slim down naturally.

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Introduction

My love for Ramadan runs deep. I love everything about it. True, it is a month of spirituality. However, so much of our physical and emotional well-being are also affected. To the extent that Ramadan can be like a reset button for the year, assuming we take advantage of the opportunities the month presents.

Thousands of years ago humans would go without food because it was simply not available. Consuming three meals a day is a very modern way of eating. So is having a vast variety of food available at our fingertips. From a health perspective, humans need to fast now more than ever in the history of mankind. Subhan Allah, God knew that there will come a time when fasting will not become natural anymore, shedding a new light on Ramadan being one of the 5 pillars of Islam.



Fasting means going without – it's not limited to food.

We need to fast from so much more than just food. We live in a world of over-consumption. We over-consume food, drink, clothes, shoes, entertainment, news, and social media.

Have you ever heard of a dopamine fast? It is basically a break from all the instant gratification stimuli in our lives such as shopping, gaming, or cigarettes. Companies know how to take advantage of our addictive behaviors - processed foods, adding salt and sugar unnecessarily, video games, shopping with the touch of a button. Millions are spent to make you more addicted so you would continue to buy.

Ask yourself this, other than food, what else can you go without during Ramadan and be better for it at the end of the month? Everyone has something they want to be free of; something that causes them stress and/or feel they are addicted to. What is your thing? It could be food-related such as an addiction to coffee or sugar. It could be an addiction to watching too much TV or spending too much time on social media. Maybe it's gossiping? Or playing video games?

We fast from food and drink during Ramadan only from sunrise to sunset. In the same way, you don't have to fast from any undesirable behavior completely. For example, if you would like to free yourself from your addiction to social media, then perhaps only go onto social media for an hour a day. If it's from your phone, maybe turn it on an hour after waking up in the morning, and turn it off at least an hour before going to bed. For motivation, make a list of all the things you will have time for by removing these distractions from your life...such as cooking healthy meals!

My goal is to share with you how you can take advantage of Ramadan to take control of your health with a meal plan and recipes to help you on your journey, and at the same time instill some healthy habits that will stay with you long after Ramadan ends. Such lifestyle behavior changes may have longer-lasting benefits than traditional interventions such as medications, which are only effective when taken.

Long-term and hopefully life-long health habits need time to become second nature. If you take advantage of Ramadan every year to obtain a couple of new habits, you may be getting older as time goes by, but you will certainly get stronger and healthier.

How To Use The Recipes and Meal Plan

Although I don't follow a 100% plant-based, gluten-free or dairy-free diet, I do eat that way most of the time. I believe we can all do with more plants and less gluten and dairy in our life. That's why all the recipes I share in this book are vegetarian (eggs are included in a few recipes, and several include honey), without gluten or dairy.

No matter what way of eating you prefer - vegan, low carb, junk food - fasting will improve your health as well as your self-control. So, imagine how much your body and mind will benefit by combining fasting with a food plan that excludes highly inflammatory foods (gluten, dairy, processed sugar) while adding high-fiber nutrient-rich plants that feed the healthy bacteria in your gut and help you lose weight (if that's your goal), achieve clear skin, improve your digestion, and increase your energy levels.

This is a general guide and you can change it up depending on your goals and preferences. For example:

- If you don't have a gluten intolerance, include it during the month. However, always try to avoid refined grains as much as possible.
- If you can't imagine going a month without dairy, treat it as a treat! Once a week, choose organic where possible, and opt for goat or sheep's dairy that is easier to digest.
- I don't include calories or portion limits, however, if your main goal is weight loss, then you may need to make some adjustments. I encourage you to use this time to get in touch with your hunger and satiety signals, especially if you have been dieting for a long time. When we diet, we are not following our hunger signals or choosing meals based on what we are craving. Instead, we follow certain rules or guidelines. Most of the time this means not eating when hungry, not eating until satiated, and not eating what we are craving. Take the opportunity in Ramadan to restore your relationship with food. Although I have a meal plan for you, it's more to give you an idea of what you might be eating, and not something that you have to follow to the letter.
- The recipes are mostly plant-based with a few that use eggs. Use the recipes to either include more plant-based meals in your daily diet, or to go fully plant-based for the month. The aim is to get you to eat and prepare more plant-rich meals going forward after Ramadan.

Ramadan Meal Plan

WEEKDAY	SOUPS	SALADS	MAINS	SIDES	DESSERTS	SNACKS
DAY 01	Cauliflower Zucchini Lentil	X	Spinach & Millet Stuffed Butternut Squash	X	Apple Date Crumble	Scramled Eggs with Dosa, sliced cucumbers + sweet peppers
DAY 02	Cauliflower Zucchini Lentil	Kabboula	Chickpea Tagine	Crispy Aubergine Rice	Tahini Stuffed Dates	Green Smoothie
DAY 03	Beetroot Cauliflower	X	Leek & Artichoke Galette	Caramelized Onion Green Beans	No Bake Brownies	Smoked Red Pepper Hummus Dosa wrap with fresh herbs
DAY 04	Beetroot Cauliflower	Aubergine Lentil	Zucchini Chard Fritters	Cashew Yoghurt	No Bake Brownies	Apple Pie Oatmeal
DAY 05	Mushroom Thyme	Mexican Slaw	Lentil Keema Pie	X	Pumpkin Date Galette	Beetroot Hummus with crudites & crackers
DAY 06	Mushroom Thyme	Falafel Bowl	X	Pumpkin Flatbread	Crispy Caramel Bites	Golden Chia Milk Pudding
DAY 07	Lentil Harira	Beetroot Quinoa Tabboule	Mushroom Musakhan	Lentil Quinoa Dosa	Crispy Caramel Bites	Savory Miso Oatmeal

Set your
intentions

THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH, SALLALLAHU 'ALAYHI WASALLAM, SAID:

“Actions are (judged) by motives (niyyah), so each man will have what he intended.”

[AL-BUKHARI & MUSLIM] -

You have most likely bought the book because you have a specific goal or goals in mind. Perhaps your goal is to cut out gluten or dairy. Maybe it's to lose weight or clear your skin. That's amazing. And you've already taken the first step to help you get there. What's more important than buying a book or program though, is to get clear on your intentions.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A GOAL AND AN INTENTION?

Goals are external, while intentions are internal. Goals are what you want to be doing, intentions are what you want to be. Goals are future focused, intentions focus on the present. If goals are the actions, then intentions are the soul of these actions.

To help clarify matters more, take a few minutes to answer these questions, answering them for each of your goals:

1. WHAT IS MY GOAL FOR RAMADAN?
2. WHY IS THIS GOAL IMPORTANT TO ME?
3. HOW WILL I FEEL ONCE THIS GOAL HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?
4. WHAT PERSONAL VALUE IS ATTACHED TO ACHIEVING THIS GOAL?

Here are some examples to help you:

GOAL	INTENTION	VALUES
Pray tarawih every day of Ramadan	Reduce stress & anxiety	Spirituality
Organize my kitchen and meal prep twice a week	Consume healthy homemade meals	Productivity & Health
Lose 4 kilos by the end of Ramadan	Feel better in my clothes and look my best	Beauty
Stop consuming all processed foods + soft drinks	Have a healthy, strong body that is free of disease	Health & Zest
Workout with a personal trainer 3 times a week	Feel strong and energetic so I can play with my kids	Health & Family
Take a daily 30 minute walk in nature	Appreciate and be grateful for the beauty in my outdoor environment	Beauty & Gratitude
Cook gluten-free meals for my sister	Help my sister with her recent celiac disease diagnosis	Giving & Love

As mentioned earlier, intentions focus on the present while goals are future focused. Since life happens in the present, our intentions must be front and foremost in our minds in order to drive the thoughts and actions we need to take every day to help us reach our goal in the future.

It is normal to run into obstacles in any journey towards achieving a goal; some are tangible, such as a worldwide pandemic, and some are intangible, such as negative thoughts and feelings that surface once the initial excitement of starting a new path fades. This is where a reminder of your intentions and values are vital in helping you stay focused and motivated.

Our thoughts lead to actions that create our reality. Clear and positive intentions that you remind yourself of daily will influence the actions you take that will lead to the life you want.



Fasting Health Benefits

Fasting has been around for thousands of years, unlike other fad diets. Only recently though has science discovered its incredible health benefits.

I grew up with the notion that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, and eating 5-6 meals daily is healthier and keeps your metabolism up. So, based on that, fasting would be detrimental to our health. That meant fasting the month of Ramadan and any other time of the year, such as Mondays and Thursdays or the “White Days” would also be considered unhealthy. I always wondered though, why would God make us do something unhealthy?

Thanks to recent research, it's been shown that fasting is extremely beneficial for the body on so many levels. I can't tell you how happy that makes me feel! Before I get into those benefits, let's have a look at what fasting means, in the general sense. And whether there is only one way or many ways to go about it.

What is fasting? And what are the different types of fasting?

Fasting is to abstain from all food and caloric drinks on certain days or the majority of the day, depending on the type of fasting being followed.

- 1. FASTING IN ISLAM:** Muslims fast anything from 12 to 22 hours - depending on the time of year and where you are in the world, since it's from sunrise to sunset. During this time, no food or drink is consumed - not even water. In modern times, this would be referred to as a dry intermittent fast.
- 2. 16/8:** With this method, also under the umbrella of intermittent fasting, you fast for 16 hours a day, and eat within an 8 hour window. Most people on this method would skip breakfast until they reach 16 hours from their last meal the night before. Some people prefer to follow 14/10, 18/6 or 20/4, however 16/8 seems to be the most popular.
- 3. 24 HOUR FAST:** Some people prefer to do a 24 hour fast once a week. They would usually stop eating at their chosen time, let's say 7pm. And then not eat anything until the next day at 7pm.
- 4. 5:2 DIET:** You eat normally for 5 days a week, and for 2 non-consecutive days you eat 500 calories if you're a woman and 600 calories if you're a man.
- 5. LONGER PERIOD FASTING:** This is a general category that covers anything from a 3-day water fast to a 40-days green juice fast. Depending on their length, they can be difficult without medical oversight.

Fasting during Ramadan is considered an intermittent fast as food is consumed within a certain time frame during the day. There has been a significant amount of research on fasting, including intermittent fasting and the benefits it can have on our bodies. Here are some of the most important physical health benefits of fasting.

- 1. WEIGHT LOSS:** Fasting can help promote weight loss for two main reasons. The first is a general caloric reduction, assuming you don't overeat during the eating period. By reducing the number of hours you eat, most people tend to eat less, especially snacks, which can lead to long-term weight loss. The second and more talked about reason is that fasting encourages your body to use fat as its fuel, which leads to higher fat burning. When you eat, your body uses glucose primarily for energy. However, when you fast, your body doesn't have the steady stream of glucose and therefore turns to fat cells for energy. This is especially beneficial for men or bodybuilders that wish to lose weight without losing any muscle.
- 2. SLOWS DOWN THE AGING PROCESS:** Our body's ability to produce a natural human growth hormone, known as HGH, reduces as we age. This hormone is largely responsible for the health of our cells, healthy tissue in our brain, as well as our vital organs. HGH also helps hair and nails grow faster. While fasting, HGH levels increase, which helps the body age more slowly.
- 3. REDUCED RISK OF DISEASE:** Maintaining a healthy weight and raising HGH levels will both have a beneficial effect on reducing disease risk. However, the most important benefit of fasting in reducing risk of disease is its effect on normalizing or increasing your body's sensitivity to insulin. Diabetes occurs when your body stops responding to the hormone insulin that is secreted by the body when your blood glucose levels rise. Some studies have found that fasting helps your blood sugar levels by keeping them well-regulated and preventing spikes and crashes in addition to lowering insulin. Preventing a build-up of insulin allows your body to work more efficiently and thus prevents many diseases, not just diabetes.
- 4. ANTI-INFLAMMATORY:** Your body experiences two types of inflammation, namely acute and chronic. Acute is when your body responds to an injury, such as a sprained ankle, or to bacteria and you get the flu, in order to remove the foreign substances from the body and start the healing process. In short, acute inflammation is "good", lasts for hours or a few days, and is essential to our survival. Chronic, however, may last for months or years, and may go undetected at the beginning stages. It occurs as a response to toxins entering the body regularly, from food or the environment, that stress your cells in a similar way as an injury. However, since there is no specific injury to heal, the inflammation lasts as long as the toxins are around. With time, chronic inflammation leads to cell death and the breakdown of healthy tissue, manifesting into diseases such as allergies, diabetes, cancer and dementia. When you fast, nothing inflammatory is coming in, and simultaneously your body takes the energy that would normally be used to digest food and redirects it to healing and repair. This process helps reduce chronic inflammation.
- 5. PROTECTS THE BRAIN:** The anti-inflammatory effects mentioned above help to slow the progression of disorders like Alzheimer's disease. What's more, several animal studies have shown that fasting enhances cognitive function and memory.

6. **AUTOPHAGY & ANTI-AGING:** Fasting triggers a self-cleaning process in the body called autophagy, which literally means to self-eat (auto-phagy). This helps slow down the aging process, reduces inflammation, and enhances your body's performance overall. Diseased cells are being replaced by healthy tissue - this new healthy tissue can give you a more youthful appearance.
7. **GUT HEALTH:** Simply put, when you fast, your body takes a break from digesting, which is much needed if you are eating throughout the day, or eating the wrong foods. By combining this restive time for your digestive system with healthy planti-ful meals you will be feeding your healthy bacteria and hopefully starving the unhealthy bacteria.
8. **METABOLIC FLEXIBILITY:** By stressing your body with periods of eating and then fasting, your body adapts by switching from burning carbs/sugar for fuel to burning fat. When your body uses fat for energy, it produces ketones the same way as a ketogenic diet. This ability to switch from burning glucose to fat for energy is called metabolic flexibility and is a more efficient and stable way to produce and maintain energy.

Healthy habits last a lifetime, and Ramadan is the perfect annual opportunity to build new ones. As the years pass, you may be getting older, but also stronger and healthier.



The Health Benefits Are Mental and Emotional Too

Ramadan is an opportunity to make both physical and emotional advancements. It is truly a gift from God to incorporate new habits, or ditch bad ones. Fasting helps in that regard by practicing delayed gratification and self-control through not eating or drinking. It's a workout for your willpower. That's why many people use Ramadan to quit smoking or drinking caffeine.

Fasting can also help you feel calmer - you go without food and drink and realize that you can survive and even thrive, you can go without the most important human need for survival and realize you don't actually need it. That builds your self-confidence and simply makes you feel better about yourself. At a subconscious level you are giving yourself the boost of confidence that says "If I can do this, then I can do anything!"

Another way that helps on an emotional level, is to reconnect with your hunger and satiety cues. You are forced to feel hungry and be more in tune with what your body is craving. Listen to that, eat what your body truly needs and not what your habits dictate, and stop before you are full.

In Short, Fasting Puts You In Charge of Your Life

Your body is already packed full of repair and rejuvenation mechanisms. Living a healthy lifestyle by eating a well-balanced diet, sleeping well, and exercising will enhance this natural repair mechanism that God has created in all of us. By incorporating fasting, you are making this mechanism stronger and more efficient.

Many religions, not just Islam, encourage fasting to benefit the body and the soul. And we now have research to back this up.

Fasting throughout the year, not just during Ramadan, has helped me maintain a healthy weight without dieting. Whenever I've found my weight goes up by a kilo or two, I add an extra fasting day for a couple of weeks and my weight will return to normal. I also like how, on fasting days, I get to break away from my daily habits and routine. For me it's going for a long walk instead of a quick, high intensity workout, or having a green juice when I break my fast instead of my morning coffee. Consistency makes the body lazy, while fasting provides the inconsistency that makes it stronger in return. It's like physical exercise, you need to mix things up over time to see a difference.

I hope this information has encouraged you to fast during Ramadan and beyond for your spiritual, physical and mental health.

Ramadan is a gift from God. Let's compound the many health benefits of fasting with a healthy anti-inflammatory diet to truly receive the harmonious outcomes of this gift every year.



Fasting Tips for Ramadan

Ramadan is an opportunity for us all to work on our health goals, whatever they may be. However, the late nights and big family meals can get in the way. Below I share with you some tips to keep you on track during the holy month:

DON'T FEAR HUNGER - it's mostly in your head. When I was younger, I had this fear of hunger, so I would eat as much as I could late at night, thinking it would make fasting easier the next day. I'm sure many of you have figured out that it actually makes the hunger more intense. I realized that the hunger will come, usually at the same time during the day, it will last for a few minutes and then go... and I will be fine. And any extra food I eat the day before doesn't make a difference.

PRIORITIZE SLEEP - Yes, we do need to prioritize late night prayer in Ramadan also, just make sure you get enough sleep overall, even if it means taking a nap during the day. Sleep is important on so many levels, and can even help if you want to lose weight, in addition to reducing feelings of hunger.

MEAL PREP - Healthy home-cooked meals are possible and less time consuming with proper planning. If your meals are not planned in advance, work, kids and other responsibilities will ultimately get in the way, which ends up meaning you will be hitting the drive-through or ordering in just before the call to maghrib prayer. Meal prep is about spending a little extra time when you're a bit less busy, such as over the weekend, so you can fill your fridge and freezer with pre-made or half-prepared meals. It's also about making a double batch and saving half in the freezer for the following week. Start by choosing the recipes you plan to make in the upcoming week, then make a shopping list after checking what you already have and what's missing, and then finally, on the day that works best for you, prepare the dishes that will hold up well in the fridge and you can reheat during the week such as soup, salad dressings, cooked grains, roasted vegetables and snacks. Make sure to label everything with a name and date.

As a general rule, stored in air-tight containers, most meals can last up to 4-5 days in the fridge. Just like fasting or exercise, make meal prepping work for your lifestyle and schedule. You may prefer to meal prep twice a week, for example, which is what I do. Or you might use the evenings to meal prep for the next day so that once you are back from work, it's all ready to be warmed up and served. Use your time wisely by meal prepping all or part of your meals in advance to help save you time in the long-run.

DON'T DIET! - Especially if you're someone that seems to be on a diet all the time. You could say I am anti-diet...but that's a long discussion I will leave for another time. For now, what's important to note is that if you diet on a regular basis, and worse if you indulge in "cheat days", you lose the connection of feeling hungry or full...and the intuition of choosing and enjoying what you eat. Ramadan is the perfect time to reconnect to your body's hunger and fullness cues. Take this opportunity to really listen to your body and feed it what it needs and craves, keeping in mind that once you pass the fullness stage, you will stop enjoying your food...and therefore you will stop eating not because "it's wrong" or "you will get fat"...but because you are satisfied. It's a liberating feeling... and many people have found that they can lose weight and keep it off (in the long-term) more easily by learning to listen to their body and eating intuitively than dieting. And God willing, after Ramadan ends, you will be able to listen to your body better.

MOVE - You can read more about exercise in Ramadan here. Gentle movement like walking or yoga can reduce feelings of hunger or lethargy and help you sleep better too.

Top 5 Foods to Avoid

This meal plan and guide is not about restricting yourself – it's about going for foods that fill you up, reduce inflammation, and leave you feeling good inside and out. I'm not a fan of rules about what you should and should not eat, however, it's helpful to know which foods will most sabotage your goals during Ramadan (and after). When you are eating nothing, you are also eating nothing inflammatory. Take advantage of that by making sure to avoid the following 5 inflammatory foods once you break your fast.

- 1. GLUTEN:** Gluten is a protein found in grains like wheat, rye, barley, and spelt. Many people are sensitive to it. It can cause anything from digestive issues, to leaky gut to autoimmune disease. It's encouraged to get tested to know for sure if you are intolerant, and most people would be to some degree. I encourage you to avoid it completely during Ramadan, using the recipes in this book will help a great deal, and see how you feel at the end of the month. You might find you have more energy and feel less joint pain, for example. If you add it back in and any of those undesirable symptoms return, it's worth removing gluten completely from your diet going forward.
- 2. DAIRY:** Not all dairy is created equal. Organic goat milk yoghurt or camel milk can be highly beneficial for many people. And if that's the only type of dairy you consume and you feel great, then keep at it. However, for many of us dairy means lattes, pizza and cheesecake! Conventional dairy from corn-fed hormone injected cows is what we need to avoid as it is one of the most common allergens due to its lactose and beta-casein content, both of which our body finds difficult to digest. However, grass-fed ghee, or clarified butter, has the beta-casein removed, and is great for cooking thanks to its high smoke point. This is especially useful if coconut oil is unavailable or too expensive. As with gluten, during Ramadan I encourage you to remove dairy and see how you feel. You may find that your skin clears up, or you stop having migraines. After Ramadan you can add organic dairy back in moderation assuming it doesn't cause any stomach upset or a return of any undesired symptoms.
- 3. UNHEALTHY FATS:** There was a time when all types of fat were discouraged. Now we know that not all fats are created equally. However, this can cause confusion. To make things simpler, avoid all fats that are not considered naturally occurring. Those are the highly processed vegetable and seed oils makeup of natural fats, must be avoided completely as they are incredibly dangerous. These types of fats are found in processed packaged convenience foods and restaurant/fast-food fryers. By cooking your meals at home and avoiding deep-fried foods, you are automatically eliminating those types of fats.
- 4. SUGAR:** All health and nutrition experts agree that sugar is bad for us. It is a known contributing factor to weight gain, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, acne, cancer, depression and cavities – just to name a few! The dessert recipes in this book are all made with unrefined sugar such as honey or date molasses. But even these sweeteners need to be consumed in moderation. And I hope it goes without saying that artificial sweeteners are just as bad if not worse – so with this I will break my rule of no rules, **NO ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS OF ANY KIND PLEASE.**
- 5. CAFFEINE:** It's a good idea to limit caffeine intake, especially coffee, as it can be quite dehydrating. Later in the evening try to avoid caffeine completely so that it doesn't disrupt your sleep. The better you sleep, the easier the fast, the more energy you have, and the more mindfully you will eat.

Top 5 Foods to Include

Make fasting easier while also enhancing its tremendous health benefits by including the following foods:

- 1. FRUITS & VEGETABLES:** The variety of colors in fruits and vegetables are an indication of the many nutrients they provide, so it's important to see many colors on your plate. They have antioxidants, minerals, and phytochemicals in the correct combination to help create energy in the body and build immunity. During Ramadan it's even more important to consume water-rich fruits and vegetables such as cucumbers, tomatoes, spinach, mushrooms, melons, and zucchini.
- 2. GLUTEN-FREE WHOLE GRAINS:** Nutrients in whole-grains like fiber, antioxidants, phytonutrients, vitamins and minerals each offer important health benefits of their own. However, when they work together as part of the "whole" food, they interact to protect your health in several ways. They may even be a better source than fruits and vegetables of key nutrients such as B vitamins, Vitamin E, magnesium and iron.
- 3. HEALTHY FATS:** Consuming healthy fats such as olive oil, olives, avocados, coconut oil, and ghee with your vegetables allows your body to utilize fat-soluble vitamins like vitamins A, D, E and K2. In addition, it is vital for your cellular health as your body needs fat to build healthy cell membranes. It also helps keep you satiated for longer and curbs sugar cravings. Nuts and seeds are also excellent sources of healthy fats (protein too!).
- 4. HIGH FIBER FOODS:** As our water intake decreases overall during Ramadan, it's important to consume high fiber foods that are essential for healthy digestion and elimination. Fiber also expands in the stomach, giving us that feeling of satiety without overeating. Most plant foods are high in fiber.
- 5. LENTILS & BEANS LEGUMES:** have many health benefits from heart-health to anti-ageing. They are especially beneficial in Ramadan as they are complex carbohydrates, contain plenty of dietary fiber, and have a low glycemic index – that means they are released into the body slowly, preventing us from feeling hungry and providing sustainable energy. Additionally, when combining lentils and beans with grains such as rice or millet, complete proteins are formed.

Ramadan is like a reset button for the year – you need to take advantage of the opportunities the holy month presents.

Fasting and Exercise

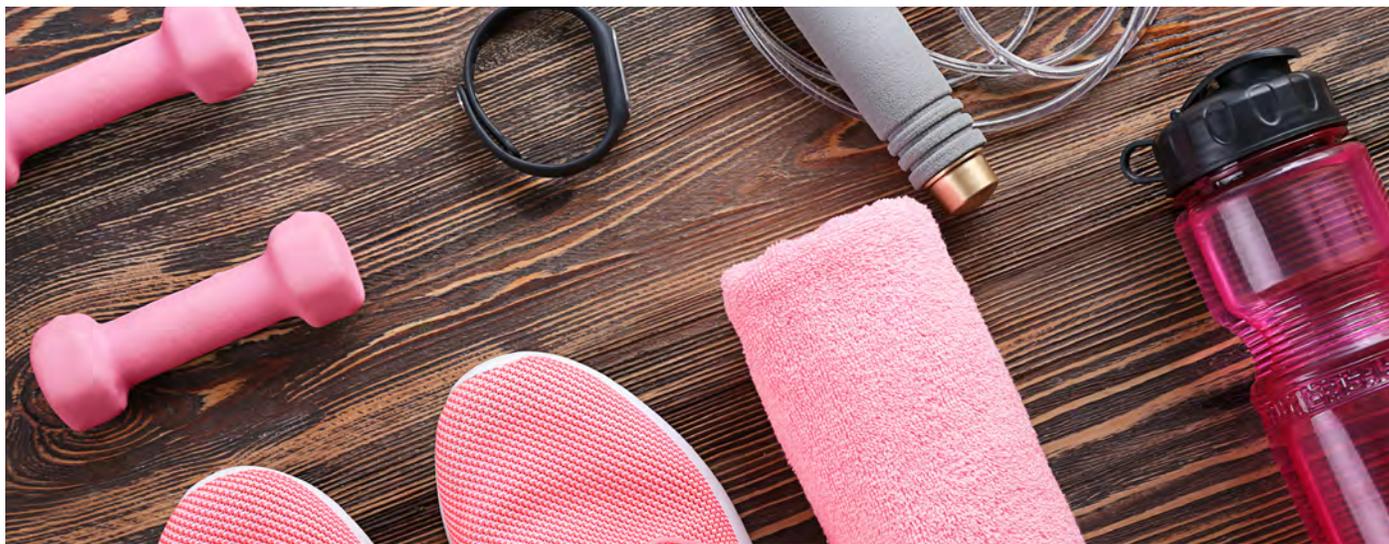
Exercise while fasting is another opportunity to combine the health benefits of the two for more synergistic benefits. If you have been exercising regularly, you will probably be able to continue to exercise while fasting. I urge you here to listen to your body. Everyone is different, and each fasting day is different. It's best to maintain your current level of physical activity, and be prepared to pull back on the intensity on the days you are feeling more tired, or more dehydrated. I repeat, always listen to your body. On some days you might have so much energy, you can workout longer and stronger. Other days, your body just doesn't want to cooperate.

It's important not to stress too much about how intensely you're moving your body – just make sure you're getting your steps in or at a level where it will be easier to get back on track once Ramadan ends.

You're probably wondering when's the best time to workout? Before iftar, or after? If before, is it best to workout on waking, or closer to iftar time? The short answer is to workout at the time that you feel your best and/or your schedule allows. Assuming, however, your schedule is flexible and your energy levels before and after are the same, then working out while fasting means your body will burn more fat, especially if you do cardio, and working out on an empty stomach is easier to avoid digestive upset. As for the best time while fasting, that would be as close as possible to sunset. That way, once you break your fast, you replenish your body with healthy fats, proteins, vegetables and carbohydrates while your metabolism is still revved up from the workout.

Ideally, I get my workout done in the day time so that after iftar my schedule is completely free. If for any reason I wasn't able to or not feeling my best, I would break it down into mini-workouts, such as 15 minutes of yoga in the morning, a 20 minute walk in the afternoon and a 15 minute toning workout in the evening. Even small spurts of movement help keep your metabolism and muscles active throughout the day, fend off stress, and help you sleep more soundly.

And finally, don't underestimate the power of everyday movement! It might be gardening, walking in the mall, or taking the stairs instead of the elevator. Every little bit counts. To encourage you further, if you feel extra hungry or lethargic on any day, just get up and move your body for 5 minutes. You will most likely feel better.



Fasting Beyond Ramadan

We say we want to live a long life, but what we mean is we want to live a healthy, long life full of energy and zest. Fasting helps us to live a longer, higher quality life. So, why limit it to Ramadan?

The same way no diet fits all, no fast fits all. There are so many options backed by studies to fast your way. You can follow the Prophet Muhammed's (PBUH) sunnah of fasting Mondays and Thursdays, or days 13 to 15 of the Islamic month. Or you can follow intermittent fasting weekdays, eating from 12pm to 8pm, or whatever eating window suits you best. Perhaps a fast with a bulletproof coffee in the morning will help get you through your work day and make fasting easier. Maybe you prefer to do a 24 hour fast a few times a month.

As you can see, there are so many ways. And the many health benefits of fasting are truly encouraging to continue fasting throughout the year. Find a way that makes fasting work better for you at a personal level so that you are more likely to stick to it and reap its rewards. You might also choose the method that works best for your goals, such as weight management, weight loss, longevity or if it's purely spiritual.

Fasting is easier than dieting, and therefore it is a better long-term method for weight management. Dieting and calorie restriction leave you feeling more hungry and consumed with thoughts about food and your next meal. Eating less can actually make you more hungry than eating nothing. As time passes, will-power naturally dwindles, and you ultimately go back to your old eating patterns, which makes you feel like a failure. Fasting cuts down on food-related thinking. It teaches the brain not to waste time on obsessive food thoughts, the complete opposite of what dieting does. This free energy and time can be used for other, more important tasks.

The deeper spiritual connection that comes with fasting combines with our body's need for health and repair to help us, God willing, live a longer, happy life.



Special Ingredients

The following is a list of ingredients you will find in the recipes that you may not be familiar with or that may not be available to you. Below is a brief explanation of each and a suggested substitute if available.

Gluten-Free Grains

QUINOA: Although technically a seed, quinoa cooks up like a grain and has a delicious nutty flavor, with the added bonus of being rich in protein. Use it to replace gluten-containing grains such as bulgur and freekeh in your salads and mains. It's available in three colors – white, red and black.

MILLET: Is a mildly flavored grain that can be used in salads and served with stews. Just like quinoa; they can be used interchangeably in most of the recipes in this book.

OATS: Sometimes contain gluten, so make sure they are certified gluten-free if you are highly intolerant. There are several types of oats such as rolled, steel-cut or quick-cooking. For the recipes in this book, we have used only rolled oats. Use oats to make oat flour and oat milk (see below).

RICE: Is one of the most easily-digested grains, in addition to being widely available. If you are unable to find quinoa or millet, use rice instead and adjust the cooking times and water amount accordingly.

Gluten-Free Flours

OAT FLOUR: Can easily be made at home by grinding oats using a food processor or blender. If you are highly sensitive to gluten, make sure your oats are certified gluten-free.

ALMOND FLOUR: Made from finely ground raw blanched almonds. It's excellent in baking when combined with other gluten-free flours, because it adds a delicious taste, richness and protein. Hazelnut or chestnut flour may be used as an alternative.

MILLET FLOUR: Has a mildly sweet flavor and is amazing in baking. However, it's best combined with other gluten-free flours and not used on its own. It can be replaced with buckwheat flour.

RICE FLOUR: Works well in gluten-free baking, although it is rarely used in the baking recipes here. However, it can be used as an alternative to any of the other flours and easily be made at home by grinding rice using a strong blender or even a spice grinder.

BUCKWHEAT FLOUR: Made from finely ground buckwheat groats, buckwheat flour has nothing to do with wheat. It has a rich nutty flavor and a very high nutritional value. Don't buy Bob's Red Mill Buckwheat Flour as it has a strong taste and can make your baked goods darker in color. I prefer using Bob's Red Mill Raw Buckwheat and grinding it myself in the Vitamix. It can be replaced with millet flour in most baking recipes.

ARROWROOT STARCH: Is a type of starch that is used as a thickener in sauces and pudding. It also helps to bind a dough when combined with other gluten-free flours in baking. Cornstarch may be used as a substitute.

Dairy-Free Alternatives

PLANT MILK: Almond and Oat milk are my go-tos in baking due to their wide availability and mild flavor. Both can easily be made at home. Raw almonds need to be soaked for a minimum of 8 hours, then blended with 4 times the amount of water before straining it, using a nut milk bag or cheesecloth. Almond milk can be kept in the fridge for up to 3 days. Make your own oat milk by combining 1 part oats with 3-4 parts milk before blending and straining. Do not soak or over-blend the oats as it may cause the texture to become slimy. Due to its higher sugar content, oat milk can help add more color to baked goods.

CASHEW CREAM: An excellent alternative to yogurt when mixed with an acid, and to replace cream in soups or pasta sauces. Soak raw cashews for 3 hours and then strain and blend it with 3-4 times the volume of water until smooth (there is no need to strain). Store in the fridge for up to 3 days.

COCONUT MILK: An excellent anti-inflammatory alternative to dairy with healthy fats that help balance blood sugar. Stick with canned full-fat coconut milk, or make your own by using 1 part dried coconut soaked in 2 parts water and blend.

COCONUT CREAM: The best dairy-free alternative to regular cream in baking and when making puddings or ice cream. It can be sold canned or sometimes in cartons, however, you can easily get it from a can of full-fat coconut milk that has been refrigerated overnight. Once you open it, the cream would have settled on top. Unfortunately there is no easy-to-find substitute for it.

Natural Sweeteners

HONEY: Adds natural sweetness to both desserts and savory dishes. It comes in a variety of textures, however, in this book we use mild, runny honey. If you are strictly vegan, use maple or brown rice syrup instead, keeping in mind that they are both slightly less sweet than honey.

MAPLE SYRUP: Pure, not pancake syrup with maple flavor, is made from the sap of certain maple trees, and is a nutritious alternative sweetener to use in baking and a vegan alternative to honey. If maple syrup is not available to you, then honey can be used instead, just reduce the amount slightly as honey can be somewhat sweeter and have a stronger flavor.

DATE MOLASSES: Considered a whole-food sweetener, unlike sugar cane molasses, it is not a by-product of making date sugar. Readily available in most middle eastern supermarkets, you can also make it at home by boiling dates until soft, then blending until a syrup forms, adding the amount of water needed for the consistency desired. Best used in combination with other sweeteners. Makes a delicious drizzle on cakes when combined with tahini.

COCONUT SUGAR: Is made from the sap of the coconut tree and it contains trace minerals such as iron and zinc, with a relatively low glycemic index. It is an ideal sweetener in desserts, and can be replaced with brown sugar in almost all recipes, although it is slightly less sweet. Date sugar is also a good alternative.

DATE SUGAR: Considered a whole food since it is made from dehydrated, ground dates. It is therefore rich in vitamins, minerals and fiber. It is also an excellent alternative to brown sugar. In baking, however, it's less sweet than both brown sugar and coconut sugar.

Healthy Fats

OLIVE OIL: Adds flavor to dressings and can be used in low-medium temperature sautéing.

COCONUT OIL: We love the versatility of coconut oil in both cooking and baking. It's an excellent alternative for butter in both sweet and savory dishes. It has a high smoke point and therefore it is safe to use for sautéing and stir-frying. If coconut oil is unavailable to you, then use ghee for cooking, and butter for baking.

AVOCADO OIL: A mild-flavored oil that has a high smoke point, which makes it excellent for high-heat cooking. A flavorless, high-smoke point alternative would be refined coconut oil. In a pinch use olive oil, just make sure to keep the cooking temperature relatively low.

GHEE: Also known as clarified butter as the milk solids have been removed, grass-fed ghee is a good alternative to butter for high-heat cooking.

Everything Else

TAMARI: A salty, umami-rich, gluten-free version of soy sauce. If you are not strictly gluten-free, go ahead and use soy sauce. For a soy-free and gluten-free alternative, use coconut aminos instead, bearing in mind that it can be slightly sweeter.

MISO: Made from fermented soybeans, there are various types. Generally, the deeper the color, the stronger the flavor. It adds a deep umami savory/salty flavor to vegetarian dishes. Although we have only used it in the Savory Oatmeal recipe, we recommend you experiment with this essential vegetarian ingredient that adds both nutrition and flavor to your dishes.

NUTRITIONAL YEAST: A yellowish flaky deactivated yeast that imparts a cheese-like flavor when added. Try it sprinkled on popcorn!

CHIA SEEDS: Considered a superfood for their high nutritional value, chia seeds are often used ground to replace eggs in baking, or to help thicken and bind mixtures. I prefer to use white chia seeds as they don't impart a darker color to the end result.

FLAXSEED: A nutritional powerhouse and a great vegetarian source of omega-3 fatty acids and fiber. Ground flaxseeds are great for baking without eggs, and I prefer to use golden flax seeds as they have a milder flavor and lighter color, which is better in sweet treats. Try to use freshly ground flaxseeds when possible and store in the fridge or freezer.

PSYLLIUM: An essential in gluten-free baking, it comes in both husk and powder form. It really helps create a "glue" for flours to bind. Ground chia and flax seeds may be used as an alternative in some recipes.

DARK CHOCOLATE: 70% dairy-free dark chocolate was used for all the recipes with chocolate. Any dark chocolate can be used, keeping in mind that the lower the percentage of cacao solids, the higher the amount of sugar and potentially dairy.

CACAO POWDER: Always use the best quality unsweetened cacao powder you can find, and make sure it's dairy-free. If you are using raw cacao powder, then you may need to use less since it has a stronger and richer flavor.

KOMBU: A type of sea vegetable, high in minerals and vitamins, which helps reduce the gas-properties of the beans when added during the cooking process. Remove the kombu once you are done cooking the legumes (I enjoy eating it, it's very delicious).



SECTION 01

Soups

SERVES: 8

Lentil Harira

🕒 PREP TIME: 15 MIN 🕒 COOK TIME: 40 MIN

Can we really have a Ramadan cookbook without Harira?

Despite living thousands of miles from Morocco, I grew up having Harira during Ramadan. Actually we would have it all year, as many people do. As this is a vegetarian cookbook there is no meat in the recipe, but lots of wholesome flavor.



Ingredients:

- ¼ cup (60ml) olive oil
- 2 large onions, finely chopped
- 1 ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- large pinch of saffron
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste
- 3-4 cups (750ml-1000ml) vegetable stock
- 3 ½ cups (750g) ripe tomatoes, chopped
- 1 ¾ cups (175g) celery, chopped
- ½ cup lightly packed (15g) parsley, chopped
- ½ cup lightly packed (15g) coriander, chopped
- 1 ¼ cups (250g) green lentils
- 1 cup (175g) cooked chickpeas
- Coriander leaves, chopped, to garnish
- Harissa sauce to taste
- Lemon wedges to serve

Directions:

1. Heat olive oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the onions & cook for 7-10 mins, stirring occasionally until the onions are soft.
2. Add the spices & dry fry for a minute, followed by the tomato paste & cook for 2-3 mins.
3. Add 3 cups (750ml) of stock, tomatoes, celery, herbs, lentils and stir. Bring to the boil, then cover, lower the heat to a simmer, and cook for 30 mins. Check if the lentils are cooked and add the rest of the stock if needed.
4. Add the chickpeas, close the lid & cook for 5 mins.
5. Taste & adjust seasoning. Serve with harissa sauce, lemon wedges & coriander.



Sharing is Caring!

SERVES: 4

Beetroot and Cauliflower

🕒 PREP TIME: 30 MIN 🕒 COOK TIME: 15 MIN

This soup looks just as good as it tastes! Although I must admit it's not the type of soup someone would expect to see on the Iftar table, it's certainly nutritious and a lovely change from lentil or more common vegetable soups. The lemon juice is a must, add it to the soup, and have some wedges on the side for those who prefer a more zesty flavor to balance the earthy sweetness of beetroot.



Ingredients:

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 leeks, white and light green parts only, finely sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, sliced
- 5-6 cups (1.25 - 1.5 litres) vegetable stock
- 3-4 large beetroot (750g), peeled & chopped
- ½ head large cauliflower (250g), chopped into florets
- 2 teaspoons ground caraway
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon sweet paprika
- ¼ cup lemon juice, or to taste
- Parsley, chopped, to garnish
- Coconut cream (optional)

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F. Rub the chopped beetroot & cauliflower florets with 1 tablespoon olive oil, salt, pepper & place on a lined baking sheet. Roast until cooked through, about 20-25 minutes.
2. Heat the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil in a large saucepan over a low-medium heat. Add the leeks and garlic and cook gently for 10-12 minutes until very soft. Add the spices & cook for 30 seconds, then add the stock and the cooked beetroot and cauliflower to the pan, bring to a boil, and then reduce to a simmer. Cover and cook for about 15 minutes.
3. Remove the saucepan from the heat, uncover and leave to cool slightly. Whizz the soup in a blender, in batches, until smooth. Return to the pan, add the lemon juice to taste and then season with salt and pepper. Swirl in some coconut cream if you have it on hand.



SERVES: 4

Mushroom Thyme

🕒 PREP TIME: 10 MIN 🕒 COOK TIME: 40 MIN

A delicious creamy mushroom soup using cashews that no one will believe is dairy-free.

To make the cashew cream, soak a $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of raw cashews for about 3 hours. Drain the cashews, rinse and add to a blender with 1 cup of water. If you have a high-speed blender such as a Vitamix, you can skip the soaking. Blend until smooth. Set aside until ready to use. You can make more than you need for this recipe. The remaining cream can be stored in the fridge in an airtight container for a week. Use it as a base for salad dressing, or in any recipe that calls for cream.



Ingredients:

- 3 tablespoons avocado or olive oil
- ½ cup (100g) onion, finely diced (100g)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 cups (200-250 g) mushrooms, cleaned and sliced
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves
- 3 tablespoons gluten-free flour (brown rice or millet)
- 3 cups (700ml) vegetable or mushroom stock
- sea salt (to taste)
- freshly ground black pepper (to taste)
- ⅓ to ½ cup (90-120ml) cashew cream (or any non-dairy cream)

**Reserve some of the sautéed mushrooms and fresh thyme for garnish, or simply garnish with some fresh, chopped parsley.*

Directions:

1. Warm the oil or melt the butter in a medium-sized saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the onions along with a pinch of salt. Saute until the onions are golden.
2. Increase the heat to high and add the mushrooms along with the thyme and another pinch of salt and some black pepper. Sauté the mushrooms until they release their moisture. Cook until they are browned for about 8-10 minutes. Add the garlic and saute for 30 seconds or so to release its aroma.
3. Next, add the flour and stir to combine. Add the stock, a bit at a time. Turn the heat up to medium and bring the soup to a simmer. Stir often to make sure the bottom does not scorch. Simmer the soup until the mushrooms are tender, about 15 minutes. Season to taste with more salt and pepper.
4. You can blend all or part of the soup; it's your choice. I like blending about two thirds of the soup. Transfer your desired amount to a blender and blend until smooth. Return back to the pot on low heat and add your cream, starting with a ⅓ cup. Taste and decide if you would like to add more. Check the seasoning adding more salt and pepper if needed.
5. Serve garnished with some sautéed mushrooms, fresh thyme or parsley and a swirl of cashew cream.

SERVES: 4

Cauliflower Zucchini Lentil

🕒 PREP TIME: 10 MIN 🕒 COOK TIME: 30 MIN

A lentil soup with an extra dose of veggies because we all need more vegetables in our life. I decided to go with cauliflower and zucchini as they boost the fibre content of this recipe. The lentils, also high in fibre, are relatively low in carbs. You can also change up the vegetables and use celery and carrot instead.



Ingredients:

- 3 tablespoons coconut oil, olive oil or ghee
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 1 garlic clove, finely grated
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon sweet paprika
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon chilli flakes
- 2 heaped cups (250g) small florets of cauliflower
- 2 heaped cups (250g) chopped zucchini, 1 inch chunks
- 1 cup (210g) red lentils
- 5 cups (1.180L) water
- 1 ¾ teaspoons salt

Directions:

1. Heat up a medium saucepan over medium heat and add the oil or ghee. Once the oil is hot, add the onion and cook until translucent, about 5 minutes.
2. Add the garlic and cook for 30 seconds. Add the tomato paste, paprika, cumin and chilli flakes and sauté for about 1 minute.
3. Add the vegetables and stir to coat with the spices.
4. Add the lentils, water and salt. Increase the heat to high and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and let simmer, stirring occasionally, until the lentils are tender and the vegetables are cooked, about 25 minutes. Taste and add more salt if needed.
5. Serve as is or blend to make a smooth soup if you prefer.



SECTION 02

Salads

SERVES: 3-4

Aubergine Quinoa and Lentil Salad

🕒 PREP TIME: 15 MIN 🕒 COOK TIME: 45 MIN

A wholesome main dish with those Middle Eastern flavors we all love. It's rich in protein thanks to the lentils and quinoa. The star in the dish is the aubergine! The marinade for the aubergine makes it absolutely delicious. Use this roasted aubergine in any salad or sandwich.

This dish can be served warm as a main or as a salad at room temperature. If serving warm, don't add the dressing, and keep the herbs for garnish.

This recipe may have a lot of components but with a little planning, it's pretty easy. Each part can be made ahead and kept in the fridge. If you are not dairy-free, a full-fat yogurt can be a faster replacement for the cashew yogurt recipe below.



Ingredients:

- 2 medium aubergines (± 500g)
- ¼ cup (60ml) olive or avocado oil
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 tablespoon pomegranate molasses
- 1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
- ¼ teaspoon chilli flakes (I like to use Aleppo or Turkish chili flakes)
- ½ cup (100g) brown lentils, soaked for 4 hours
- ½ cup (95g) quinoa, soaked for 1 hour (or longer)
- ½ cup (30g) fresh parsley leaves, roughly chopped
- ½ cup (30g) mint leaves, roughly chopped
- ¼ cup (40g) hemp seeds (optional)
- Salt & Black Pepper

DRESSING:

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- ½ tablespoon pomegranate molasses
- Salt & black pepper (pinch of each)

CASHEW YOGURT:

- 1 cup (150g) raw cashews, soaked for 3 hours
- ⅓ cup (90ml) water
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 430°F or 220°C. Prepare a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Cut the aubergine width ways into 2cm wide slices and place into a bowl. In a small bowl mix together the oil, garlic, molasses, lemon zest, chili flakes, ¼ teaspoon salt, and ⅛ teaspoon black pepper. Drizzle the dressing all over the aubergine slices and mix well. Spread out on the prepared baking sheet, and roast for 40-45 minutes. It should be dark golden brown. Set aside.
3. In the meantime, cook the lentils and quinoa and drain afterwards. Add them to a medium saucepan, with 2 cups of water and ½ teaspoon of salt, over high heat. Once the water starts to boil, reduce the heat, cover with a tight-fitting lid, and let it simmer for 20-25 minutes until the water is absorbed and both the lentils and quinoa are cooked through. Remove the lid, fluff with a fork, and set aside to cool.
4. Mix all the dressing ingredients together. Now make the yogurt.
5. To make the cashew yogurt: Add the drained cashews with the water, lemon juice and vinegar and blend until smooth. Add more water if needed to help blend more easily. Transfer to a bowl and chill in the fridge until ready to use.
6. To assemble, mix the quinoa and lentils with the fresh herbs, hemp seeds and the dressing (if serving warm, see note in the introduction). Transfer to your serving dish, arranging the roasted aubergine on top, then dollop the yogurt all over, drizzling with more molasses. A sprinkle of toasted almond flakes and fresh pomegranate adds both beauty and flavor, so go for it!

To serve:

- Toasted flaked almonds
- Drizzle of pomegranate molasses
- Fresh pomegranate seeds

SERVES: 4

Kaboula

🕒 PREP TIME: 15 MIN 🕒 COOK TIME: 10 MIN

My favorite salad in this book for sure! It's grain-free and full of fibre and phytonutrients thanks to the kale, peppers and cauliflower. This recipe has a few steps, but it's quite simple and can easily be made ahead and stored in the fridge from the morning or even the day before.

While you are preparing the cauliflower rice, you might as well make extra and use it to make one of the combinations available to you in the Cauliflower Rice Three Ways on another day of the week.



Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons raisins
- 2 tablespoons white vinegar
- 2 cups (180g) riced cauliflower
- 1 ½ tablespoons olive or avocado oil
- 1 shallot or small red onion, finely chopped
- 1 sweet red pepper, cored, deseeded and diced
- 1 small jalapeño or mild chilli pepper, seeds removed and chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 4 cups (150g) shredded and chopped kale

DRESSING:

- 1 ½ tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 2 teaspoons sumac
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper

Directions:

1. Start by mixing the raisins with the white vinegar. Set aside for a minimum of 2 hours, but no longer than 24 hours.
2. Using about ½ a medium cauliflower, finely chop the florets, or place them into a food processor and pulse several times until you get small pieces the size of peas or slightly smaller. Take care to not over-process. You don't want it turning into powder. Set aside.
3. In a large frying pan or saucepan with a lid, heat the oil and once hot, add the shallot, red pepper, and jalapeño and sauté for about 5 minutes until softened. Add the garlic and sauté for about 30 seconds just until fragrant. Add the riced cauliflower and mix in, then immediately turn off the heat and cover the pan to allow the cauliflower to steam and soften. Let cool while you prepare the kale and dressing.
4. Prepare the dressing by mixing all the dressing ingredients together.
5. Place the shredded and chopped kale into a large bowl, and add a tablespoon of the dressing. Using your hands, massage the dressing into the kale until the leaves soften and turn a darker green color. Set aside for the dressing to continue to do its magic and further soften the kale leaves.
6. When the cauliflower mixture has completely cooled down, add it to the kale and mix to combine. Then add a couple of tablespoons of the dressing and mix again, followed by the raisins with the soaking liquid. Taste and see if you would like to add more dressing.
7. Cover the bowl and store in the fridge, taking it out 15 minutes before serving. Sprinkle with more sumac on top if you wish.

SERVES: 4

Falafel Bowl

🕒 PREP TIME: 20 MIN 🕒 COOK TIME: 10 MIN

This is definitely more of a meal than a salad. And of course, the falafel can be enjoyed as part of a gluten-free wrap or lettuce wrap with some hummus if you prefer. You have many options as suggested below, you do you!

I like to make the falafel patties and store them in the freezer for days when I don't have time to cook from scratch.



Ingredients:

KALE CHICKPEA FALAFEL:

- 1 medium kale leaf (any variety), rinsed well
- 1 small carrot, peeled and cut into chunks
- 1 cup (200g) cooked chickpeas
- 1 tablespoon nutritional yeast (optional, but highly recommended)
- 1-2 tablespoons tahini
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley leaves
- 1 green onion, green parts only, cut into large pieces
- 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice, to taste
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin, or more to taste
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- Freshly ground pepper to taste
- 2-3 tablespoons oat flour (or chickpea flour for a grain-free option)
- 1-2 tablespoons Avocado oil for cooking

BUILD YOUR BOWL:

- Taboula (use the Beet Taboula recipe replacing the beetroot with tomatoes)
- Hummus (your choice from one of the three in this book or classic hummus)
- Gluten-free bread (store-bought or one of the options in the Baking section)
- Sauerkraut
- Olives

Directions:

1. To make the falafel - place the kale and carrot in a food processor and pulse to chop into small pieces. Add the chickpeas, nutritional yeast, tahini, parsley, green onion, lemon juice, and spices. Pulse a few times and then add the flour just to help the mixture come together and form a patty. Using about a ¼ cup, shape into falafel shapes or patties.
2. If you want to cook the falafel straight away, heat a medium frying pan with oil. Once hot, add the patty and fry for a few minutes until golden brown, then flip to finish the other side.
3. If you are not frying them straight away and would like to freeze them, then shape them and place on a tray to store in the freezer. Once they have frozen solid, transfer to a bag or container. It will keep in the freezer for up to 3 months. You can cook straight away from frozen, and they are great cooked in an air-fryer if you have one. Just make sure to spray or brush it with a little oil beforehand.
4. Once your falafel is ready, serve in a bowl with options above.

Good food is
the foundation of
genuine happiness.



SERVES: 2-4

Beetroot Taboula

🕒 PREP TIME: 15 MIN

A simple light salad that can easily be made ahead to save you time during iftar. Use this recipe as a base and change it to how you like your taboula....perhaps more quinoa, less beetroot? Replace the balsamic vinegar with some lemon juice for a more traditional taboula taste. For more flavor, it's best not to boil the beetroot, but roast it in the oven.

Wash your beets and then individually wrap them in foil and place on a baking sheet in a preheated oven (400°F/190°C) for 40-50 minutes until the beets can easily be pierced with a fork. The time will depend on the size of the beets. Once cool enough to handle, use some kitchen paper towels to rub off the skin. Store in the fridge in an air-tight container for up to 5 days.



Ingredients:

- 1 cup (160g) cooked beetroot, diced
- 2 cups (60g) fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 1 cup (150g) cooked quinoa
- ½ large onion (40g), finely chopped

DRESSING:

- 60ml balsamic vinegar
- 60ml olive oil
- ½ teaspoon salt, plus more to taste
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper

Directions:

1. Start by making the dressing: blend all the ingredients together and check for seasoning. Set aside while you make the salad.
2. In a medium bowl, add all the ingredients and mix together.
3. Add the dressing and toss well. Check for seasoning. Add more salt if needed.
4. Transfer to the serving dish, top with the crumbled goat cheese if you are not 100% dairy-free.



SERVES: 4

Mexican Slaw

🕒 PREP TIME: 20 MIN

I'm not a big fan of slaw-style salads, but the dressing here makes it extra special.

For the dressing you need one roasted red bell pepper. I usually buy a jar of ready roasted red peppers, which just makes life easier. But if you can't get hold of any at your local supermarket, then you can certainly make them at home. And while you're at it, make extra to use in the Smoked Red Pepper Hummus recipe.



Ingredients:

- 1 cup (75g) purple cabbage, shredded
- 1 cup (70g) broccoli, raw, shredded
- ½ cup (50g) carrots, shredded
- 6 (75g) cherry tomatoes, halved
- ¼ cup (35g) corn
- 2 radishes, sliced
- 1 tablespoon fresh coriander leaves, chopped
- 2 tablespoons pumpkin seeds

SMOKED TAHINI RED PEPPER DRESSING

- 1 jarred or freshly roasted red bell pepper (about 50-75g)
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 3 tablespoons tahini
- 2 tablespoons water
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- ½ teaspoon honey
- ½ teaspoon smoked paprika
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- ¼ teaspoon sea salt

Directions:

1. Start by making the dressing. Combine all of the ingredients into a blender and blend until smooth. Taste and add more salt if desired. If not using straight away, keep in the fridge stored in a sealed jar.
2. Combine all salad ingredients, except for the coriander and seeds, in a bowl. Add half the dressing and mix well. Taste and add more dressing to your liking. Sprinkle on the coriander and pumpkin seeds to serve.



SECTION 03

Mains

SERVES: 2 AS MAIN OR 4 AS A SIDE

Mushroom Musakhan

🕒 PREP TIME: 15 MIN

🕒 COOK TIME: 50 MIN

Musakhan is traditionally made with chicken, but all the flavor comes from the onions and spices that get soaked up by the mushrooms in this vegetarian alternative to the classic Palestinian dish.

Although delicious served on its own, turn it into a meal by combining it with one of the options available for you in this book, such as the Pumpkin Flatbread, Basic Cauliflower Rice, or as a filling for a galette using the Best Gluten-Free Pastry Dough recipe. It's also delicious served with rice, quinoa, or cold with some greens. Adding spinach is optional but we highly recommend it.



Ingredients:

- ¼ cup (60ml) olive oil, divided
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh oregano or 1 teaspoon dried
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 ¼ teaspoons sumac
- ⅛ teaspoon allspice
- pinch ground cardamom
- salt & Pepper
- 2 medium (450g) onions, ¼ inch slices
- 2 tablespoons pine nuts
- 4 cups (500g) mushrooms, sliced in half if small, and into quarters if large
- 2 large handfuls (120g) fresh spinach, roughly chopped
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh herbs
- 1-2 tablespoons toasted pine nuts

Directions:

1. Mix ½ tablespoon oil with the oregano, garlic, sumac, allspice, and cardamom in a small bowl. Set aside.
2. In a large skillet or frying pan, heat 1 tablespoon of oil over medium-high and add the mushrooms with ½ teaspoon of salt. Cook stirring occasionally until evenly browned, about 8-10 minutes. Transfer to a bowl.
3. Wipe the empty skillet clean and heat 1 tablespoon of oil on high heat, then add the onions with ¼ teaspoon of salt and cook, stirring occasionally until the onions begin to soften and release water. About 5 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium and continue to cook the onions, stirring frequently, until the onions are browned and slightly sticky, about 30mins.
4. Now clear the centre of the pan, moving the caramelized onions to the sides, and add the remaining 1 ½ tablespoons of oil and spices mixture and cook, mashing the mixture into the skillet for about 30 seconds. Then stir the spice mixture into the onions. Add the cooked mushrooms and mix just until warmed through. If serving straight away add the spinach in batches, stirring until wilted. If you are making this ahead, then add the mushroom and spinach when reheating.
5. Transfer to a serving plate, add the pine nuts and season with salt and black pepper. Sprinkle with fresh herbs to serve.

SERVES: 4

Leek and Artichoke Galette

🕒 PREP TIME: 30 MIN 🕒 COOK TIME: 30 MIN

If a galette is new to you, then think of it as free-form pie or tart. Classic galette dough would be made with wheat flour and butter, but in The Best Gluten-Free Pastry Dough recipe there is no sign of either.

Now on to the delicious filling! The leeks, artichokes and spinach provide plenty of fibre and nutrients. You can certainly make the filling ahead of time and, once cooled, keep it in the fridge (up to 2 days) until you are ready to bake the galette. You can either make 1 large or 4 individual galettes. It's delicious served on its own, but a little hot sauce or even cashew yogurt would be a delicious addition.



Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon coconut oil or olive oil
- 4 cups (350g) chopped leeks, white and light green parts only
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tablespoon dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 8-9 artichoke hearts (1x400g frozen bag)
- 2 cups packed (50g) spinach, roughly chopped if large (about 2 handfuls)
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- Dairy-free cheese (optional)
- ½ recipe The Best Gluten-free Pastry Dough
- Garnish: chopped coriander and pomegranate seeds

Directions:

1. If you are using frozen artichoke, make sure they are fully thawed, and then slice thinly. If the artichokes are exceptionally large, cut it in half first and then slice.
2. In a large saucepan, heat the oil over medium-high and add the leeks with the salt, and sauté for about 10 minutes until they start to caramelize. Add the garlic, thyme, black pepper, and artichoke and stir to combine. Cook over medium heat for about 10-15 minutes until the artichokes have softened. Cover the pan during this time, but also stir often to make sure the leeks don't stick or over-brown too much. If the pan gets too dry, add a splash of water from time to time and stir well. All those bits stuck to the pan add flavor, and the water will help release them and keep them as part of the filling.
3. Once the artichokes are cooked and soft, remove the pan from the heat, add the spinach and lemon juice and stir until the spinach has wilted. Let the filling cool while you preheat the oven to 400°F or 200°C and roll out the galette dough as per the instructions in the recipe.
4. Once your dough is rolled out, add the filling to the centre, keeping about 2 cm from the border and fold the edges to the centre, I like to use parchment paper to help with this step.
5. Carefully transfer the galette onto a baking sheet. If you wish for added color, brush the edges with beaten egg. If you are not strictly dairy-free, then a sprinkle of 75g goat cheese would be nice here, or use your favorite dairy-free cheese. Bake in the oven for about 30 minutes until the pastry is golden brown. Serve warm or cold sprinkled with chopped coriander leaves and pomegranate seeds if you wish.

The people
who give you
their food give
you their heart.

- CESAR CHAVEZ

SERVES: 4

Lentil Keema Pie

🕒 PREP TIME: 40 MIN 🕒 COOK TIME: 35 MIN

A twist on Shepherd's pie and Indian Keema. A traditional Shepherd's pie is mainly made from minced meat and mashed potato, with some green peas. In the recipe, the potato topping has been replaced with a combination of cauliflower and sweet potato, while the filling includes mushrooms and peas with lentils as your protein.

I like to add a type of seaweed called Kombu when cooking legumes as it helps reduce the gas-properties of the beans. Remove the kombu once you are done cooking the lentils.



Ingredients:

LENTILS:

- ¾ cup (155g) brown lentils
- 3 cups (700ml) vegetable stock
- 1 stick Kombo (optional)

POTATO TOPPING:

- 1 cup (150g) white or orange sweet potato, peeled and chopped
- 3 cups (300g) cauliflower, roughly chopped into florets
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1 tablespoon mustard oil or 1 teaspoon mustard powder
- ½ teaspoon salt

PIE FILLING:

- 1 tablespoon coconut oil
- 1 small brown or yellow onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon ginger, grated
- 1 cup vegetable stock (or water)
- 1 cup (100g) sliced mushroom, chopped small
- 1 cup (130g) frozen peas
- 2 ⅓ cups (300g) cooked brown lentils from above
- 1 teaspoon garam masala
- ½ teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon chili flakes
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons coriander leaves, chopped

Directions:

1. Start by cooking the lentils. In a medium saucepan, add the lentils with 3 cups of vegetable stock, and kombu if using. Bring the water to the boil, then lower to a gentle simmer and let cook for 20 minutes. The lentils will be cooked through, but still firm. Remove the kombu stick and strain the lentils and save the cooking water for later. Set aside while you make the topping and prepare the rest of the ingredients.
2. To make the topping, add the sweet potato to a steamer basket and start steaming. After 10 minutes, add the cauliflower and garlic cloves. After about 20 minutes, both the sweet potato and cauliflower should be cooked through and soft. Set aside to cool down slightly. Then place the sweet potato, cauliflower, and garlic into a food processor with the mustard oil and salt. Blend until smooth. Set aside while you make the filling.
3. While the lentils and topping are cooking, prepare all your vegetables. Preheat the oven to 400°F or 190°C.
4. Prepare a medium sized ceramic or pyrex baking dish.

To make the filling, add the oil to a large saucepan over a medium heat. Once the oil is hot, add the onions and sauté for about 5 minutes until translucent. Then add the garlic & ginger and sauté for about 30 seconds until fragrant. Now add the spices followed by the tomato paste & cook for 30 seconds. Add the lentil cooking water (about ¾ cup or 180ml) with the mushrooms and peas. Cook uncovered over medium-low heat for about 8 minutes, stirring occasionally. Then add the lentils and continue to cook uncovered over medium-low heat for a few minutes just until most of the liquid has evaporated. Taste and add more salt & pepper if needed.
5. Transfer the filling to your dish and pat it down well with the back of a spoon. Spoon the topping all over, spreading it evenly, and then decorate with a fork if you wish.
6. Bake for 30-40 minutes until the topping starts to brown. Let cool for about 5-10 minutes before serving, sprinkling the chopped coriander on top.

SERVES: 4

Chickpea Tagine

🕒 PREP TIME: 10 MIN 🕒 COOK TIME: 30 MIN

When testing recipes, you can get to a point where you can't look at that dish anymore. With this recipe I was finding excuses to keep testing it again and again. So delicious with rice, quinoa, cooked millet or chickpea couscous - if you can get hold of it. I would even add some gluten-free pasta! Leftovers would be delicious for suhoor with some gluten-free bread or even a fried egg on top.



Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 shallots or medium red onions, chopped
- ½ cup (80g) dried apricots, finely chopped
- 6 garlic cloves, chopped
- ½ - 1 teaspoon salt
- ¾ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- ½ teaspoon turmeric
- 1 teaspoon harrisa paste or ½ teaspoon harrisa spice mix (or chilli flakes)
- ¼ teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 4 medium tomatoes (260g), cored and diced (1½ cups)
- 1½ cups (370ml) vegetable stock
- 2-3 cups spinach, kale or chard (about 50-100g), roughly chopped (optional)
- 1 cup (210g) cooked chickpeas, drained and rinsed if canned

Directions:

1. Heat up a medium saucepan over medium heat and add the oil. Once the oil is hot, add the shallots or red onion and cook for about 2 minutes until softened.
2. Add the apricots, garlic, ½ teaspoon of salt and the rest of the spices and tomato paste, and stir for about 2 minutes.
3. Add the fresh tomatoes and stock, increase the heat to high and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat to low, and let simmer, stirring occasionally, for about 20 minutes. You want the sauce to be thick and most of the water evaporated, but not dry or sticky. If you'd like to include some greens, add it towards the end and stir until wilted.
4. Add the chickpeas and stir just to warm through. Taste to see if more salt or black pepper are needed. Serve straight away with gluten-free bread or cooked grains.





SERVES: 4

Crispy Aubergine Rice

🕒 PREP TIME: 10 MIN 🕒 COOK TIME: 60 MIN

Serve this rice with the Chickpea Tagine, or turn it into a main dish by adding in your favorite cooked beans or lentils, chopped herbs, or toasted nuts. If you have leftover roasted cubed pumpkin, mix it in towards the end and serve with some pomegranate seeds sprinkled on top for a pop of color.

The ingredients for the dish are pretty simple, but for the crispy rice, you will need to use a large skillet or frying pan with a tight fitting lid. To enhance crispiness, the lid is wrapped tightly with a clean kitchen towel by knotting the cloth together at the top where the lid handle would be. This cloth, also used in Persian cooking, is called a damkoni. So, if you have one already (lucky you!) make sure to use it.



Ingredients:

- 1 cup (200g) brown jasmine or short-grain brown rice or 4 cups (500g) cooked
- ¼ cup coconut oil
- 1 mild red chili pepper, minced
- 1 shallot or medium red onion, thinly sliced
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 medium eggplant (about 300g), cubed
- ½ cup cilantro, roughly chopped
- ¼ cup sliced almonds, toasted
- Salt and black pepper

Directions:

1. Start by cooking your brown rice. In a medium saucepan, add the rice with 2 ½ cups of water and a large pinch of salt. Bring to a boil and then let simmer until all the water has evaporated, about 30 minutes. Then cover and reduce the heat to the lowest setting, and continue to cook for another 15 minutes. Turn off the heat, and keep the lid on for a further 15 minutes, then remove the lid and fluff with a fork. You can make the brown rice a day ahead if you wish and just store in the fridge until it's time to make the crispy rice.
2. To make the sticky rice, use a medium to large skillet or frying pan that has a tight fitting lid. Wrap the lid very tightly with a clean kitchen towel (see intro). Set the lid aside for now.
3. In your skillet or frying pan, heat 2 tablespoons of the coconut oil over medium-high. Sauté the chili and shallots or onions until softened, about 3 minutes. Add in the garlic and cook for 1 minute. Add the cubed eggplant and sauté for about 8-10 minutes until softened and browned. Season with salt and black pepper. Meanwhile, have your cooked rice ready in a large bowl. Once the eggplant is cooked, add the eggplant mixture to the rice and mix through.
4. Place the skillet back over medium-high heat (no need to wash it) and add the remaining oil. Once hot, add the rice mixture and use a spatula to press it into one layer. Cover the skillet with the towel-wrapped lid and cook for about 7 minutes, until the rice is golden and crispy. Using a flat spatula, flip the sections of rice in order to crisp the other side. Cover again with a lid for another 5 minutes. Remove the skillet from the heat, keep covered and let it sit for 10 minutes. Transfer the crispy rice to a serving dish and sprinkle with the cilantro and almonds.

People who love
to eat are always
the best people.

- JULIA CHILD

SERVES: 4

Spinach & Millet Stuffed Butternut Squash

🕒 PREP TIME: 60 MIN 🕒 COOK TIME: 25 MIN

This recipe is basically a deconstructed pumpkin and spinach kibbeh, with gluten-free millet replacing the traditional bulgar.

Although the recipe does require a few steps, they can all be made in advance and assembled close to Iftar time, and warmed in the oven. It's delicious served as is, however a side of cashew yogurt and a drizzle of pomegranate molasses would make it extra special.



Ingredients:

FOR THE SQUASH:

- 1 medium butternut squash (about 1.2kg)
- Olive oil
- Salt & freshly ground black pepper

SPINACH & MILLET FILLING:

- ½ cup (100g) uncooked millet, rinsed and drained
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large onion (about 250g), thinly sliced
- 2 bunches (250g) fresh spinach or chard, de-stemmed and chopped
- 1 tablespoon pomegranate molasses
- 1 teaspoon 7-spice powder
- 1 teaspoon ground sumac
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ -1 teaspoon chilli flakes (aleppo if you have it)
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ½ cup (135g) cooked chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 2 tablespoons nutritional yeast (optional)
- 2 tablespoon chopped parsley or coriander leaves

Directions:

1. Start by roasting the squash. Preheat the oven to 375°F or 190°C. Use a large, sharp chef's knife to slice the squash in half, lengthwise, leaving the seeds in for now. Rub a drizzle of olive oil on the cut side of the squash, then place both halves cut side down on a baking sheet. Roast in the oven until the long part is tender when pierced with a knife, about 45 minutes. Scrape the seeds and strings from the squash and discard. Next, carefully scrape out some of the squash flesh, leaving a 1.5 cm border all around. Reserve the scraped squash meat, you should have about 1 cup or 300g. Lightly salt and pepper the squash halves, and set aside.
2. Meanwhile cook the millet. In a small, lidded saucepan, combine the rinsed millet, 1 cup water, and ¼ teaspoon salt. Set over a medium heat and bring to a simmer, then reduce the heat to very low, cover the pot, and let the millet steam until tender and all the water has been absorbed, about 15-20 minutes. When the millet is cooked, remove from the heat and let it stand, still covered, for 10 minutes. Now fluff with a fork. You should have 2 cups of cooked millet to use in the recipe.
3. While the millet is cooking, prepare the spinach filling. In a large saucepan, heat the oil and once hot, add the onion and cook over medium heat for about 8 minutes until softened. Add the spinach or chard, molasses and spices and stir until most of the leaves are wilted. Add the chickpeas and stir through.
4. About 45 minutes before you would like to serve the stuffed squash, preheat the oven to 375°F or 190°C. Place the two squash halves cut side up on a baking sheet. Mix the reserved squash meat with the millet and nutritional yeast if using. Mix half of the millet mixture with the spinach filling, then divide the filling evenly between the two squash halves. Top with the remaining millet mixture spreading it out evenly to almost cover the spinach filling.
5. Place the baking sheet in the oven on the centre rack for about 20-25 minutes until the filling is warmed through and the topping is slightly browned. Sprinkle the stuffed squash with your choice of herbs and serve by slicing each half into two or three pieces. You can either eat it the whole thing or just use a spoon to scoop up the delicious stuffing.

SERVES: 4 AS A MAIN, 8 AS A SIDE

Zucchini Fritters with Cashew Yoghurt



PREP TIME: 45 MIN



COOK TIME: 20 MIN

These fritters are delicious on their own, with your favorite hot sauce, or with this cashew yogurt recipe and a drizzle of tamarind sauce.

Yogurt with cucumbers, mint and dill is a Middle Eastern classic that accompanies many dishes. For a dairy-free alternative, we have replaced the yogurt with soaked raw cashews. Serve this with the Zucchini & Chard Fritters, the Leek & Artichoke Galette or the Spinach & Millet Stuffed Butternut Squash. A lovely variation is roasted cubed beetroot instead of the cucumber - resulting in a beautiful pink color.



Ingredients:

- 2 cups (375g) grated courgette/ zucchini
- 2 cups (150g) swiss chard (or other greens, e.g. spinach), chopped
- ½ cup (8g) mint leaves, chopped
- 3-4 eggs (depending on size)
- ¾ cup (90g) ground almonds
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon nutritional yeast (optional)
- ¼ cup (50g) chia seeds
- ¼ -½ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Directions:

1. Remove excess moisture from grated courgettes by salting & drying with paper towels.
2. Place courgettes, swiss chard, mint, eggs, almond meal, chia seeds, salt & pepper in a large bowl and mix. Leave for 20 minutes to allow chia seeds to absorb moisture.
3. Heat a large frying pan over medium heat. Add 1 tablespoon of oil and once hot, measure about ¼ cup portions of batter and pour carefully into the hot pan, pressing down to form a fritter of about 1 cm thick. Cook for about 4-5 minutes, until nicely golden on bottom, then flip & cook on the other side until golden, another 3-4 minutes. Remove from pan and keep warm while cooking the remaining fritters, adding the second tablespoon of oil.

For the Cashew Yoghurt

- 2 cups (375g) grated courgette/ zucchini
- 1 cup raw cashews, soaked for 3 hours
- ½ cup water
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 2 small cucumbers, roughly chopped
- 2 tablespoons onion, grated
- 3 tablespoons fresh mint, chopped
- 3 tablespoons fresh dill, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- ½ teaspoon salt or to taste
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper

For the Cashew Yoghurt:

1. Add the drained cashews with the water, lemon juice and vinegar and blend until smooth. Transfer to a bowl and add the remaining ingredients. Mix well. Taste for seasoning adding more salt, pepper or lemon juice. Cover and keep refrigerated for up to 3 days.

SERVES: 2-3

Cauliflower Rice Three Ways

🕒 PREP TIME: 10 MIN

🕒 COOK TIME: 10 MIN

High in fibre and water, cauliflower is an amazing food to include during Ramadan. It's also an amazing grain-free option to add to salads or serve with your favorite curry. You will also be increasing your intake of lower carb vegetables without even realizing it. Below you have the basic method for preparing cauliflower rice to enjoy with any recipe. And two variations that work great as a side dish or can be turned into a meal by adding some cooked beans or lentils.

TO MAKE CAULIFLOWER RICE

Place washed and dried cauliflower florets in a food processor with the S-blade. If you are using a whole head of cauliflower, then just add half. Pulse several times until the cauliflower is the size of rice or slightly bigger. Just don't let it turn into a powder. Transfer to a bowl and continue with the remaining cauliflower. Use in one of the recipes below.



Ingredients:

BASIC:

- 1 tablespoons avocado or olive oil
- 2 cups (200g) riced cauliflower
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper
- (Optional add in: fresh chopped herbs)

SPANISH:

- 1 tablespoons avocado or olive oil
- ½ medium yellow or white onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 cups (200g) riced cauliflower
- 1 cup (130g) frozen green peas, thawed
- (Optional add in: fresh chopped herbs, pitted green olives)

COCONUT-CORIANDER:

- 1 cup (200g) lightly packed fresh coriander leaves and tender stems, roughly chopped
- 1 green onion, roughly chopped
- 1 mild green chilli, stemmed, seeded and quartered
- 2 tablespoons coconut oil, divided
- 2 tablespoons coconut milk/water
- 2 tablespoons water
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 cups (200g) riced cauliflower
- ½ cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- (Optional garnish: lime wedges, toasted coconut flakes)

Directions:

BASIC:

1. In a medium saucepan or frying pan, warm the oil over medium heat. Add the cauliflower with salt and pepper, and sauté for 3-5 minutes until softened to your liking. You can also add tablespoon of vegetable stock for more flavor during the cooking process. Serve straight away sprinkled with some fresh herbs of your choosing.

SPANISH:

1. In a medium saucepan or frying pan, warm the oil over medium heat. Add the onion and sauté for about 5 minutes until soft. Add the tomato paste and spices, and sauté for a couple minutes. Add in the cauliflower and green peas and sauté for 3-5 minutes until softened to your liking. Serve straight away with some fresh herbs and/or sliced green olives.

COCONUT-CORIANDER:

1. Make the green sauce first by placing the coriander, chilli, salt, 1 tablespoon of coconut oil, the coconut milk, water and salt in a blender or small food processor. Blend until almost smooth. Set aside.
2. In a medium saucepan or frying pan, warm the remaining oil over medium heat. Add the cauliflower and tomatoes (if using), and sauté for about 3 mins. Now add the green sauce mix until warmed through. Serve straight away sprinkled with some toasted coconut flakes and a squeeze of lime.

SECTION 04

Snacks & Suhoor

SERVES: 4 AS A MAIN, 8 AS A SIDE

Caramelized Onion and Green Beans

🕒 PREP TIME: 10 MIN 🕒 COOK TIME: 30 MIN

See this recipe as a base for numerous creations. We chose to add some green beans as they are delicious and easily available if you use frozen, and flavored the dish simply with garlic and turmeric to give you a boost to your immunity. You can have the dish as is with some gluten-free bread or cooked grains. Or you can add some protein by scrambling in some eggs, or even crumbled firm tofu if you don't eat eggs. You can also add cherry tomatoes instead of the green beans, or leafy greens such as kale or spinach.



Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons avocado or olive oil
- 2 medium white or brown onions, sliced
- 250g green beans, cut into 2.5cm lengths
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- ½ - 1 teaspoon ground turmeric
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper

Directions:

1. Heat the oil in a large frying pan over medium heat, add the onions and then leave it without stirring for a few minutes until the bottom starts to turn golden. Stir the onions around and again leave it for a few minutes until the bottom turns golden. At this point, lower the heat and stir the onions frequently until they are brown, soft and caramelized, between 20-30 minutes depending on how much caramelization you prefer.
2. While the onions are cooking, boil water in a medium saucepan and add the green beans. Cook for about 8 minutes. Drain the beans and add them to a bowl of ice water to stop them from cooking further.
3. Once the onions are almost done, add the garlic and sauté for a couple of minutes, then add the beans and spices and stir together. Taste and add more seasoning if you like. If you are using eggs or tofu, add them after the beans and stir until cooked through. Serve warm.
4. Leftovers can be stored in an airtight container in the fridge for 3 days.

Eat food.
Not too much.
Mostly plants.

- MICHAEL POLLAN

SERVES: 4

Hummus Three Ways

🕒 PREP TIME: 5 - 50MIN

Three variations of hummus to add more vegetables and color into your life. Enjoy with the crackers, flatbread or dosa in the baking section or your favorite gluten-free bread.



Ingredients:

GREEN HUMMUS:

- 1 cup (50g) packed spinach
- 5 tablespoons lemon juice
- 3 tablespoons tahini
- 3 tablespoons chickpea brine
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1½ cups (300g) cooked chickpeas (if canned, drain and rinse)
- 1-2 garlic cloves
- ½ teaspoon salt or to taste

SMOKED RED PEPPER HUMMUS:

- 1 heaped cup (200g) cooked chickpeas (if canned, drain and rinse)
- Scant ½ cup (100g) roasted red pepper*
- 3-4 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons tahini
- 3 tablespoons chickpea brine
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 garlic clove
- ½ - 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon salt or to taste

* They are usually available ready roasted in jars at the supermarket. You can also use red pepper paste.

Directions:

GREEN HUMMUS:

1. Add the spinach, lemon juice, tahini, chickpea brine and olive oil to a blender. Blend until smooth.
2. Add the remaining ingredients and blend until you have your hummus. 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.

SMOKED RED PEPPER HUMMUS

1. Add the chickpeas, red peppers, lemon juice, tahini, chickpea brine and olive oil to a blender. Blend until smooth.
2. Add the remaining ingredients to the blender and blend until you have your hummus. Test to see if you would like to add more paprika, salt or lemon juice.
3. Transfer to a container and store in the fridge until ready to serve.



Ingredients:

BEETROOT HUMMUS

- 3 medium beets (400g raw or 300g cooked)
- ¼ cup (45g) raw cashews, soaked for 3 hours
- ½ cup (110g) cooked chickpeas
- 3 tablespoons chickpea brine
- 2 ½ tablespoons tahini
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 garlic clove, chopped
- ¾ - 1 teaspoon sea salt
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 tablespoons fresh mint, finely chopped

Directions:

1. If you are not starting out with cooked beets, we need to roast them. Roasting is best for flavor and color. Wash your beets and then individually wrap in foil (if small, you can wrap more than one together) and place on a baking sheet in a preheated 400°F/190°C oven for 40-50 minutes until the beets can easily be pierced with a fork. The time will depend on the size of the beets. Once cool enough to handle, use some kitchen paper towels to rub off the skin. Store in the fridge in an air-tight container for up to 5 days.
2. Roughly chop the roasted beets and add them to a blender or food processor with the rest of the ingredients except for the mint. Blend until smooth. Taste and adjust to your taste adding more salt, cumin or lemon juice etc.
3. Stir through the fresh mint or just sprinkle on top with some toasted sesame seeds to serve.



Smoothies Your Way

Wouldn't it be wonderful to, when you hear the term "fast food", the first thing that comes to mind is a smoothie instead of a burger and fries? If you have all your ingredients ready, smoothies are truly the healthiest quick meal you can have.

Rather than giving you a recipe, I thought a template of how to build a smoothie would be best, using what is available to you, what's in season, and what you enjoy the most.

During Ramadan, smoothies are delicious as a snack or for suhoor. It's also amazing at curbing any sweet cravings if you're avoiding sugar or don't have the time to make a healthy dessert.

To create a balanced meal in the form of a smoothie, it's important to include greens, a good source of healthy fat, and protein with the fruit or sweet vegetables you will be adding.

You may also like to add extra superfoods to give a boost to the nutrient content of your smoothie. For example, during Ramadan, adding chia seeds is a great way to stay hydrated for longer as they absorb 10 times their weight in water - by absorbing the water we drink, it helps hold it in our system for longer.

Use the table below to build your smoothie, aiming with time to reduce the amount of fruit. If you add less liquid, you can make a smoothie bowl and enjoy it with a spoon, which is my favorite way to have smoothies. Keep in mind though that if your blender isn't that powerful, you may need to add more liquid and chop your fruit and vegetables into small chunks.

Smoothie Formula

COMPONENT	LIQUID	GREENS	FRUIT/ SWEET VEG	PROTEIN	FAT	EXTRAS
AMOUNT	1-2 cups	1-2 cups	1 ½ cups	1-2 teaspoons	1-2 teaspoons	To taste
EXAMPLES	Water Nut/Seed Milk Coconut Water 100% Veg Juice Cold Tea Ice	Kale Collards Parsley Spinach Zucchini Lettuce Celery	Apples Bananas Mangoes Pineapple Kiwi Berries Lemon Carrots Sweet Potato Pears	Protein Powder Chia Seeds Sesame Seeds Hemp Seeds Pumpkin Seeds Nuts/Seeds Butters Collagen Powder	Avocado Coconut Oil Flax Oil Nuts/Seeds MCT Oil	Cacao Goji Berries Ginger Dates Maca Lucuma Chlorella Spirulina



SERVES: 1

Golden Milk Chia Pudding

 PREP TIME: 5 MIN COOK TIME: 30 MIN

Speaking from personal experience, having chia pudding for suhoor makes a difference to my energy levels the next day. Thanks to the healthy fats, high fibre and protein content, your blood sugar stays stable, resulting in sustained energy. And since it can absorb 10 times its weight in water, it expands in your stomach, increasing your fullness level.

There are so many ways to enjoy chia pudding, however, a combination of turmeric and ginger is a boost to your immunity that we all need in these times of a worldwide pandemic.



Ingredients:

- 1 cup (240ml) canned coconut milk
- 2 cm piece fresh turmeric, sliced thinly
- 2 cm piece fresh ginger, sliced thinly
- 1 cinnamon stick
- Pinch black pepper
- 1 tablespoon honey or to taste
- 1 teaspoon vanilla (optional)
- ¼ cup (40g) chia seeds

Directions:

1. Start by making your golden milk. In a small saucepan, combine the milk, turmeric, ginger and cinnamon stick. Bring to a gentle boil, then lower to a simmer for about 20 minutes. Turn off the heat and leave the milk to cool completely so that the flavors infuse into the milk even further.
2. Strain the milk into a bowl or jar, and whisk in the black pepper, honey and vanilla. Now add the chia seeds and stir well.
3. Leave to sit for 10 minutes, then whisk again (to avoid chia seeds settling at bottom).
4. Cover the bowl & refrigerate for a few hours or overnight.
5. Enjoy topped with fruits, coconut flakes, nuts, seeds or granola.

We tested the recipe using powders, which is definitely easier and faster. However, infusing the milk in turmeric, ginger and cinnamon tastes much better, and you can make extra golden milk to enjoy on it's own or added to your tea or even coffee.

If you would like to use powders then add 1 teaspoon each of turmeric, ginger and cinnamon powder, keeping the rest of the ingredients as is.



SERVES: 2

Apple Pie Oatmeal

🕒 PREP TIME: 5 MIN

🕒 COOK TIME: 10 MIN

If you have been avoiding refined sugar, sweet oatmeal can sometimes taste like dessert. And this recipe is no exception - especially if you enjoy eating apple pie. Grated pear can certainly be substituted for apple if you prefer. And if you are only making this for yourself, store half in the fridge in an air-tight container and warm up in a saucepan on low heat with a little bit of milk to get it to the consistency you prefer.

It's best to use rolled oats and not quick-cooking to give enough time for the apple to soften and flavors of the cinnamon and cardamom to infuse into the oatmeal.



Ingredients:

- 1 cup (90g) rolled oats
- 2 cups (475ml) non-dairy milk (almond, cashew or light coconut)
- 1 apple (or pear), peeled and grated
- Optional Add-ins: 1 teaspoon each psyllium, flax or other milled seeds, collagen powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground cardamom
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup or honey (optional)
- Toppings: chopped nuts, nut butter, tahini, granola, toasted coconut

Directions:

1. In a medium saucepan, combine the oats, milk, grated apple, add-ins if using, spices & salt. Heat over medium-low heat, cover and let gently simmer for about 10 minutes, stirring from time to time, until the oats are creamy and done. Add more milk if the pan is getting dry.
2. Remove from the heat, transfer to bowls, adding sweetener and toppings of choice.
3. Cooled leftovers can be stored in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 3 days and warmed gently over low heat with a little more milk.

If you do not eat well, then you won't be able to think well, love well, and sleep well.

SERVES: 2

Savory Miso Oatmeal

🕒 PREP TIME: 10 MIN

🕒 COOK TIME: 10 MIN

Savory oatmeal never appealed to me, until I had to test this recipe for the ebook by Dina. I was very surprised at how much I enjoyed it! Seriously, if you have been hesitant like me, don't delay and thank me (and Dina!) later.

Miso plays an important role in adding an umami flavor to the dish. However, if you can't get hold of it, then a teaspoon of tamari (gluten-free soy sauce) should do the trick. If you do have miso, don't add salt until the end as both the miso and vegetable stock will be adding saltiness to the dish. You can make the oatmeal with all coconut milk or all stock, but I like a mix of both.



Ingredients:

- 1 cup (90g) rolled oats
- 1 cup (240ml) coconut milk
- 1 cup (240ml) vegetable stock
- 1-2 tablespoons Shiro (white) miso
- 2 tablespoons avocado or coconut oil
- 2-3 shallots, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup (120g) mushrooms, sliced
- Topping suggestions - use some or all:
 - 4 eggs, fried, boiled or poached
 - 1 avocado, sliced
 - ¼ cup (40g) kimchi
 - 1 teaspoon black sesame seeds
 - Hot sauce (I used Sriracha)

Directions:

1. Place oats in a saucepan, add coconut milk and vegetable stock & bring to a boil.
2. Reduce the heat, cover slightly & simmer for 10-15 minutes until oats are cooked through & 'porridgy'.
3. In the meantime, prepare your toppings of choice. Heat the oil, then add the shallots & saute for a few minutes until soft and slightly browned. Add the garlic, sauté for 1 minute then add the sliced mushrooms and cook for a few minutes until soft and starting to brown.
4. Boil, fry or poach your eggs. Slice the avocado.
5. Once the oats are cooked, turn off the heat and gradually stir in the miso paste until it has dissolved. Taste & season with salt if required.
6. Top with eggs, mushrooms, avocado, kimchi, black sesame seeds & hot sauce



SECTION 05

Baking

SERVES: 8-10 FLATBREADS OR WRAPS

Pumpkin Flatbread

🕒 PREP TIME: 25 MIN

🕒 COOK TIME: 20 MIN

This flatbread is lovely with eggs and can also be enjoyed with any of your favorite dips. I usually have them warmed and still soft with eggs, and then make crispy pita style chips if I'm having them with hummus. To make chips, simply cut them into triangles and spray or brush with a little oil. Then place in a hot oven or an air-fryer until the desired crispiness is achieved.

I usually make this on the same day I make the Spinach Pumpkin Cobbler as I'm already roasting some pumpkin.



Ingredients:

- 1 cup (140g) oat flour
- 1 cup (140g) millet flour
- ½ cup (60g) arrowroot starch
- ¾ teaspoon ground psyllium
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon turmeric (optional)
- 3 tablespoons (45ml) olive oil
or melted coconut oil
- ⅔ cup (180ml) warm water
- ½ cup (120g) cooked and mashed
pumpkin (or sweet potato)

Directions:

1. In a medium bowl, mix together the flours, arrowroot, psyllium, salt and turmeric (if using).
2. In a blender (or in a bowl using a fork and some muscle), blend the oil, warm water and mashed pumpkin until smooth. Pour the wet mixture over the dry and mix until you get a ball of dough. Don't worry if it seems dry, just be patient and the flour will absorb all the liquid. Only add in more water if the dough is too crumbly.
3. Keeping the ball of dough inside your bowl, cover with a clean kitchen towel and let it rest for 15 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, prepare 2 large sheets of parchment paper, about 25cm X 25cm, 2 smaller squares of about 20cm X 20cm, and a rolling pin.
5. Once the dough has rested, divide it into 8 equal portions, about 90g each.
6. Heat a large cast-iron skillet, crepe pan or tawa to medium heat. Keeping the remaining portions covered with the towel, roll out the dough between the 2 larger pieces of parchment, to about 22cm in diameter. If you are like me and want 'perfect circles', then use a plate of the similar size to cut and remove the extra dough, and save it to make an extra portion at the end.
7. Transfer the rolled out dough to the smaller parchment and use it to flip the dough onto the heated pan, parchment on top. Let the flatbread cook for about 1-2 minutes until starting to brown, and then peel away the parchment and flip to finish off the other side, also for around 1-2 minutes. Repeat with the remaining dough.
8. Serve warm. Store leftovers in an airtight container in the fridge for 5 days and warm briefly before serving. See intro if you would like to make tortilla chips/crispy bread.

You can't just eat good food. You've got to talk about it too. And you've got to talk about it to somebody who understands that kind of food.



SERVES: 18-20

Lentil Quinoa Dosa

 PREP TIME: 10 MIN COOK TIME: 20 MIN

If dosa is new to you, let me introduce you to a life-changing gluten-free alternative to flatbread that has been around for centuries (or even longer) in India.

Dosa is traditionally made by soaking white rice with lentils, then blending, then fermenting, then baking. Simple ingredients, simple process. It's spread out thinly like a crepe and then baked in a large frying pan or tawa until golden brown before flipping. You technically don't need to flip it, especially if you plan on filling it like they would in India. But it's so good on it's own or dipped into something delicious (how about trying it with one of the hummus recipes?).

To increase the nutrient and protein content, I have replaced some of the white rice with quinoa. But you can certainly make it with all white rice. Most recipes call for short-grain white rice, which is what I have used, but long-grain basmati rice works too. Brown rice may also work, but I honestly haven't tried. As for the lentils, most varieties would work, however, it's best to use split lentils. And keep in mind the color of the dosa will differ depending on the lentils you use.



Ingredients:

- 2 cups (380g) white rice (not cooked)
- 1 cup (170g) white quinoa (not cooked)
- 1 cup (170g) lentils (without skin)
- 1-2 teaspoons sea salt



Directions:

1. Wash the rice, quinoa and lentils and place it in a large bowl. Pour over enough water to cover the ingredients by about 1 inch. Cover and set aside for 6-8 hours.
2. Drain the ingredients and then add to a blender with just enough water to help it blend. I used about 1 ½ cups. You want it to be the consistency of thick pancake batter. Transfer to a clean glass bowl or large jug, cover, and leave it for 10-12 hours to ferment. If your kitchen is cold, place it in the oven with the pilot light on. You will know that your batter has fermented when it has doubled in size, the top has bubbles and is somewhat frothy. At this point you can refrigerate the batter for up to 3 days.
3. When you are ready to make the dosa, add salt and stir well. Now warm up a large, flat frying pan, crepe pan or tawa on medium heat, add a little oil (if non-stick you may not need to add any oil) followed by a splash of water, and then wipe clean. Spread a ladle full of the batter all over to make a thin crepe, and wait until it browns on the bottom before flipping to finish off the other side. If your dosa is very thin, you may not need to flip it.
4. Repeat the process with the remaining batter. Enjoy plain or with a dip. Store extra dosa in an airtight container in the fridge and warm up to make it crispy again.

MAKES 1 TRAY OF CRACKERS

Sun-dried Tomato Crackers

🕒 PREP TIME: 10 MIN + 2 HR REST 🕒 BAKE TIME: 30 MIN

I always have seed crackers like these available in my kitchen. They are perfect for breakfast with a dip or on their own as a snack with a cup tea. In Ramadan, enjoy them for your suhoor with one of the hummus recipe options.



Ingredients:

- 1 cup (110g) rolled oats
- ¼ cup (45g) flaxseeds
- ½ cup (75g) sunflower seeds
- ⅓ cup (50g) pine nuts or slivered almonds
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon onion powder
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 tablespoons psyllium husk or 1½ tablespoons psyllium powder
- 1 tablespoon chia seeds
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ⅔ cup (180ml) water
- ½ tablespoon date molasses
- 1½ tablespoons olive oil (or oil from sun-dried tomato jar)
- ½ cup packed sun-dried tomatoes (100g), chopped

Directions:

1. In a large bowl, combine the oats, seeds, pine nuts, oregano, onion & garlic powder, psyllium, chia seeds and salt. Mix just to combine. Add the water, molasses and olive oil and again mix just to combine and moisten the ingredients. Add the sun-dried tomatoes until mixed through.
2. Transfer the mixture to a large sheet of parchment paper or silicone mat. You will need to spread out the mixture to approximately 30cm x 50cm so try and use parchment or a silicone mat 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 using a sharp knife to make the shapes you like.
3. Cover the crackers with pieces of parchment paper, and now you wait for at least 2 hours or overnight before baking.
4. Preheat the oven to 350°F or 170°C. Slide the crackers still on the parchment paper onto the baking sheet. Bake for 20 minutes, remove from the oven and flip the crackers upside down onto the same sheet (be careful and protect your hands). Peel off the parchment. Bake in the oven until crispy and golden, for another 20-30 minutes.
5. Let them cool and break up into your shapes. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 weeks.

SERVES: 4

Gluten-free Pastry Dough

🕒 PREP TIME: 30 MIN 🕒 COOK TIME: 30 MIN

This pastry dough can be used in so many sweet or savory recipes. Use it to make the Leek & Artichoke Galette, or use it with the Mushroom Musakhan or the Chickpea Tagine. If you like, add a teaspoon of chopped fresh herbs such as rosemary or thyme to the flour when making the dough.

A FEW NOTES ABOUT THE INGREDIENTS

If you are not following a strict dairy-free diet then cold butter chopped into 1 inch cubes can be a replacement for the coconut oil.

I haven't tested the recipe with an alternative flour. But I would expect oat flour can replace either the buckwheat or the millet. I would avoid using all oat flour though. As for the arrowroot, cornstarch can be a good alternative. Adding the ground chia seeds helps the dough be more flexible. So the dough might break while rolling if the chia seeds are not used.



Ingredients:

- ½ cup + 1 tablespoon (150g) cold coconut oil
- 1 cup (150g) millet flour
- ¾ cup (130g) buckwheat flour
- ½ cup (60g) arrowroot starch
- 1 tablespoon ground chia seeds
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- ½ -¾ cup (120-180ml) ice cold water
- 1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar
- 1 egg (optional)

Directions:

1. Make sure your coconut oil is frozen in chunks. I measure out the coconut oil at room temperature (which is usually liquid in Kuwait) and then fill up small silicone ice cube trays or cupcake molds with the oil and freeze it for about 30 minutes while I gather the rest of the ingredients.
2. In a food processor, combine the flours, the arrowroot, ground chia seeds and salt. Pulse a few times to combine. Then add the frozen chunks of coconut oil (they need to be relatively small chunks, about the size of small marbles) and pulse to break up into the flour, with the largest pieces being no bigger than the size of green peas. Now add a ½ cup/120ml of cold water with the vinegar and pulse until the dough sticks together when pinched, adding the rest of the water if needed.
3. Transfer the dough to a clean work surface and carefully shape it into a disc and wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for about 30 minutes. You can refrigerate it for longer but leave it out at room temperature before moving on to the next step.
4. Preheat the oven to 400°F or 200°C.
5. Take out the dough and place it between two large sheets of parchment paper. If you would like to make smaller portions, then divide it into 4-6 equal pieces. Keep each piece of dough covered while you roll out the rest. Roll out the dough to about ⅛ inch or a little less than 0.5 cm, you can tidy up the circumference into a neat circle using a knife or keeping it as is, it won't matter once you add the filling. Add the filling to the centre keeping about 2 cm from the border and fold the edges to the centre. I like to use the parchment paper to help with this step.
6. Carefully transfer the galette to a baking sheet. If you wish for added color, brush the edges with beaten egg. Bake in the oven for about 30 minutes until the pastry is golden brown. Serve warm or cold.

SERVES: 20

All-purpose Biscuit Dough

🕒 PREP TIME: 40 MIN 🕒 COOK TIME: 12 MIN

If you have the Healthy Eid Desserts ebook, then you might have come across this recipe as it's the base for the New Age Mamoul. It's a very versatile dough that can be used in many different ways. When crumbled, you can use them as base for a dairy-free cheesecake, or you can use them in our No-Bake Brownies recipe. Chopped into large chunks, we use them in the Fig & Chocolate Biscuit Cake in the Eid ebook. Make a batch, store it in the freezer, and use it when and as needed....plain, with chocolate chips or whatever your heart desires!

A FEW POINTERS ON THE INGREDIENTS

When I tested the recipe the first time, I didn't use the psyllium, which gave me a good result, just a tiny bit crumbly compared to the version below that does contain psyllium. So, if you don't have psyllium, you can still make it.

The coconut oil needs to be soft, the consistency of yogurt. This is the consistency during cold months or in an air-conditioned room. So, if your kitchen is warm and your coconut oil is melted, place it in the fridge for about 10-15 minutes to help it reach the proper consistency.



Ingredients:

BISCUIT DOUGH

- 1 ¼ cup (140g) oat flour
- ½ cup (55g) blanched almond flour
- ¼ cup (40g) millet flour (or buckwheat flour)
- 2 tablespoons arrowroot starch
- 1 teaspoon ground psyllium husk or 1 ½ teaspoons whole psyllium husk
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- ⅓ cup (80g) coconut oil, softened (see intro)
- ½ cup + 1 tablespoon (105g) honey
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- ¼ cup (60ml) dairy-free milk

ADD-INS

- Dairy-free chocolate chips, dark chocolate chunks, chopped nuts, dried fruit

Directions:

1. Place the oat flour, almond and millet or buckwheat flour, arrowroot, psyllium, baking powder and salt in a medium bowl. Mix just to combine.
2. In another medium bowl, mix the coconut oil with the honey, vanilla and lemon juice, and just 2 tablespoons of the milk. Add the dry mixture to the wet, and mix until you get a soft but firm dough, adding the remaining milk as needed. You want the dough to come together without crumbling, but not wet. Give the flour time to absorb all the liquid. Cover the bowl and place in the fridge for 30 mins to make it easier to shape. This dough can be kept in the fridge for 3 days. Any additions to the dough can be added after slicing or, at this stage, once the dough has been mixed and before it firms up.
3. Remove the dough from the fridge and place on a sheet of parchment paper. Shape the dough into a log, about 5cm x 26cm, rolling it up in parchment paper to help shape it. Use the same parchment paper to wrap the dough, twisting the ends like a giant candy, and place in the freezer to firm up and make it easier to slice.
4. When you are ready to bake the biscuits, make sure to preheat the oven to 350°F or 160°C. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
5. Slice the log into 1.5cm wide slices, and place on the baking sheet. If you haven't added any fillings, add them now. Bake for about 12-15 minutes until golden brown. Let it cool on a wire rack until cool enough to enjoy warm or cold.
6. Store in an airtight container for 3 days. However, it's best to bake the amount you expect to consume that day and keep the rest in the fridge or freezer.

SECTION 06

Desserts

SERVES: 4-6

Apple Date Crumble

🕒 PREP TIME: 15 MIN

🕒 BAKE TIME: 30 MIN

I promise that you will make this more than once during Ramadan and after. I love how you can make the filling and topping in advance and then assemble and bake in time to serve warm after iftar. And please try your best to make this ice cream to serve with it, it really takes this crumble to the next level.

Unsweetened applesauce is available as baby food in most grocery stores. However, it's very easy to make at home. Peel and slice one large apple. Place it in a small saucepan with a couple of tablespoons of water. Over low heat, let it simmer until the apple slices are soft, about 10 mins. Once cool, place in a small food-processor and blend until smooth. Store in an air-tight container in the fridge for up to 5 days.



Ingredients:

CRUMBLE TOPPING:

- ½ cup (40g) oat flour
- ⅓ cup (35g) almond flour (or more oat flour)
- ⅓ cup (50g) coconut sugar
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ⅓ cup + 1 tablespoon (80ml/80g) coconut oil
- 2 tablespoons (30ml) maple syrup
- ⅔ (80g) cup rolled oats
- ⅔ cup (85g) raw pecans, chopped

FRUIT FILLING:

- 1 cup (200g) pitted dates
- ½ cup (125g) unsweetened apple sauce
- 3 tablespoons coconut oil
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- 3 green apples (500g), cored, peeled and grated

Directions:

1. For the topping, place oat flour, almond flour, sugar, cinnamon, and salt in a food processor and pulse a few times to combine. Add the coconut oil and maple syrup and, again, just pulse to moisten. Add in the oats and pecans and pulse a couple of times to mix through. You will have a crumbly mixture with some chunky pieces. Transfer to a bowl, cover and place in the fridge. The crumble can be made ahead and stored in the fridge for up to 3 days.
2. Preheat the oven to 380°F or 190°C. Lightly grease a medium sized pyrex or ceramic baking dish with a little coconut oil. Set aside.
3. To make the filling, start by soaking the dates in hot water for a few minutes to soften, then drain and puree in a food processor or blender to make a paste. You can also just mash with a fork. Transfer the date paste to a medium saucepan and combine with the apple sauce, coconut oil, cinnamon and salt. Heat the mixture over medium heat and bring to a boil, lower the heat and let it simmer for 5 minutes until you get a thick smooth paste. Meanwhile, grate the apple, and once the date mixture is ready, stir in the apple and set aside to cool slightly.
4. Transfer the filling to the baking dish and crumble the topping on top, making sure to keep some of the pieces chunky.
5. Bake for 25-30 mins until the topping starts to get crispy and the filling is bubbling. If the topping browns too fast, cover it with aluminum foil for the last 10 mins of baking. Let cool slightly before serving with dairy-free ice cream.

SERVES: 26 BITES

Crispy Caramel Bites

🕒 PREP TIME: 10 MIN

🕒 COOK TIME: 30 MIN

These bites are a testament that dairy-free, gluten-free and refined sugar-free desserts can be absolutely delicious. You will be making these during and after Ramadan as anyone that tries them will ask you to make them again (and again!).

The amount of coconut cream called for in the recipe can be obtained from 1 can of full-fat coconut milk. Store the can in the fridge overnight. The cream will separate from the water, and then all you need to do is scoop it out. Don't worry if it's a little less or more, the recipe should still work. I like to use the leftover water in smoothies.

The recipe was tested with both coconut sugar and date sugar. Both taste delicious, but the caramel made using the coconut sugar is more glossy and smooth with a darker color, while the one made with date sugar was lighter in color and a little grainy. However, once you've added the filling ingredients and dipped the bites in dark chocolate, you won't notice the difference. Also the date sugar will be slightly less sweet.

If you can't get brown rice cereal, then the second best option is to use regular rice crispy cereal. The addition of the cacao nibs is optional, but I like the bitter notes it adds, and how it cuts the sweetness of the caramel.

Get creative with how you decorate them...I used ground pistachio, chopped almonds and rose petals. Flaked sea salt is also a good option.



Ingredients:

CARAMEL

- 220g (240ml) coconut cream (see intro)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (120g) coconut sugar or date sugar
- 1-2 teaspoon rose water (optional: use 2 teaspoons for a stronger flavor)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt

CRISPY FILLING

- 1 cup (40g) puffed brown rice cereal
- $\frac{1}{3}$ (35g) slivered almonds, finely chopped
- 1-2 tablespoons cacao nibs (optional)

CHOCOLATE COATING

- About 1 cup (100g) 70% dairy-free dark chocolate, chopped
- Optional garnish - pistachio powder, chopped almonds, rose petals, flaked sea salt

Directions:

1. In a medium saucepan, mix the coconut cream with the sugar. Then over medium to low heat, let the mixture bubble up, stirring frequently (not constantly), for about 20 minutes until you get a thick caramel.
2. Meanwhile, prepare your filling ingredients by measuring and finely chopping the almonds.
3. Once the caramel is ready, remove from the heat and straight away add the salt and rose water (if using). Mix to combine then add the rice cereal, almonds and cacao nibs and mix well. Transfer to a parchment lined baking tray or pyrex dish and set aside to cool slightly, about 20 minutes. Then cover and transfer to the fridge to help the mixture become firm and easier to work with.
4. Once the caramel mixture is firm, roll into balls, about 1 rounded tablespoon each. Place on a parchment lined tray and return to the freezer.
5. While the balls are in the freezer, melt the chopped dark chocolate in a microwave or double boiler. Once the chocolate has melted, take out the balls from the freezer and dip into the melted chocolate, letting any excess chocolate drip back into the bowl before placing the balls back onto the parchment lined tray.
6. Continue with the rest of the balls, sprinkling the pistachios on top before the chocolate completely sets. Return the balls to the fridge to set.
7. Best served at room temperature. Store leftovers in the fridge in an air-tight container for up to 5 days.



SERVES: 10

No-bake Brownies

🕒 PREP TIME: 2 HR

🕒 CHILL TIME: 1 HR

I'm tricking you with the title I know. It's only "no-bake" if you have ready-made gluten-free biscuits, or already have baked some of the biscuits in the all-purpose biscuit dough recipe.

And one more thing, you need to make the coconut condensed milk...which takes about 2 hours!! Oh, and chilling the brownies for another hour. So, let's just say it's best to make these brownies a day in advance. Either way it's soooooo delicious, everyone will love them, and it's all quite simple to put together.

With regards to the condensed milk, I've used honey as a sweetener, however maple syrup, coconut sugar and date sugar will all work also. The color and sweetness level will differ though, so keep that in mind if substituting.



Ingredients:

TO MAKE THE CONDENSED MILK:

- 1 can (400ml) full-fat coconut milk
- ⅓ cup (110g) honey

TO MAKE THE BROWNIES:

- 1 cup (240ml/250g) condensed milk from above
- ⅓ cup (60g) 70% dark chocolate, roughly chopped
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 cups (200g) gluten-free biscuit crumbs
- ¼ cup (25g) raw walnuts, finely chopped (optional)

Directions:

1. To make the condensed milk - Place the coconut milk and honey in a medium saucepan. Bring to a simmer over medium heat. Once the mixture starts to boil, reduce the heat to very low. Let the milk simmer very gently and stir from time to time. After 60-90 minutes the mixture will get thick and darker (the color will depend on your choice of sweetener) and you'll be left with almost half of what you started out with, or about 1 cup. If you're not using it straight away, let it cool, then transfer it to a jar and store in the fridge.
2. If you've just made the condensed milk, remove from the heat and add the chopped chocolate and stir to melt in the heat of the milk. If you have made your condensed milk ahead of time, then warm it up over low heat in a medium saucepan, then add the chocolate and stir until melted and mixed well. Now add the biscuit crumbs and walnuts and stir to make sure everything is coated in the chocolate. Transfer to a parchment lined 20cm x 15cm baking dish or pyrex, spread evenly, then sprinkle chopped walnuts on top if you like.
3. Place the brownies in the freezer for about an hour until firm enough to slice into 8 large, or 16 mini pieces. Store leftovers in the fridge in an airtight container. It's best served slightly cold as it will become soft at room temperature.



SERVES: 10

Energy Stars & Moons

🕒 PREP TIME: 15 MIN

🕒 CHILL TIME: 60 MIN

In Kuwait we celebrate gergean in the middle of Ramadan. Kids dress up in traditional clothing, walk to neighbors homes, knock on the door and sing to get candy and nuts in return. It's lots of fun, but certainly not the healthiest of traditions with the variety of candies available these days and the kids of course ignore the nuts.

I would be really impressed if your kids would go for these healthy bites instead of candy, but it's still a nice way to celebrate, and you can enjoy it yourself. You can shape them into balls and enjoy a couple with your coffee after Iftar. Or cut them into stars and crescent shapes using cookie cutters, then drizzle or dip them in some melted dark chocolate.



Ingredients:

- 1 can (400ml) full-fat coconut milk
- 1 cup (160g) raw almonds
- ½ cup (60g) rolled oats
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground cardamom
- Pinch of salt
- 1 cup (200g) pitted soft dates
- 2 tablespoons tahini
- 2 tablespoons date molasses
- ⅔ cup (100g) chopped 70% dark chocolate (optional)

Directions:

1. Place the almonds, oats, cinnamon and cardamom with the salt in a food processor and pulse until you get small crumbs.
2. Add half the dates and process to combine, then add remaining dates and process again to distribute.
3. Now add the tahini and date molasses and pulse until the mixture is moistened and comes together when pinched.
4. Transfer to a lined 20cm square (or the equivalent) baking pan and press down evenly then place in the fridge for about 30 minutes to firm up.
5. To make the topping, place chocolate in a double-boiler and melt over low heat. Once melted, remove from heat.
6. Remove energy bites from the fridge and cut out star and crescent shapes using a cookie cutter. If you don't have shape cutters then just slice into squares, or you can roll into balls. Carefully dip the bites in melted chocolate. Place the dipped bites on a parchment lined tray. Let bites set in the fridge for about 30 minutes before serving.

SERVES: 6

Pumpkin Date Galette

🕒 PREP TIME: 60 MIN

🕒 BAKE TIME: 20 MIN

A combination of pumpkin and dates, need I say more? I use canned pumpkin puree to make life easier, however, if you don't have that available, then you can certainly steam peeled and cubed pumpkin until it's completely soft and then puree it in a food processor. You will probably end up with some extra pastry, use it to make cut out shapes, sprinkle them with some raw sugar and bake them just until golden, then use them to decorate the galettes.

If you don't have almond butter to use in the filling, I'm sure tahini would work just as well – and if you do then a drizzle of it with date molasses will be a sure winner.

You can make both the pastry dough and the filling a couple of days in advance. You can make one large galette or 6 smaller individual ones.



Ingredients:

GLUTEN-FREE VEGAN PASTRY DOUGH:

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (70g) GF oat flour
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (40g) millet flour or buckwheat flour
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (30g) arrowroot or cornstarch
- 1 tablespoon ground chia seeds
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon fine sea salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (115 grams) coconut oil, cold and in chunks
- 2 tablespoons (30ml) maple syrup
- 1-2 tablespoons ice water (add ice cubes to water and measure out as needed)
- 1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar or lemon juice
- Dairy-free milk or beaten egg

PUMPKIN FILLING:

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (120g/120ml) coconut cream
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (140g) pitted dates
- 1 cup (230g) pumpkin puree
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (65g) almond butter
- 2 tablespoons date molasses
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons arrowroot starch
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ginger powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt

Directions:

1. Start by making the pastry dough. Make sure your coconut oil is frozen in chunks. I measure out the coconut oil at room temperature (which is usually liquid in Kuwait) and then fill up small silicone ice cube trays or cupcake molds with the oil and freeze it for about 30 minutes while I gather the rest of the ingredients.
2. In a food processor, combine the flours, the arrowroot, coconut sugar, ground chia seeds and salt. Pulse a few times to combine. Then add the frozen chunks of coconut oil (they need to be relatively small chunks, about the side of small marbles) and pulse to break up into the flour, with the largest pieces being no bigger than the size of green peas. Now add the maple syrup, one tablespoon of cold water with the vinegar and pulse until the dough sticks together when pinched, adding the rest of the water only if needed.
3. Transfer the dough to a clean work surface and carefully shape it into a disc and wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for about 30 minutes. You can refrigerate it for longer, but leave it out at room temperature before moving on to the next step.
4. While the dough is chilling, make the filling. Pour hot water on the pitted dates and set aside to soften.
5. Drain the dates and place in a food processor or blender. Add the coconut cream and pumpkin and blend until smooth. Add almond butter, molasses and vanilla, and blend again. Add the remaining ingredients and blend until smooth. It will be quite thick and you may need to stop to scrape down the sides of the bowl a couple of times. Transfer to an airtight container, and store in the fridge (for up to 3 days).
6. Preheat the oven to 400°F or 200°C.

7. Take out the dough and place it between two large sheets of parchment paper. If you would like to make smaller portions, then divide into 6-8 equal pieces. Keep each piece of dough covered while you roll out the rest. Roll out the dough to about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch or a little less than 0.5 cm, you can tidy up the circumference into a neat circle using a knife or keeping it as is, it won't matter once you add the filling. Add the pumpkin filling to the centre, keeping about 2 cm from the border and fold the edges to the centre, I like to use the parchment paper to help with this step. Any extra dough can be rolled out and cut into shapes such as stars, crescents or flowers. Bake for just 20 minutes until golden and then use to decorate the galette.
8. Carefully transfer the galette to a baking sheet. If you wish for added color, brush the edges with beaten egg or dairy-free milk. Sprinkle the edge with coarse sugar if you like. Bake in the oven for about 30 minutes until the pastry is golden brown. Serve warm or cold.



About the Authors



Arwa AlTurkait

Arwa AlTurkait left the finance world to follow her passion for baking back in 2008 opening Crumbs bakery in Kuwait. She struggled with secondary infertility for 6 years, and was able to get pregnant naturally once she became aware of the importance of nutrition to heal one's body. This new found knowledge led to a passion for creating delicious and healthy recipes that she shares on her blog and YouTube channel.

Arwa is also a functional medicine certified health coach, culinary nutrition expert, and is eager to spread the word in the Arab world that healthy food can be delicious and easy with amazing flavor. *To learn more from Arwa visit AnaArwa.com*



Dina Yazbak

Dina Yazbak is a food nerd who accidentally discovered her passion for food when she went on maternity leave, & realised that she was happiest when she was tinkering with something or other in her kitchen.

She was born & brought up in Dubai, went to university in London, where she met Arwa, and is currently heading Research & Innovation with Kaykroo, developing & launching F&B concepts.

On a good day, she can be found hiding from her husband & three children in her kitchen, cooking, baking & spending time amongst her beloved cookbooks, & occasionally documenting some of her adventures under the pseudonym Pyjamas in the Kitchen **@pyjamasinthekitchen**

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