

**WE'RE ALL USED TO THE 5 REGULAR
FOOD GROUPS:**

**CARBOHYDRATES, PROTEIN, FRUIT
AND VEGETABLES, DAIRY AND FATS.**

**IN THE FOLLOWING RECIPES WE'RE
GOING TO THINK ABOUT BRAIN FUEL:**

**5 FOOD GROUPS FOR SUCCESSFUL
CHILDREN (AND ADULTS)!**

JUST HAVE FUN IN THE KITCHEN!

Please take photos and/or videos and share them with me:

cduff@manorprep.org

NB: They could be shared online or on social media

Oily fish, seeds, and nuts. The omega-3 fatty oils in certain fish, especially salmon, trout, mackerel, herring, sardines, pilchards, and kippers, are a must-have for healthy brain function. Omega-3 deficiency can lead to fatigue and poor memory! Not a big fish fan? Omega-3 fats are also found in linseed or flaxseed oil, soybean oil, and pumpkin seeds. Walnuts are also a great omega-3 healthy snack, full of heart-healthy and anti-inflammatory nutrients that help promote blood flow, delivering more oxygen to the brain.

Berries and other fruits. Eating lots of blueberries, strawberries, and other berries appears to be linked to slower mental decline. These healthy snacks are packed with vitamin C, which is believed to help increase mental agility. Healthy sugar can also enhance your alertness and ability to focus; it's your body and brain's best source of energy. Before you get too excited, we're talking here about the glucose you get from natural carbohydrate sources like fruits and juices, not SWEETS!

Dark chocolate. In moderation, dark chocolate can energize you and help you focus. Dark chocolate can help reduce blood pressure, as well as get more blood flow to your brain and help you get more fuel. Grabbing a piece of dark chocolate is a great way to keep focused and relaxed – really good before a test!

Whole grains. Whole grains are another important component to overall wellness. The complex carbohydrates in whole grains have a low glycemic index, so they digest slowly and release glucose (your brain's best source of energy) over a longer period of time. And whole grains (along with fresh fruits and dairy) are a satisfying, filling way to add some healthy calories and energy at breakfast time, a crucial meal for getting brain food to fuel your day.

Tomatoes, broccoli, spinach. This trio is often mentioned in lists of superfoods for your whole body, and each packs nutrients that have major benefits for cognitive function, concentration, and brain health. These super foods should always be on your shopping list, as they are easy to toss in many recipes. Throw in other brain-boosting produce like beetroot and avocado and you've got a tasty tray of veggies.

Oily Fish, Seeds and Nuts

Salmon and Broccoli Pasta – serves 4

300g dried pasta, any kind
300g broccoli, cut into small florets
2 tablespoons olive oil
8 spring onions, trimmed and sliced
2 x 120g skinless salmon fillets, cut into roughly 3cm chunks
Good pinch dried chilli flakes
100ml double cream
½ small lemon, finely grated zest only
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Half fill a large pan with salted water and bring to the boil. Add the pasta and cook for 7–12 minutes until just tender. Three minutes before the end of the pasta cooking time, add the broccoli to the water and cook with the pasta for 3 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat the oil in a medium non-stick frying pan and cook the spring onions for 1–3 minutes, or until softened, stirring regularly. Add the salmon pieces and chilli and cook for about a minute, turning the salmon 3–4 times. Add the cream and a ladleful of the pasta cooking water (around 100ml). Season generously with salt and pepper. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook the salmon for 3–4 minutes, turning occasionally (add an extra splash of water if the sauce thickens too much). Drain the pasta and broccoli and return to the pan. Add the creamy salmon sauce and lemon zest and toss together lightly.

Tuna Tostados – serves 4

For the tuna filling

2 oranges, juice only
2 limes, juice only
2 red chillies, chopped
16 cherry tomatoes, finely chopped
2 red onions, thinly sliced
A bunch of chives, finely chopped
1 dried chipotle chilli, soaked in boiling water then drained and chopped
1 tablespoon coriander stalks, finely chopped
1 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoon sugar
500g fresh tuna loin, cut into small cubes

For the soured cream sauce

6 tablespoons soured cream
2 garlic cloves, crushed
6 spring onions, finely chopped
2 green chillies, finely chopped
1 bunch coriander, finely chopped
A bunch of mint, finely chopped
2 limes, juice only
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

For the tostadas

6 fresh soft tortillas, each cut into two smaller rounds with a 7cm/3in cutter
4 tablespoons olive oil
100g grated white cheese, such as Wensleydale

To make the tuna filling, mix the marinade ingredients together in a bowl, add the tuna and set aside for 10 minutes. Heat a little olive oil in a frying pan over a medium heat and fry the tuna for 3-5 minutes until just cooked. Add the tuna to the marinade and mix well to combine. To make the sauce, blend the ingredients together in a food processor and season with salt and pepper. To assemble, brush the tortillas with a little olive oil, sprinkle over the cheese and toast under a hot grill until melted. Top with the tuna and soured cream sauce and serve.

Potatoes in their Skins – serves 1 (this recipe can easily be sized up)

1 baking potato
Drizzle of olive oil
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
Salad leaves, to serve
Squeeze of lemon, to serve

For the mackerel

1 small smoked mackerel fillet, skinned and flaked
1 tablespoon soured cream
1 teaspoon horseradish sauce
2 teaspoons snipped fresh chives

For the bacon and cheese

2 streaky bacon rashers, fried until crisp
1 tablespoon crème fraîche
2 teaspoons finely chopped fresh parsley
1 tablespoon grated Cheddar

For the bacon and kale

2 streaky bacon rashers, fried until crisp
Handful of kale, blanched and roughly chopped
1 tablespoon crème fraîche

For the pea and mint

Handful of peas, blanched and slightly crushed
2 teaspoons plain yoghurt
2 teaspoons shredded fresh mint
1 tablespoon grated Gruyère

Pre-heat the oven to 220C. Rub the potato with a little oil, then sprinkle with salt and pepper. Place on a baking tray and bake for 45 minutes to 1 hour, depending on the size. Leave the potatoes to cool a little. Use a knife to cut into the potato, leaving a 3mm border. Use a spoon to scoop out the flesh into a bowl and mash with a fork. Return the skins to the oven to crisp up for 6–7 minutes.

Meanwhile, make the filling. Whichever filling you are making, simply mix all the ingredients (apart from the cheese) into the mashed potato. Season with salt and pepper. Remove the skins from the oven, spoon in the filling, sprinkle with the cheese if using and bake for a further 6–7 minutes. Put the salad leaves on a plate, dress with a drizzle of oil and a squeeze of lemon juice and serve with the potatoes.

Salmon and Egg Kedgeree - serves 6

2 fresh lime leaves, torn
1 lemongrass stalk, bashed
4 salmon fillets
45g unsalted butter
1 teaspoon vegetable oil
1 onion, finely chopped
Thumb-size piece fresh ginger, peeled and finely grated
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon ground cumin
½ teaspoon ground turmeric
325g basmati rice
Bunch fresh coriander, roughly chopped, plus extra to serve
1 tablespoon fish sauce
Zest and juice 1 lime, plus extra lime wedges to serve
4 eggs, soft boiled
Sliced spring onions and sliced red chilli to serve

Heat the oven to 220°C. Pour 650ml cold water into a roasting tray with the lime leaves, lemongrass and salmon. Cover with foil. Poach in the oven for 15 minutes until the salmon easily flakes. Drain the poaching liquid into a jug and set the salmon aside, still covered with foil. Melt the butter in a large heavy-based pan with a tight-fitting lid. Add the oil and onion and cook over a low-medium heat for 5-8 minutes to soften. Add the ginger and spices and gently fry with the onion for a few minutes until fragrant. Add the rice and stir to coat. Pour in the reserved poaching liquid and lime leaves (top up with extra water if it's less than 650ml) and cover with the lid. Simmer for 15 minutes over a low heat until the rice is tender. Turn off the heat, remove the lid and fluff up the rice with a fork. Wrap the lid in a clean tea towel and return it to the pan to seal it (the tea towel helps to absorb any extra liquid from the rice, so it won't turn soggy before serving).

To serve, drain off any extra liquid from the salmon fillets and flake them, discarding the skin. Gently mix the salmon into the rice along with the coriander, fish sauce and lime zest and juice, then put on a warmed serving platter. Quarter the eggs and put on top, then serve with the spring onions, chilli slices, extra coriander and lime wedges.

You can use other fish, such as trout or smoked mackerel or undyed smoked haddock. To soft-boil eggs, cook in boiling water for 6 minutes. Drain and run under cold water until cool. Peel, leaving whole.

Berries and other fruits

Berry Cobbler – serves 6

1 tablespoon cornflour
Juice of 2 oranges and zest from ½
2 tablespoons caster sugar
6 ripe peaches
250g blueberries

For the Cobbler

200g self-raising flour
50g butter, cut into small pieces, plus 15g, melted
100g light muscovado sugar
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
5-6 tablespoons milk

Heat oven to 190C. Butter a wide shallow ovenproof dish. Blend the cornflour with the orange zest and juice, and put in a large pan with the sugar. Halve, stone and slice the peaches and add to the pan. Bring slowly to the boil, stirring gently until the sauce is shiny and thickened, about 3-4 minutes. Remove from the heat, stir in the blueberries and tip into the prepared dish.

Tip the flour into a mixing bowl and add the 50g butter. Rub the butter into the flour until it resembles fine breadcrumbs, then stir in half the sugar. Mix the remaining sugar with the cinnamon and set aside. Add the milk to the dry ingredients and mix to a soft dough. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface and knead briefly. Roll out to an oblong roughly 16 x 24cm. Brush with melted butter and sprinkle evenly with the spicy sugar. Roll up from one long side and cut into 12 slices. Arrange around the top of the dish, leaving the centre uncovered. Bake for 20-25 minutes, until the topping is crisp and golden. Serve warm.

Breakfast Muffins – makes 12

2 large eggs
150ml natural yogurt
50ml rapeseed oil
100g apple sauce or pureed apples
1 ripe banana, mashed
4 tablespoons clear honey
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
200g wholemeal flour
50g rolled oats, plus extra for sprinkling
1½ teaspoons baking powder
1½ teaspoons bicarbonate of soda
1½ teaspoons cinnamon
100g blueberries
2 tablespoons mixed seeds

Heat oven to 180C. Line a 12-hole muffin tin with 12 large muffin cases. In a jug, mix the eggs, yogurt, oil, apple sauce, banana, honey and vanilla. Tip the remaining ingredients, except the seeds, into a large bowl and mix to combine.

Pour the wet ingredients into the dry and mix briefly until you have a smooth batter – don't overmix as this will make the muffins heavy. Divide the batter between the cases. Sprinkle the muffins with the extra oats and the seeds. Bake for 25-30 minutes until golden and well risen, and a skewer inserted into the centre of a muffin comes out clean. Remove from the oven, transfer to a wire rack and leave to cool.

Lime and Blueberry Crumble Creams - serves 6

Crumble

6 shortbread fingers
50g golden caster sugar
25g butter
225g blueberries
3 tablespoons golden caster sugar
300ml double cream
100ml condensed milk
3 limes, zested and juiced (about 100ml juice)

For the crumble, put the biscuits into a food bag and bash to pea-size crumbs using a rolling pin. Gently heat the golden caster sugar in a non-stick pan until it starts to melt in patches. Swirl a few times till you have an even, amber caramel. Take off the heat. Stir in the butter – it will bubble – then stir in the crumbs, working quickly to get them all coated. Spread out over an oiled plate and leave to cool and harden.

Put the berries, golden caster sugar and 1 tablespoon water into a pan, cover and simmer for 3-5 minutes until some berries have popped and they are surrounded with dark juice. Cool completely.

Mix the cream, condensed milk, lime zest and juice in a large bowl – the mix will thicken straightaway. To serve, layer up the berries, lime cream and crunchy biscuit in 6 small glasses or cups to serve.

Blackberry Braised Red Cabbage – serves 4

1 tablespoon butter
1 red onion, thinly sliced
1 small red cabbage, about 600g, cored and thinly sliced
5 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
3 tablespoons soft brown sugar
1 teaspoon mixed spice
2 tablespoons redcurrant jelly
4 venison steaks, about 175g each
175g blackberries, frozen
1 tablespoon oil
Mashed potato, to serve

Melt the butter in a large saucepan, add the onion and cook slowly for 10 minutes until really soft. Add the cabbage, vinegar, sugar, mixed spice and **half** the jelly along with 100ml water, then season. Bring to the boil, stir, then cover with a lid. Cook for 40 minutes over a medium-low heat. Meanwhile, remove the venison from the fridge to come to room temperature. Add the blackberries to the cabbage mixture. Continue cooking, uncovered, for 5-10 minutes until the liquid has evaporated and the blackberries have broken down slightly.

Heat a frying pan until hot. Rub the venison steaks with the oil, then season. Cook in the hot pan for 4-5 minutes on each side, depending on thickness, for medium-rare. In the final 1 minute of cooking, add the remaining jelly to the pan and spoon it over the steaks as it melts, to glaze. Remove the steaks from the pan and leave to rest. Serve the cabbage and venison with mashed potato.

Dark Chocolate

Mini Melting Chocolate Pastries – makes around 30

320g pack ready-rolled all-butter puff pastry
100g bar dark chocolate (70% cocoa solids)
1 medium free-range egg, beaten
Demerara sugar to sprinkle
Dark and white chocolate, melted separately, to decorate

Heat the oven to 200°C. Unroll the pastry onto a work surface. Using a rolling pin, gently roll it out to the thickness of a £1 coin. Cut the pastry in half, widthways, then break the chocolate into its individual pieces and distribute evenly over 1 piece of pastry, leaving a 1cm gap between each piece of chocolate and at the edges. Brush between the chocolate pieces with beaten egg, then lay the other piece of pastry over the top. Use your fingers to press down the pastry around the chocolate, pushing out the air.

Using a sharp knife, cut the pastry into even pieces, leaving a border around each chocolate piece. Put on a non-stick baking sheet, brush with beaten egg to glaze, press down the edges with a fork to seal, then chill for 30 minutes. Glaze again, then sprinkle with sugar and bake for 15 minutes or until golden. Cool for 2 minutes, drizzle with melted chocolate, then serve warm.

After Dinner Mints – serves 8 generously

200g dark chocolate (70 per cent cocoa solids)
1 large free-range egg white
220g icing sugar
1 teaspoon peppermint essence
A few drops of green food colouring

Grease and line a 18cm x 28cm shallow tray with baking paper. Melt half the chocolate in a heatproof bowl over a pan of gently simmering water. Pour into the tray, shake until evenly spread, then put in the fridge to harden.

Meanwhile, make the fondant. Put the egg white in a clean bowl and gently stir with a fork to break up. Sift the icing sugar into a bowl, then add half to the egg white. Stir with a wooden spoon until mixed. Add the peppermint essence, stir well, then beat in the rest of the icing sugar to make a smooth, thick, spreadable paste. Add a few drops of green food colouring until it becomes the palest green colour.

Once the chocolate has hardened, spread a thin layer of the peppermint cream fondant over it using a palette knife, then put back in the fridge for 30 minutes to 1 hour until set. Once the peppermint cream has set, melt the rest of the dark chocolate over simmering water. Let it cool slightly, then spread another layer of dark chocolate over the set peppermint cream, tipping the tray in all directions so the chocolate evens out over the surface. Leave in the fridge to set. Once set, remove from the tray and transfer to a plate or board. Break or cut into pieces!

Chocolate Truffle Fondants – serves 8

200g butter, melted, plus extra for brushing
10g cocoa powder for lining the moulds, plus extra to serve
150g good quality dark chocolate, chopped
50g milk chocolate, roughly chopped
4 medium free-range eggs and 4 medium egg yolks
180g golden caster sugar
180g plain flour
9 Lindt Lindor white chocolate truffles
Crème fraîche or cream to serve

You'll also need:

9 x 150ml dariole moulds

Brush inside all the moulds with melted butter, then chill for 5 minutes. Repeat the brushing, making sure the moulds are well coated to stop the fondants sticking when cooked. Tip the cocoa powder into one of the dariole moulds and roll it around until the inside is coated with cocoa, then tip the leftover cocoa powder into the next mould and repeat until all the moulds are coated. Put the moulds back in the fridge while you make the fondants.

Put the chopped dark and milk chocolate in a heatproof bowl set over a pan of barely simmering water (don't let the bowl touch the water) and leave the chocolate to melt gently. When completely melted, stir to combine, then set aside to cool until just warm but still liquid. Stir in the 200g melted butter until combined.

Using an electric hand mixer in a mixing bowl, whisk the eggs and sugar until the mixture is pale, thick and just holds a ribbon shape when you lift the beaters. Sift in the flour and gently fold in until combined. Pour in half the chocolate/butter mixture and mix until just combined, then repeat with the remaining mixture. Pour half the batter evenly into the prepared moulds, then put a Lindor truffle in the centre of each. Top with the remaining batter, then put on a baking tray and chill for 30 minutes.

Heat the oven to 200°C. Bake for 11 minutes from chilled. The fondants are ready when you can see a visible crust on top of each one and they're starting to pull away from the sides of the moulds slightly. Take out and, working quickly, cut one of the fondants to check. If it's done to your liking, take the rest out of the oven. Let the fondants sit for 30 seconds, then invert onto plates, dust with cocoa powder and serve with crème fraîche or cream.

Chilli Con Carne with Dark Chocolate – serves 4

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 red onion, finely chopped
2 red peppers, deseeded and sliced
2 teaspoons hot chilli powder
1 teaspoon cumin
1 teaspoon paprika
500g beef mince

500ml passata with onion and garlic
250ml beef stock, made with 1 beef stock cube
20g dark chocolate
410g can red kidney beans in water, drained and thoroughly rinsed
200g long grain rice, cooked
4 tablespoons crème fraîche

Heat the oil in a large saucepan and add the onion. Cook for 2-3 minutes until beginning to soften, then add the peppers. Cook for another 3-4 minutes until the peppers are just tender. Add the chilli powder, cumin and paprika to the pan and stir through, cooking for 1 minute. Put the mince in the pan and move around, breaking up with a wooden spoon. Cook for 3-4 minutes until brown all over. Pour in the passata and stock. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook for 30 minutes. Roughly chop the chocolate and add to the chilli, along with the beans. Stir to combine and melt the chocolate, then simmer for another 15 minutes until the mixture has thickened slightly. Serve the chilli with the rice and a good dollop of crème fraîche.

Whole Grains

Chicken and Couscous One Pot

8 skin on, bone-in chicken thighs
2 teaspoons turmeric
1 tablespoon garam masala
2 tablespoons sunflower oil
2 onions, finely sliced
3 garlic cloves, sliced
500ml chicken stock
Large handful of whole green olives
Zest and juice 1 lemon
250g couscous
Small bunch flat-leaf parsley, chopped

Toss the chicken thighs in half the spices and a pinch of salt until completely coated. Heat 1 tablespoon of oil in a large sauté pan with a lid. Fry chicken, skin-side down, for 10 minutes until golden brown, turn over, then cook for a further 2 minutes before removing from the pan. Pour the rest of the oil into the pan, then fry the onions and garlic for 8 minutes until golden. Stir in the rest of the spices, then cook for 1 minute longer. Pour over the chicken stock and scatter in the olives. Bring everything to the boil, turn down the heat, then sit the chicken, skinside up, in the stock. Cover the pan with a lid, then simmer gently for 35-40 minutes until the chicken is tender.

Put the kettle on, then lift the chicken onto a plate and keep warm. Take the pan off the heat. Stir the lemon juice and couscous into the saucy onions in the pan and top up with enough boiling water just to cover the couscous if you need to. Place the lid back on the pan, then leave to stand for 5 minutes until the couscous is cooked through. Fluff through half the parsley and the lemon zest, then sit the chicken on top. Scatter with the rest of the parsley and zest before serving.

Cheesy Polenta with Sausage Ragu – serves 4

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
400g pork sausagemeat
400g can chopped tomato
200ml chicken stock
1 tablespoon tomato purée
4 rosemary sprigs, chopped
200g instant polenta
100g smoked cheese, grated

Heat the oil in a large casserole dish over a medium-high heat and cook the onion and garlic for a few minutes. Stir in the sausages, breaking them up into small pieces as you go, and cook for another 8-9 minutes. Stir in the chopped tomatoes, stock, purée and most of the rosemary. Bring to a simmer and cook for another 8-10 minutes or until the mixture is thickened. Season to taste.

Meanwhile, make up the polenta following pack instructions. Remove from the heat and stir in the cheese, with some seasoning. Spoon the polenta onto 4 plates, then top with the ragout and a sprinkling of the remaining rosemary.

Quinoa Stuffed Butternut Squash serves 4

1 medium butternut squash
Olive oil, for roasting
Pinch of dried oregano
150g ready-to-eat quinoa (Merchant gourmet)
100g feta cheese
50g toasted pine nuts
1 small carrot, around 50g, grated
Small bunch of chives, snipped
Juice of half lemon
1 red pepper, chopped
50g pitted black olive
2 spring onions, chopped

Heat the oven to 200C. Halve the butternut squash, scoop out the seeds and score the flesh with a sharp knife. Arrange the two halves on a baking tray, drizzle with a little olive oil, season with freshly ground black pepper and sea salt, sprinkle with dried oregano and cook for 40 minutes. Take out the oven, add the chopped peppers to the tray alongside the squash and cook for a further 10 minutes.

Meanwhile mix the rest of the ingredients. Take the tray out of the oven and carefully transfer the peppers to the stuffing mix. Stir together and spoon the filling onto the butternut squash. Return to the oven for 10 minutes.

Coconut rice pudding with mango, orange and lime

55g short-grain rice
230ml coconut milk
110ml milk
1 teaspoon orange zest
2 teaspoons caster sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla essence
110ml cream

To serve

Mango, sliced
Lime wedges
2 teaspoons brown sugar

Place the rice, coconut milk, milk, zest, sugar and vanilla in a saucepan over a medium heat and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat, cover and cook for 1 hour, stirring occasionally. When the rice is cooked, remove from the heat and leave to cool with the lid on. When the mixture is cold, stir in the cream. Pour into a serving bowl, top with mango and a sprinkling of brown sugar and serve with wedges of lime on the side.

Tomato Broccoli Spinach

Cannellini Beans with Wilted Spinach, Broccoli and Roasted Tomatoes

5 vine-ripened tomatoes, halved
4-5 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
3 cloves garlic, very finely chopped
½ small red onion, finely chopped
2 x 410g tins cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
1 teaspoon rose harissa
1 large handful parsley, finely chopped
1 large handful coriander, finely chopped
Juice of half a lemon
200g pack tenderstem broccoli spears
250g bag spinach

Pre-heat oven to 180C. Put the tomatoes in an ovenproof tray, drizzle with 1 tablespoon of olive oil, season and roast for 25 minutes or till shrivelled and crisp at the edges. Heat 1½ tablespoons olive oil in a frying pan, add the onion and one third of the garlic and fry gently for 5 minutes. Add the cannellini beans and harissa. Season and stir. Cook for another 3-4 minutes, then add the chopped parsley and coriander and the lemon juice if using. Set aside in the pan.

Meanwhile, blanch the broccoli in salted boiling water until tender. Drain, dress with 1 tablespoon of olive oil and season with one third of the chopped garlic, salt and pepper. Transfer to a large, warmed serving plate.

In the broccoli pan, wilt the spinach in 1 tablespoon of water. Drain well, stir in the remaining garlic, season, dress with 1 tablespoon of olive oil and set on the plate next to the broccoli. Add the warm cannellini beans and complete with the roasted tomatoes, straight out of the oven. Serve at once with a warm crusty loaf, a bowl of olives and more olive oil if you like.

Tomato, Pesto, Spinach and Mozzarella Focaccia

500g strong white bread flour, plus some for dusting
½ teaspoon salt
325ml water
7g sachet fast-action yeast
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus some for drizzling
100g cherry tomatoes
150g spinach, wilted and chopped
125g ball mozzarella, drained
5 tablespoons pesto, see recipe, below
Sea salt, to serve (optional)

Put the flour into a bowl with the salt and the yeast. Add the water and oil to the flour and then mix well. Tip the dough out onto a worktop lightly dusted with flour and work it by pulling and stretching for at least 10 minutes. Try to get as much air into it as

possible. Put the ball of worked dough into a well-oiled bowl, cover with a little more oil and a tea towel. Leave to rest until doubled in size.

Now stretch the dough out onto a baking sheet until it's about 20 x 30cm. Leave the dough to rise again to about half as high again, about 30-40 minutes in a warm place, loosely covered with a tea towel.

Heat oven to 200C. When the dough has risen, press your fingers into it gently to make some holes and put in the cherry tomatoes. Bake for about 15 minutes, then remove from the oven. Dot the chopped spinach and the mozzarella, then bake for another 5-10 minutes until golden and cooked through. Drizzle over the pesto and scatter with sea salt, if you like. Serve straight away.

Pesto recipe

75g grated parmesan
1 bunch basil
240ml olive oil
3 cloves garlic
1-2 teaspoons lemon juice
Salt and pepper to taste

Put it all in a magimix and blend until smooth. Store leftovers in the fridge.

Macaroni, Broccoli and Cauli-cheese

100g cauliflower florets
100g broccoli florets
250g macaroni
100g cherry tomatoes, quartered
150g cheese cheddar, Comte, Emmenthal or Gruyere or a mix
60g grated Parmesan
150g mascarpone cheese
45g butter
45g plain flour
450ml milk
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

Topping

50g white breadcrumbs
20g grated Parmesan

Cook the pasta according to the packet instructions in lots of salted water. Put the cauliflower and broccoli florets into a pan of salted water and cook until soft, approximately 5- 8 minutes. Next make the sauce. Melt the butter, stir in the flour and cook for 1 minute. Gradually add the milk, stirring over a low heat for 5 to 6 minutes. Take off the heat, stir in the cheese and then add the mascarpone and stir to combine. Add in the cooked vegetables and blend together.

Stir the drained macaroni into the veggie-cheese sauce. Add the quartered tomatoes and combine. Transfer the mixture to a greased ovenproof dish. Mix together the breadcrumbs and Parmesan and sprinkle on top. Place under a preheated grill until golden and bubbling. If you have made this in advance, put in an oven at 220C and heat through for about 20 minutes until bubbling and golden.

Spinach, Tomato and Rice Pilaf – serves 4

2 teaspoons olive oil
1 onion, finely chopped
3 garlic cloves, sliced
A thumb-sized piece of ginger, finely chopped
2 teaspoons smoked paprika
Zest and juice of 2 lemons
1 cinnamon stick
200g long-grain rice
70g vegetable stock
100g baby spinach
250g cherry tomatoes
½ a small bunch of flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped

Heat the oil in a large pan or casserole and fry the onion with a pinch of salt for 10 minutes until soft. Add the garlic, ginger and paprika, and cook for a minute. Stir in the lemon zest and juice, cinnamon stick and rice, making sure every grain is coated in oil. Pour in the vegetable stock and bring to the boil. Toss in the spinach and cherry tomatoes, stir briefly, put on a lid and cook gently for 20 minutes. Remove the lid and stir through the parsley, adding a splash of water if it looks a little dry. Season and serve.