**Recipes to keep us healthy**

**Eat lots of brightly coloured fruit and vegetables**

Vegetables such as [sweet potatoes](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/health-benefits-sweet-potato), butternut squash and [beetroot](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/ingredient-focus-beetroot) are rich in beta-carotene which our bodies convert to vitamin A. We need vitamin A to keep the mucosal linings in our nose and lungs robust enough to [defend against infection](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11375434). Other foods to include are orange and red fruits such as [oranges](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/health-benefits-oranges), mango, apricots and melon.

**Spinach, Sweet Potato and Lentil Dahl – serves 4**

1 tablespoon sesame oil

1 red onion, finely chopped

1 garlic clove, crushed

A thumb-sized piece of [ginger](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/ginger), peeled and finely chopped

1 red [chilli](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/chilli), finely chopped

1½ teaspoons ground turmeric

1½ teaspoons ground cumin

2 [sweet potatoes](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/sweet-potato), about 400g, cut into even chunks

250g red split lentils

600ml vegetable stock

80g bag of [spinach](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/spinach)

4 [spring onions](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/spring-onion), sliced on the diagonal, to serve

½ small pack of [basil](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/basil), leaves torn, to serve

Heat the sesame oil in a wide-based [pan](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/content/five-best-saucepans) with a tight-fitting lid. Add the onion and cook over a low heat for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until softened. Add the [garlic](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/content/top-five-garlic-gadgets), ginger and chilli, cook for 1 minute, then add the turmeric and the cumin and cook for 1 minute more.

Turn up the heat to medium, add the sweet potatoes and stir everything together so the potato is coated in the spice mixture. Tip in the lentils, vegetable stock and some seasoning. Bring the liquid to the boil, then reduce the heat, cover and cook for 20 minutes until the lentils are tender and the potato is just holding its shape. Taste and adjust the seasoning, then gently stir in the spinach. Once wilted, top with the spring onions and the basil leaves to serve.

**Beetroot Felafal – serves 6**

1 tablespoon [olive oil](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/olive-oil)

2 [onions](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/onion), chopped

2 teaspoons ground cumin

2 x 400g cans chickpeas, drained

500g raw [beetroot](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/beetroot), peeled, trimmed and coarsely grated

100g fresh breadcrumbs

1 [egg](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/egg)

1 tablespoon tahini paste

Vegetable oil, for brushing or frying

**To serve**

1 tablespoon tahini paste

2 x 150ml pots natural yogurt

Pinch of [sugar](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/sugar)

Flatbreads

3 handfuls of salad leaves

Heat the olive oil in a frying pan and fry the onions until softened but not coloured. Add the cumin and cook for 1 minute, then scrape the mixture into a food processor with the chickpeas, two-thirds of the grated beetroot, the breadcrumbs, egg and tahini. Whizz to a rough paste, then scrape into a bowl and stir in the remaining grated beetroot with plenty of seasoning. With damp hands, shape into about 20 balls and space on baking parchment-lined baking sheets. Chill until ready to serve.

Heat oven to 200C. Brush the falafels with a little vegetable oil and bake for 20-25 minutes until crisp and hot through. To serve, mix the tahini with the yogurt, sugar and some seasoning, then dollop onto the flatbreads with the warm falafels and salad.

**Butternut Squash and Chickpea Tagine – serves 4**

1 tablespoon oil

1 red onion, finely chopped

2 garlic cloves, crushed

1 teaspoon grated [ginger](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/ginger)

½ teaspoon ground [cumin](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/cumin)

1 teaspoon ground coriander

1 teaspoon [cinnamon](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/cinnamon)

¼ teaspoon mild chilli powder

500g fresh or frozen butternut squash chunks

2 [carrots](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/carrot), cut into small dice

1 [courgette](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/courgette), cut into small dice

2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes

1 x 400g can chickpeas, drained

Cooked [couscous](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/couscous) or rice, to serve

Heat the oil in a heavy-based pan, then slowly cook the onions for around 10 minutes until starting to caramelise. Stir in the garlic, ginger and spices and cook for a further 2 minutes. Add the vegetables and canned tomatoes and bring to a simmer. Put the lid on and simmer for around 15 minutes or until all the veg are tender. Stir in the chickpeas, heat through and serve with couscous or rice.

**Guacamole and Mango Salad with Black Beans – serves 2**

1 [lime](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/lime), zested and juiced

1 small mango, stoned, peeled and chopped

1 small [avocado](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/avocado), stoned, peeled and chopped

100g cherry tomatoes, halved

1 red chilli, deseeded and chopped

1 red onion, chopped

½ small pack coriander, chopped

400g can black beans, drained and rinsed

Put the lime zest and juice, mango, avocado, tomatoes, chilli and onion in a bowl, stir through the coriander and beans and serve.

**Add Garlic and Onion to Dishes**

This amazing family of vegetables contain potent oils that have an anti-microbial action, so they may help protect against bacterial and viral infections. They also support good gut health as prebiotics by promoting the growth of healthy bacteria.

**Pepper Crusted Salmon with Garlic Chickpeas – serves 4**

4 skinless salmon fillets, about 150g each

2 teaspoons black peppercorns

1 teaspoon [paprika](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/paprika)

Grated zest and juice of 2 [limes](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/lime)

1 tablespoon [olive oil](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/olive-oil)

**For the chickpeas**

2 x 400g cans chickpeas

3 tablespoons [olive oil](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/olive-oil)

2 garlic cloves, finely chopped

150ml vegetable stock

130g bag baby spinach

Heat oven to 190C. Put the salmon fillets in a shallow ovenproof dish in a single layer. Roughly crush the peppercorns with a pestle and mortar or tip into a cup and crush with the end of a rolling pin. Mix with the paprika, lime zest and a little sea salt. Brush the salmon lightly with oil, then sprinkle over the pepper mix. Bake for 12-15 minutes until the salmon is just cooked.

Meanwhile, tip the chickpeas into a colander, rinse well under cold running water, then drain. Heat the oil in a pan, add the garlic, then gently cook for 5 minutes without browning. Add the chickpeas and stock, then warm through. Crush the chickpeas lightly with a potato masher, then add the spinach and stir well until the leaves are wilted. Add the lime juice and some salt and pepper, then heat through. Serve with the salmon.

**Artichoke, Red Onion and Rosemary Risotto – serves 4**

1 tablespoon [olive oil](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/olive-oil)

2 red onions, sliced into thin wedges

2 red peppers, cut into chunks

2 tablespoons [rosemary](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/rosemary) needles, snipped into little pieces

140g arborio [risotto rice](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/risotto-rice)

150ml white wine

850ml vegetable stock

400g tin artichoke heart in water, drained and halved

2 tablespoons grated [parmesan](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/parmesan)

2 tablespoons toasted pine nuts

Heat the oil in a large frying pan or wok. Cook the onions gently for 6-7 minutes until softened and browning. Add the peppers and rosemary and cook for a further 5 minutes. Add rice and stir well. Pour in the wine and some of the stock. Bring to the boil then reduce the heat and simmer gently, stirring occasionally until almost all the liquid is absorbed. Stir in another ladleful of the stock and simmer again, until it’s all absorbed. Add the final with the artichokes and simmer again until rice is tender. Season and stir in the Parmesan and ½ the pine nuts. Scatter over the remainder and serve.

**Caramelised Carrots and Onions – Serves 8 as a side dish to your roast**

500g [carrot](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/carrot)s, peeled and cut into long chunks

50g [butter](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/butter)

1 tablespoon [olive oil](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/olive-oil)

8 red onions, peeled and quartered with root intact

3 sprigs [thyme](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/thyme)

1 tablespoon soft brown sugar

3 tablespoons red wine

1 tablespoon good-quality [balsamic vinegar](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/balsamic-vinegar)

Blanch carrots in a pan of boiling salted water for 3 minutes, drain well, then pat dry. In a large pan, melt the butter and oil, then fry the carrots, onions and thyme over a low heat for 30 minutes until golden. Stir in the sugar and red wine and bubble for a few minutes to boil off the alcohol. Add the vinegar, then continue to cook until syrupy, about 5 minutes. Remove the sprigs of thyme and serve.

**Herb and garlic Pork with Ratatouille – serves 4**

2 teaspoons [rapeseed oil](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/rapeseed-oil)

2 red onions, halved and sliced

2 peppers (any colour), diced

1 large [aubergine](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/aubergine), diced

2 large [courgettes](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/courgette), halved and sliced

2 garlic cloves, chopped

400g can chopped tomatoes

2 teaspoons vegetable stock powder

1 thyme sprig

Handful [basil](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/basil), stalks chopped, leaves torn and kept separate

**For the pork**

475g [pork](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/pork) tenderloin, fat trimmed off, cut into 2 equal pieces

2 garlic cloves, crushed

1 tablespoon thyme leaves, plus a few sprigs to decorate

1 teaspoon [rapeseed oil](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/rapeseed-oil)

Brown rice or new potatoes, to serve

Heat the oil in a large non-stick pan and fry the onions for 5 minutes or until softened. Stir in the peppers, aubergine, courgettes and garlic, and cook, stirring, for a few minutes more. Tip in the tomatoes and 1 can of water, then stir in the stock powder, thyme and basil stalks. Cover and simmer for 20 minutes or until tender. Stir through the basil leaves.

Meanwhile, rub the pork with the garlic, then scatter with the thyme and some black pepper, patting it so it sticks all over. Heat the oil in a non-stick frying pan and cook the pork for about 12 minutes, turning frequently so it browns on all sides, until tender but still moist. Cover and rest for 5 minutes. To serve, slice the pork and serve with the ratatouille, some brown rice or new potatoes and some extra thyme.

**Eat Enough Vitamin C**

Eating plenty of fruit and veg every day should give us enough vitamin C to support the healthy function of our immune system. These include leafy, dark green vegetables such as chard and [spinach](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/ingredient-focus-spinach), peppers, [broccoli](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/health-benefits-broccoli), peas, kiwi fruit and citrus fruits.

**Fruit Salad Refresher**

1 banana

5 strawberries

1 kiwi fruit

100g yoghurt or milk

80ml pineapple juice

100ml orange juice

1 teaspoon honey

Put everything in the blender and whizz until smooth. Taste for sweetness and add more honey if needed.

**Mango and Banana Smoothie**

1 mango, peeled and cut into chunks

1 banana, peeled and sliced

500ml fresh orange juice

Put all in the ingredients into a bowl and blend until smooth and thick.

**NOTES:**

Smoothies are a great way to kick-start the day. Full of vitamins and minerals; add some dairy and the calcium is taken care of too! These smoothies will certainly help with hydration, concentration and energy throughout the morning. Use any fruit you like – any combination will work.

**Get enough vitamin D through sunlight or food**

Vitamin D is an important nutrient for overall health. In the winter months (thank goodness we are starting to see some more sunshine now), low levels of sunlight mean we need to obtain vitamin D from our diets. There are only a few food sources, of which the best are oily fish such as [salmon](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/ingredient-focus-salmon) and mackerel, [eggs](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/ingredient-focus-eggs) and [mushrooms](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/health-benefits-mushrooms).

**Mushroom Baked Eggs with Squished Tomatoes – serves 2**

2 large flat mushrooms, stalks removed and chopped

[Rapeseed oil](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/rapeseed-oil), for brushing

½ garlic clove, grated

A few thyme leaves

2 tomatoes, halved

2 large eggs

2 handfuls [rocket](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/rocket)

Heat oven to 200C. Brush the mushrooms with a little oil and the garlic. Place the mushrooms in two very lightly greased gratin dishes, bottom-side up, and season lightly with pepper. Top with the chopped stalks and thyme, cover with foil and bake for 20 minutes. Remove the foil, add the tomatoes to the dishes and break an egg carefully onto each of the mushrooms. Season and add a little more thyme, if you like. Return to the oven for 8 to 10 minutes or until the eggs are set but the yolks are still runny. Top with the rocket and eat straight from the dishes.

**Baked Salmon and Eggs – serves 6**

6 crusty white rolls (poppy seed ones look lovely)

25g [butter](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/butter), melted

6 slices smoked salmon

6 medium eggs

A few snipped chives

Heat oven to 180C. Slice off the top of each roll, then gently remove the bread inside until there is a hole large enough to accommodate a slice of salmon and an egg. Arrange the rolls on a baking sheet, reserving the tops (whizz the middles into crumbs and keep in the freezer for another recipe).

Brush the inside and edges of the rolls with a little melted butter, then arrange a slice of salmon inside each one. Crack an egg into each and season. Bake for 10ish minutes or until the eggs are cooked to your liking. Scatter with snipped chives. Toast the tops, brush with the remaining butter, then cut into soldiers and use to dip into eggs.

**Mushroom and Basil Omelette with Smashed Tomatoes – serves 2**

2 [tomatoes](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/tomato), halved

3 medium eggs

1 tablespoon snipped chive

300g chestnut mushroom, sliced

1 teaspoon unsalted butter

2 tablespoons cream cheese

1 tablespoon finely chopped basil leaves

Heat the grill to its highest setting and place the tomatoes on a square of foil underneath, turning occasionally to prevent burning. When the tomatoes are slightly scorched, remove from the grill, squashing them slightly to release the juices. Break the eggs into a bowl and mix with a fork. Add a small splash of water and mix. Add the chives and some black pepper, and beat some more. Set aside while you prepare the mushrooms.

In a non-stick frying pan, heat the butter over a medium heat until foaming. Add the mushrooms and cook for 5-8 minutes until tender, stirring every few minutes. Remove and set aside. Briskly stir the egg mixture, then add to the hot pan (tilting it so that the mixture covers the entire base) and leave for 10 seconds or so until it begins to set. With a fork, gently stir the egg here and there so that any unset mixture gets cooked.

While the egg mixture is still slightly loose, spoon the mushroom mix onto one side of the omelette, and top with the cream cheese and basil leaves. Flip the other side of the omelette over to cover, if you like. Leave to cook for 1 minute more, then cut in half and slide each half onto a plate. Serve immediately with the tomatoes on the side.

**Salmon and Soya Bean Salad**

1 large [egg](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/egg)

200g frozen [soya beans](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/soya-beans), defrosted

Zest and juice 1 [lemon](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/lemon)

2 tablespoons flax seed or Rapeseed oil

250g pouch Puy [lentils](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/lentils)

Small bunch [spring onions](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/spring-onion), sliced

2 poached salmon fillets, skin removed

Put the egg in a pan, cover with cold water and bring to the boil. Cook for 4 minutes for soft or 8 for hard-boiled, adding soya beans to the pan for the final minute, then drain and run under cold water to cool. Shell and cut egg into 6 wedges, then set aside.

Mix the lemon juice and zest with the oil, season, then stir through the soya beans, lentils and spring onions.

Divide between 2 plates, then gently break the salmon into large flakes and put on top of the lentils along with the egg. Try it with seeded brown bread.

**Eat More Oats and Barley**

Grains such as oats and barley are rich in a water-soluble fibre which, as well as keeping us full and satisfied, has a valuable [immune effect](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17414801) – increasing the number and function of protective immune cells.

**Squash, Orange and Barley Salad – serves 6**

175g pearl barley

1kg peeled butternut squash

3 tablespoons [olive oil](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/olive-oil)

Zest and juice 1 [orange](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/orange)

4 tablespoons red wine vinegar

½ red onion, thinly sliced

Small bunch [mint](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/mint), chopped, reserving a few leaves to serve

Small bunch flat-leaf [parsley](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/parsley), chopped, reserving a few leaves to serve

2 handfuls [rocket](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/rocket)

Boil the barley for 20-25 minutes until just tender but with a little bite. Drain. Meanwhile, heat oven to 200C. Thickly slice the butternut into rounds, flicking out the seeds. Toss with 1 tablespoon of oil, the orange zest and seasoning. Spread over a baking sheet and roast for 40 minutes until golden and tender, turning halfway. Set aside while you finish the dish.

Mix the orange juice, vinegar and remaining oil with the pearl barley and plenty of seasoning. Stir in the onion and chopped herbs, then layer up on a platter with the squash, rocket and remaining mint and parsley leaves

**Chicken and Pearl Barley Risotto - serves 2**

1 teaspoon [sunflower oil](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/sunflower-oil)

2 chicken thighs, skinless, bone in

2 [carrots](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/carrot), chopped

2 celery sticks, chopped

1 [onion](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/onion), chopped

1 garlic clove, crushed

140g pearl barley

**For the green dressing**

½ x 60g bag fresh [rocket](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/rocket) leaves

Small handful [mint](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/mint), leaves only

Small handful flat-leaf [parsley](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/parsley)

Juice 1 [lemon](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/lemon)

1 teaspoon [capers](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/capers)

Heat a large saucepan over a medium-high heat and add the oil. Add the chicken and fry for 5 minutes or until well-browned on all sides. Tip in the vegetables and cook for a further 5 minutes until starting to soften. Add the garlic and pearl barley, then pour over 500ml water. Cover and leave to simmer for 25-30 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Meanwhile, put all the dressing ingredients in the small bowl of a food processor and blitz until very finely chopped. Transfer to a bowl and set aside until serving. When the pearl barley is soft, but still with a little bite, and most of the liquid has been absorbed, it’s ready to serve. Season to taste and divide the risotto between two plates, adding spoonfuls of the dressing to serve.

**Oat and Chia Porridge with Prunes – serves 2**

6 prunes

A few pinches of ground [cinnamon](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/cinnamon)

50g traditional [oats](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/oats)

2 tablespoons chia seeds

½ tsp vanilla extract

300ml natural yogurt

[Milk](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/milk), for diluting

2 small [pears](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/pear), cored and thickly sliced

2 teaspoons of sunflower or pumpkin seeds

The night before, put the prunes in a small pan with the cinnamon. Barely cover with water and bring to the boil, then simmer for 5 minutes. Tip into a bowl and set aside to soak overnight. Put a kettle full of water on to boil. Tip the oats and chia seeds into a bowl, pour over 300ml boiling water then stir well. Cover and leave to soak overnight too.

The next morning, stir the vanilla and half the yogurt into the oat mixture then dilute to the consistency you like best with a little milk or water if necessary. Spoon into bowls and top with the remaining yogurt, the prunes, pears and seeds and dust with a little more cinnamon, if you like.

**Keep Your Gut Healthy**

It's long been known that [good gut health is critical](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1482314/) to staying fit and well. In fact, more than 60% of our immune defences lie along the mucosal lining of our gut, so keeping it in tip top condition is a [first line of defence against infection](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23372900). Including probiotic foods like live yogurt, [kefir](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/health-benefits-kefir), [kimchi](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/health-benefits-offermenting) and [sauerkraut](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/health-benefits-sauerkraut) can help to feed the good bacteria in the gut. **Be careful, introduce these foods gradually to give your system time to adjust!**

**Quick Kimchi**

1 Chinese cabbage

3 garlic cloves, crushed

2½ cm piece [ginger](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/ginger), grated

2 tablespoons [fish sauce](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/fish-sauce)

2 tablespoons sriracha chilli sauce

1 tablespoon golden caster sugar

3 tablespoons rice vinegar

8 [radishes](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/radish), coarsely grated

2 [carrots](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/carrot), cut into matchsticks or coarsely grated

4 [spring onions](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/spring-onion), finely shredded

Slice the cabbage into 2.5cm strips. Tip into a bowl, mix with 1 tablespoon of sea salt, then set aside for 1 hr. Meanwhile, make the kimchi paste by blending the garlic, ginger, fish sauce, chilli sauce, sugar and rice vinegar together in a small bowl.

Rinse the cabbage under cold running water, drain and dry thoroughly. Transfer to a large bowl and toss through the paste, along with the radishes, carrot and spring onions. Serve straight away or pack into a large jar, seal and leave to ferment at room temperature overnight, then chill. Will keep in the fridge for up to 2 weeks - the flavour will improve the longer it's left.

**Kefir Breakfast Pancakes**

200g plain flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

2 eggs, beaten

500ml kefir

2 tablespoons runny honey

4 teaspoons sunflower oil

320g frozen red berry mix

Put the flour and baking powder into a bowl and mix to combine, making a well in the centre. In a separate bowl, combine the vanilla extract, eggs, kefir and honey, then pour into the dry ingredients. Gradually combine with a whisk and place in the fridge for 10 minutes to rest.

Add 1 teaspoon of oil to a large non-stick pan on a medium heat. Ladle a quarter of the batter into the pan. Cook for 2-3 minutes on each side until tiny bubbles start to show on the surface, then flip and cook on the other side for another 2 minutes. Transfer the cooked pancakes to a plate and cover with tin foil to keep warm. Add 1 teaspoon more of oil each time you empty the pan and repeat until all the batter has been cooked.

Meanwhile, put the berries in a pan and cook over a gentle heat for 5-6 minutes, or until they just start to break down. Serve the pancakes with the compote on top and a drizzle of honey.

**Last little tip:** practice good hygiene and get out in the fresh air being active!

Get out into the daylight as much as possible and keep physically active. Moderate exercise [can help to support the immune system](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17826186) because it stimulates the production of white blood cells – the cells that defend us from illness.

Stay safe and be kind to yourself and each other!