

Cooking Hints and Recipes

for Pancreatitis



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INTRODUCTION

When someone is ill, the food that person eats can have a tremendous effect on how they recover from their illness. Not only does food give you the energy to fight the illness but it can also provide nutrients that are essential to successfully combating a disease or condition.

Nutrients won't cure a condition, but they'll certainly help our body to function to its maximum and thereby help it to be better able to battle the pervading condition. If the body is not in this state, it becomes increasingly vulnerable to the potential ravages that the illness can cause or can develop.

As anyone diagnosed with pancreatitis knows, nutrition therapy certainly has a role to play in treatment and management. However as we've seen in the case studies in "Beating Pancreatitis – How to Get Healthy and Enjoy Life Again", there are degrees of severity with the condition. Some people may have to make only minor alterations to their diet. Other, more serious cases may require stringent dietary changes.

There's no single food that meets the many needs of a person with pancreatitis. The goal should be to achieve a balanced combination of foods that provides the nutrients needed to keep the body functioning in a way that allows it to better manage the condition.

As you'll read in the book, "Beating Pancreatitis – How to Get Healthy and Enjoy Life Again", there can be a number of constants in the life of many sufferers of pancreatitis. These include:

- enzyme medication,
- pain relief medication or treatments; and
- Diet modification.

All three of these factors are important but for many, it's the dietary changes that are the hardest to come to grips with. Of course, the degree of change necessary is highly dependent upon the severity of the condition, however it's pretty clear that a number of modifications are essential if the sufferer is to manage their condition properly, reduce the effect it has on their lives and minimize the chances of it worsening. These modifications are necessary for the following reasons:

- The likelihood of poor absorption of nutrients due to reduced function of the pancreas;
- The need to reduce stress on the pancreas organ and its functions;
- The risk of developing diabetes mellitus which needs to be recognized and monitored;

These factors dictate the need for sufferers to follow general dietary measures if health management and improvement is to be attained. These measures generally include:

- Low fat, high carbohydrate meals (reduce workload on pancreas)
- Smaller more frequent meals (reduce workload on pancreas, reduce diabetes risk)
- Little/No alcohol intake
- Consideration for antioxidant and vitamin/mineral supplementation to aid food and nutrient absorption

The following section on general diet issues gives some guidance and more details on how these measures can be incorporated into your regular routine.

GENERAL DIET TIPS FOR PANCREATITIS

Antioxidants and Vitamin and Mineral Supplements

We've probably all met people who've thought that they could maintain good health just by taking a daily multi-vitamin tablet. If it was only that easy! Antioxidants and Vitamin and Mineral supplements don't replace food and don't mean that you don't need to eat a well-balanced diet. Foods contain a number of other substances that pills do not – things like phytochemicals in plants. Phytochemicals are a large group of plant chemical compounds that have disease prevention properties that protect the plant from toxins and the like. Phytochemicals aren't considered essential nutrients but they are believed to contain qualities that offer health benefits to humans. Supplements however, do have a role to play in successfully combating the effects of pancreatitis. They can help ensure that the person gets the recommended daily allowances (RDA) for many nutrients. Research with older people has shown that a regular vitamin-mineral supplement helped keep them feeling better and seemed to give a positive boost to their immune system which inhibits the effects of infections. It's felt that the same holds true for those suffering from conditions such as pancreatitis.

In some regions of the world food is grown in soils with low levels of trace minerals such as selenium (a trace mineral with known antioxidant qualities). In such circumstances dietary supplementation becomes increasingly important.

It's been said that westerners have the most expensive urine in the world due to their excessive use of vitamin and mineral tablets. If the body doesn't need them it disposes of the excess. So, in selecting supplements, a good 'rule of thumb' is to not take any more than 100% of the RDA (Recommended Daily Allowance) for the individual vitamins and minerals contained in the particular brand of supplement you take. Be very careful about taking supplements in large doses.

Supplements of Antioxidants (particularly Vitamin's C, E and beta carotene) have been promoted as helpful in fighting cancers and other conditions. The same rule applies though – don't go beyond the RDA unless advised by a medical professional.

Maintain Water Intake

Water is essential to good health and the most essential nutrient. Adults are recommended to drink between 8-10 cups per day. I learnt while completing a PE degree that the body's thirst mechanism isn't a good indicator of the body's actual need for fluid. Your real need for fluid precedes your feeling of being thirsty. Hence it's important to be 'forward thinking' in maintaining regular fluid intake. This is particularly necessary when the weather is hot and humid or when you are spending lengthy periods in air-conditioning (where the cooling system extracts water from the air). As Mark mentions in 'Beating Pancreatitis – How to Get Healthy and Enjoy Life Again', maintaining regular consumption of water can be very beneficial in the treatment of pancreatitis. Whilst water intake helps regulate body temperature, it also plays major roles in dissolving solids, helping organ function and transporting nutrients around the body – three functions that are extremely important to pancreatitis sufferers.

A commonly recommended way to check hydration levels is to note one's urine color. Light to clear color is indicative of sufficient fluid intake.

Control Food Odors

Strong food flavors can reduce the appetites of some people with gastrointestinal conditions such as pancreatitis. Indeed many sufferers report being physically ill from the smells generated by the cooking of certain foods. Therefore, the application of herbs and spices, condiments and seasonings may need to be modified to suit the individual's needs. Further, it may be necessary to control odor release. Cooking in a microwave oven usually means fewer odors being released into the open, as does cooking outdoors. Food and drink

consumption can be controlled by covering the meal until just prior to eating or putting a lid on a drink and sipping through a straw.

You might wish to try some of the following ideas when food odors are a problem:

- Try substitute foods. For instance, if cooking red meat makes you feel ill, try fish or chicken as alternative forms of meat protein.
- Experiment. Sometimes you just have to find out what works best through trial and error. Sometimes sweetness is difficult when ill, so a salty stew or soup might be a little more agreeable to the taste. Sometimes flavoured foods (through herbs, spices etc) will work, other times bland things such as plain rice or pasta or some tofu might be easier to eat.
- Drink liquids. Drinking can help get rid of tastes or sensations that cause a feeling of nausea. A drink of water with a slice of lemon and/or chopped mint leaves can sometimes reduce this effect. Drinking liquids a little after eating can help limit the volume of food in the stomach.
- Eat Slowly.
- Don't lie down after meals – gravity might help keep the food down. Drinking liquids 30 mins after eating helps limit the volume of food in the stomach.
- Consider anti-nausea medication – see your physician.

Low-Fat Cooking

Some tips for low-fat cooking include:

- Remove excess fat off meats and skin from chicken. Also, to decrease overall fat consumption, have non-fat dairy products, lean meats, poultry and fish, eggs and beans. Bake, steam or broil foods instead of frying.
- Use a non-stick surface for stir-frying. To prepare the surface, pour on a little cold-pressed oil and spread it with a brush or paper towel. Remove any excess oil. Heat pan and add your ingredients. Don't have the heat

too high (or as high as one might normally have had it if using oil). If the pan begins to smoke it means the temperature is too high.

- Replace oils with water. If a recipe has oil included in it (say for stir-frying) and you don't wish to use it, then just replace the oil with about double the amount of water and reduce the heat.
- Steaming. Food can be placed above simmering water, stock, vegetable juices or you can add your favorite herbs to the water.
- Dry Baking. Food can be placed on a baking tray which is lined with a non-stick baking paper.
- Blanching. Bring a saucepan of water to the boil and drop vegetables into it for a few minutes only. This helps retain the nutrients (which can be lost when vegetables are boiled) and brings out the colours.
- Microwaving. Foods cook in their natural juices (don't add oils).

Fresh or Frozen?

Usually the less processing that food has gone through the better. An average baked potato contains 20 mgs of Vitamin C whereas a canned version has around 14 mgs. French fries have about 1mg. However, there can be other factors to consider. The freezing protocols used in most western countries are now so good that it can be better to eat frozen vegetables. When you consider the nutrient loss that occurs in the time it takes to transport vegetables from farm to supermarket and then from supermarket to your refrigerator and then to your dinner plate, eating frozen versions can sometimes be just as good if not better than eating the 'fresh' product.

Get Used to Reading Food Labels:

The labeling laws in most countries seem to be improving all the time. (These are highly variable I know, but I think the consumer movement world-wide is starting to have a positive impact in this area). Anyway, get used to reviewing the labels on food items purchased at the shopping centre. Check out the fat content in particular and make sure it's not beyond that recommended for you.

You should also check the energy content (kilojoules or calories). Some items advertised as low-fat can also be higher in overall energy than the full-fat version of that food item.

It's also wise to check the sugar levels in foods due to the potential for diabetes. Remember that sugar can be called a variety of things on labels, such as sucrose, glucose, dextrose, fructose, glucose syrup – in fact most ingredients ending in 'ose' or having 'syrup' in their name are sugars. Avoid foods with these ingredients.

Preserving nutrients in food

Remember to handle your food carefully. Bruising the food can increase its rate of deterioration.

Don't use too much water when cooking as nutrients can leach when foods are boiled. Microwave and steaming retain more nutrients in the food.

Store root vegetables such as potatoes, in a cool dark spot which is well-ventilated

Store fruits in the refrigerator. Flavor can be enhanced by bringing them to room temperature just before eating.

Keep the moisture levels in vegetables by storing them in the refrigerator either in the vegetable section or wrapped in plastic.

Food poisoning

As mentioned earlier, poor storage and handling can increase deterioration rates. In particular, store all animal produce (meats, eggs, milk) at cold temperatures before cooking to prevent bacteria developing. Keep items in their own areas in the refrigerator – don't put your vegetables next to your meats for instance.

Keep the refrigerator below 40 degrees Fahrenheit or 5 degrees centigrade.

Beware of the Diabetes Threat

Diabetes mellitus can be a very real threat for many pancreatitis sufferers due to the reduced capacity of the pancreas to produce insulin. Important aspects of a diabetic diet include having meals on a regular basis (quite often smaller meals eaten more often in order to offset the chance of hypoglycemia or low blood sugar levels) and controlled fat, carbohydrate, sugar and total calorie intake. Low cholesterol is also often recommended for diabetics due to the greater risk of heart disease in those with diabetes.

Our taste buds have become so used to increased sugar in our foods that reducing our intake can be very difficult as our taste buds have to become re-adjusted to the natural sweetness in foods. Gradually moving off sugar is probably the best way although for some with pancreatitis it can be necessary to go 'cold turkey'. Finding alternatives is often the best strategy. Artificial sweeteners are often recommended to those with diabetes. Personally, I don't like them. Better to try and reduce your dependency on sugar by either cutting it out or trying a natural sweetener like Stevia.

Ask Questions of Your Health Care Providers.

This point is a key factor in retaining and maintaining good health. As with questions about your condition, it's also important to ask about the state of your condition and what impact this might have on your dietary habits. For instance, after an attack of acute pancreatitis it is common for the patient to be given clear liquids once eating is resumed (often after being fed intravenously). Afterwards a relatively soft food, fiber-restricted diet is undertaken. As time progresses and improvement is made it is likely that the patient will be able to move on to more solid food.

Generally the rules that apply to diet for pancreatitis sufferers are:

- Low-fat – due to the difficulty in digesting fats because of impaired pancreas function

- Enzyme therapy – to help replace those lost due to impaired pancreas function
- Moderate to High carbohydrate – easier to digest
- Moderate protein intake – although this can vary as some protein can be difficult to digest
- Quite often smaller, more regular meals (4-6 times per day) are recommended in order to ease the workload on the pancreas. Large meals are usually not recommended and can sometimes cause pain to occur.
- Foods to be eaten include vegetables, fruit (although some restriction on fruits may be necessary if the sufferer has diabetes or is having difficulty controlling blood sugar levels), grains, nonfat or low-fat dairy products.

Malnutrition

Some people need to be aware of the possibility of malnutrition. As read in the book 'Beating Pancreatitis – How to Get Healthy and Enjoy Life Again', some people have great difficulty regaining their appetite as a result of pancreatitis and for these people it is essential that they closely monitor their food intake in order to ward off the effects of malnutrition, symptoms of which can be weight loss, dry skin, brittle finger and toe nails and reduced luster in the hair.

It's important then to consider the calorie needs of individuals. This can vary a lot depending on the size (weight and muscularity) of the person, how physically active they are, their sex, any other ailments they might have and of course, the severity of their pancreatic dysfunction. A very general rule of thumb in determining a persons daily calorie needs is to take their weight in pounds, add a zero and add their weight in pounds. The final figure gives you the number of calories per day they would require to maintain their existing body weight. So for example, a person who weighs 200 pounds would need to consume 2200 calories of food per day in order to remain at 200 pounds (200 add zero = 2000 +

200 = 2200). Of course this could increase if the person is active and could be decreased if a person is overweight.

Should I Become a Vegetarian?

It's believed that vegetarians are 20% less likely to be overweight than meat eaters. Researchers believe that this is because fruits, vegetables, grains and legumes are naturally low in fat. They also believe that plant-based foods are used more efficiently by the body as the nutrients from plants are absorbed better and the energy is less likely to be stored as fat. Managing weight is not the only thing for which a vegetarian diet is useful. It has been found that vegetarians have lower rates of heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and some forms of cancer. It looks like a vegetarian diet could have some benefits for the pancreatitis sufferer also. Certainly the low-fat nature of vegetarian meals makes them attractive to those with pancreatitis. As does the fact that the absorption of nutrients from plants seems to be easier than nutrients from animal-based foods. The choice of whether or not to take on a vegetarian diet however is a matter of choice for the individual. It depends on the severity of their pancreatic condition and their own disposition towards vegetarian eating. Some people are concerned about not getting enough of the right protein, iron and zinc from a vegetarian diet. Alternative plant-based proteins from legumes, nuts, seeds and soy-based products (soy beans, soy milk, tofu etc) can more than adequately compensate. In terms of iron needs, foods such as spinach, broccoli, wholegrain cereals and the like are high in iron. Having a food that is high in vitamin C with your meal can help iron absorption. Having a glass of orange juice (or better still, have the raw fruit itself) with your meal can help vitamin C absorption. Zinc is particularly important as a boost to the immune system. Snacking on foods such as pumpkin seeds, cashew nuts and other beans (red beans, lima beans, black eyed beans etc) is good for zinc absorption.

The Use of Bran in the Diet

Adding soluble fiber to the diet has been shown to reduce blood cholesterol and aid in digestion. Insoluble fiber it seems does not play as important a role in reducing blood cholesterol, but it is an important aid in normal bowel function. Foods that are high in soluble fiber include oat bran, oatmeal, beans, peas, rice bran, barley and citrus fruits. Insoluble fiber is contained in wheat cereals, wheat bran, cabbage, brussels sprouts, cauliflower and apple skin. Oat bran is a recommended addition to many meals, principally because of its reported superior ability to reduce blood cholesterol. Monitoring blood cholesterol is recommended as those with pancreatitis are more prone to developing diabetes and people with diabetes are more likely to develop a heart condition. So blood cholesterol is important. Also of importance is to check the labels of foods promoting themselves as high in fiber. For instance, some muffins and waffles are promoted as being made from oat bran or wheat bran. In fact some of these products contain very little bran.

Is Organic Better for Pancreatitis?

The debate over whether or not organic produce is better for you than conventional foods rages on. You can read reports that say there is no difference in the vitamin and mineral content of organic foods compared to conventional foods. On the other hand there are reports that say organic foods have higher levels of antioxidants because of the reduced levels of pesticides and antibiotics in the growing of organic produce. There are a number of pros and cons in relation to eating organic food. Some say it tastes better, that it gives you a greater sense of wellbeing by feeling more 'connected' to the food you are eating and that doing so is better for the environment. On the other hand, organic foods don't usually have the same appearance as conventional produce (ie they often look different because of blemishes etc) and often they are more expensive. Weighing all this up, what is best for the pancreatitis sufferer? Well, the bottom line is that everyone could benefit from more fruits and vegetables in our diets. If organics helps you with this, then you should be encouraged to buy

organic produce. Personally, I think organic is best especially for those who have an existing medical condition. You don't want any chemical additives to the food you eat whether they impact upon your condition or not. And the way things are at the moment, who can be sure that they don't have an effect!

If you're concerned about the cost, then you could mix organics with conventional produce. The important thing is to make sure you know what you are buying. Check labels to make sure the produce comes from certified organic farmers and producers. This goes for all types of food – fruit, vegetables and meat produce. Of course, a really good alternative is to try growing vegetables and fruit yourself. You then have control over what happens to the plant whilst it grows. It can also be a great project for the family!

Eating and Pain

Some days, some people with pancreatitis find that eating just causes them too much pain and eating 5-6 smaller meals in the day just seems impossible. Mostly in these circumstances sufferers are recommended to fast, that is refrain from eating in order to rest their pancreas from the job of helping to digest food. Obviously, each situation can be different so it's important to liaise with your health professional about your response to this circumstance, however most of the time it seems rest and liquid intake are recommended. In terms of liquids, commence with sipping water and other clear fluids (eg: vegetable stock) and gradually build up until other nourishing liquids and light meals can be tolerated. If there is continued difficulty keeping the fluids down then it is imperative that one seek medical assistance.

RECIPES - Discussion

These recipes provide dishes that are generally low in fat and high in carbohydrates. The question of what proportions of fats, carbohydrates and proteins to recommend to the general population has been a rather perplexing issue for governments and health professionals for some time. In fact the debate still rages over which diets are best for maintaining healthy weight (we won't get into how one defines what healthy weight is – that's another debate on its own. Witness the arguments over the Atkins diet for one!). Even for the population of pancreatitis sufferers it is difficult to make hard and fast rules for everyone's benefit. **The cause and severity of the condition will differ from person to person and each individual has a different health profile and background.**

Other variants can also include factors such as the differences between acute and chronic pancreatitis, whether the patient is recovering from an attack and cultural differences in food preparation.

For instance, there's still quite some argument over the best way of providing nutrient support to those who've just suffered an attack of pancreatitis. Louie and others in the Canadian Journal of Surgery (August 2005, Vol 48, No 4, p 299) reported that traditional approaches prescribed fasting as a means of resting the pancreas and avoiding the production of enzymes that would progress the disease. This approach provided nutrients via intravenous means. Now, consuming nutrients orally is being used more frequently due to lower incidences of trauma and complications from intravenous methods. The differences in the severity of the condition and the effect this can have on a patient's future food consumption is explained in this study with the following quote,

“It is generally agreed that mild, acute pancreatitis has little impact on the patient's nutritional status. Accordingly, most patient's with mild pancreatitis are kept fasting until they can resume oral intake.

Patients with severe, acute pancreatitis, however, suffer increased resting energy requirements and reductions in protein mass. Prolonged fasting in these patients exacerbates these metabolic changes and may influence the outcome. Therefore, nutritional support may improve outcome and reduce complications in severe pancreatitis.”

Furthermore, there are cultural differences especially in diet and food preparation that should be considered.

Studies of pancreatitis sufferers around the world have found differences in the proportions of fats, carbohydrates and proteins consumed. Patients in Europe had higher fat intake, those in Africa and India were substantially lower but were also generally higher in fat consumption than were patients from other parts of Asia. (Sarles as reported in Singh et al, 1999, 'Nutritional Profile of Patients with Chronic Pancreatitis', Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition, Vol 8).

This study went on to report that the nutritional status of pancreatitis sufferers could be affected by two areas – during attacks, food consumption is either voluntarily or therapeutically reduced and after recovering from attacks, nutrition can be affected by the person's reduced capacity to absorb nutrients in food. It recommended that once the condition had stabilized, nutrition should be improved by increasing total calorie intake. This study did not, however, consider the differences between varying levels of nutrient and total calorie consumption and the effects these might have on the recurrence or severity of future bouts of pancreatitis.

So where are we with all this? It seems as though it's better for those with pancreatitis to have a low-fat diet. But, how low do you go and are all types of fat excluded?

Collins and O'Neill state in 'Nursing', (2004, 'What Can You Say About Restricting Fat? Volume 34, No 6) that restricting dietary fat isn't an all-or-nothing proposition. The body needs a certain amount of fat in order to function and we know that malnutrition can be a major factor for those with pancreatitis. Fat intake is important. So before we start up the 'Hate Fat' campaign, perhaps we should understand that fat helps regulate many nutrients in cells and facilitates the release of a number of hormones essential for healthy bodily function. Most health authorities recommend that approximately 30% of total calories come from fat. For an average woman this is around 70 grams and the average man, around 80 grams of fat per day. For active people this can increase.

So, it seems we're in a bind – we need to lower fat intake because of the increased pressure on the pancreas due to its role in digestion and yet, we need fat as an essential provider of both calories and nutrients! So, what are we to do? Again, there are no hard and fast rules. The best advice seems to be that which is generally accepted for the whole population. That is, make sure that most of the fats you have are good fats and maintain an intake of food and supplements that are going to ensure you get the best range of nutrients possible. And, of course, as we heard in 'Beating Pancreatitis – How to Get Healthy and Enjoy Life Again', keep questioning your health service providers about the nature and severity of your condition and educate yourself so you can ask the right questions and find out what you should do in relation to your food intake. So, in relation to fats, how does one differentiate between good fats and bad? Here's a general guide:

Good Fats.

These include monounsaturated (mainly from vegetable sources and are liquid at room temperature. Polyunsaturated fats (from vegetables, nuts and seeds predominantly) are also liquid at room temperature.

Bad Fats.

Bad fats are the saturated fats which are usually solid at room temperature and found mostly from animal products (including butter, lard etc) and palm and coconut oils as well. We're also hearing more nowadays about trans-fatty acids being bad for you. These fatty acids are formed during the processing of vegetable oils. They are thought to be bad because they raise levels of low-density lipoproteins (the bad form of cholesterol). Trans-fatty acids are often labeled as 'hydrogenated vegetable oils' on food labels.

OK, so it sounds relatively easy – increase the good fats, minimize the bad. However, it seems as though it's not entirely that simple for the person with difficulty absorbing nutrients as is the case for so many with pancreatitis. Collins and O'Neill again report in 'What Can You Say About Restricting Fat?' that medium-chain triglycerides (MCT) are fats with a chemical structure that helps the body absorb them more readily. MCT's are processed differently. When we eat a fat containing MCT's, it travels through the stomach and into the small intestine. It seems MCT's allow increased absorption of other nutrients and seem to have anti-bacterial, anti-fungal and anti-viral benefits. Bruce Fife in his article 'Coconut Oil – A Miracle Food' (in 'Living Now', Qld Issue 85, June 2006, pp16-18) says that it is primarily the presence of MCT's in human breast milk that enables it to provide such protection to babies. But guess what constitutes MCT – coconut and palm kernel oils – mentioned above as bad fats! Could it be that these fats are sometimes bad and sometimes good? That appears to be the case. Coconut and palm kernel oils might be bad for you if you have cholesterol problems, but MCTs are easier to metabolize than other forms of fat and can therefore be helpful for those with nutrient absorption problems. Coconut and palm oils are not included in any of the recipes contained in this book as it seems from research that MCT consumption needs to be controlled and is best consumed in the form of a supplement. We'll keep monitoring this situation. In the meantime, you might consider some MCT or coconut oil supplementation,

however make sure you see your doctor and/or dietitian about this, particularly if you have diabetes. Dosage needs to be controlled and is individual-specific.

Fresh Is Best.

It is best to try and use the freshest ingredients possible. Preservatives in food are usually troublesome for people with digestive disorders so the ingredients in these recipes generally use fresh produce. Of course, this isn't always feasible and it will be necessary to replace fresh with processed items (usually canned or frozen).

Eggs

Some ingredients in the recipes below may not be suitable for every person with pancreatitis – either because of individual taste differences or because of the nature of your condition. Take for instance the use of eggs in recipes. Some people with pancreatitis may have no difficulty with eggs in their diet. Others may have a problem with various egg substitutes on the market. Generally, recipes try to minimize the amount of egg used because of the amount of fat they contain. This is not to be critical of eggs as they are a tremendous nutrient source. It's just that we've tried to minimize the fat levels and generally recommend replacing eggs in recipes as a means of doing this. Eggs contain cholesterol and some fat in the yolk, but not in the white. Research seems to suggest that an egg per day is quite acceptable if you do not have high cholesterol. With pancreatitis it really depends on your individual circumstances in relation to how strict you must be with fat as well as your individual tolerance levels. Some people might enjoy eggs and be able to tolerate them well. If this is the case, then alter the recipes to suit your individual needs. If in doubt, check with your doctor or dietitian. Sometimes it's a matter of trial and error.

Oils

Similarly, the use of oils is kept to a minimum. However, some people may have been advised strictly not to use oils at all in their diets. Again, this will depend on

the nature and severity of your condition. In most cases, the use of additional oils and fats is kept to a minimum in the recipes here.

Sugar and Diabetes

These recipes are all low in sugar. However carbohydrate foods can influence blood sugars too. If you have diabetes you will need to check blood sugar levels to determine the effects these foods are having. The question of artificial sweeteners arises when considering diabetes. My favorite is stevia, which is a natural product made from a herb originally found in Paraguay. From my research there are still a number of unanswered questions relating to artificial products such as saccharine and aspartame, so my preference is to stick to stevia. I've used stevia as a sweetener where required in the recipes below, however if you prefer other products then that is fine – the choice is yours. Some people may still prefer to use sugar or honey. Again the choice is yours. Nevertheless, most of the recipes in this book are low-sugar as well as low-fat. My thinking is that with the risk of diabetes with pancreatitis then it is best to keep sugar intake under control. Individuals may wish to be guided by their own judgement of their condition and the advice of their health carers in relation to this and make modifications as they see fit.

Herbs and Spices

Another area of concern for some is the use of herbs and spices. Some people with pancreatitis report having difficulty with food smells and must restrict their intake to meals with minimal added flavours. Again, in using these recipes, be aware of your tolerance to herb and spice ingredients and make modifications to suit your situation. Generally, I've tried to balance the use of these to provide some amount of flavor without being overpowering.

Make sure you check ingredients in each recipe to ensure that they don't include ingredients that you should not eat.

Using the Recipes

In writing this book, I didn't set out to prescribe a set of meals for different periods of the day. However, in organizing the various sections, it just became easier to title them under the different headings used. Some meals might be obviously meals for breakfast, but as far as I'm concerned, these recipes can be eaten at any time of the day depending upon your personal requirements. Main meals are often thought of as meals for an evening, but again this is not meant to say that recipes within the 'Main Meals' section must be consumed at that part of the day. Pancreatitis sufferers are often recommended to eat smaller and fewer meals – between 4 and 6 per day. If this is the case for you, then use these meals or portions thereof to suit your needs. Many of the recipes include a number of servings. This has been done in consideration for ease of cooking. Energy and fat readings are provided as a guide for those who need to monitor these readings in their overall diet.

ENTREES & APPETISERS

Hors d'oeuvre toast

Four (4) slices wholemeal bread
1 teaspoon finely chopped garlic
2 teaspoons finely chopped parsley or basil
Salt and pepper
Few drops of water or olive oil

Pre-heat oven to 220 degrees centigrade (425 degrees F)

Remove crust from bread slices. Using rolling pin, flatten out bread slices. Cut into about 40 mm (1 ½ inch) squares – 4 squares per slice of bread.

Place garlic, parsley or basil in a mortar. Add a few drops of water or olive oil and crush. Take small amount of mix and spread on each square of flattened bread.

Place oven paper on a baking tray. Place squares of bread on tray and bake in oven for 10 minutes or until brown and crisp. Use as a base for savory toppings.

Variation: Instead of fresh garlic you can use minced garlic which is sold in bottled form. This usually has a little vegetable oil as an ingredient so you might wish not to use the few drops of olive oil in the mixture.

NB: The odor of the garlic and herbs can be quite strong when preparing these toasts, however this lessens substantially once cooked and the taste is not as strong as might be thought during preparation.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve (1 square): Energy 21 calories (86 kj), 0.54 grams fat.

Sweet Potato & Sunflower Balls

400 g (about ½ pound) orange sweet potato (also known as kumera)
1 cup fresh breadcrumbs (take a couple of slices of 1-2 day old bread and pick out small chunks of bread to make up required amount)
2 tablespoons low-fat natural set yoghurt
1 tablespoon fresh oregano (or 1 teaspoon of dried)
1 teaspoon ground cumin seeds
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
¼ cup sunflower seeds

Peel and cut sweet potato into small pieces. Place in saucepan and cover with water. Bring to boil and then simmer until sweet potato is cooked. Mash the potato with a masher or fork. Add breadcrumbs, yoghurt, oregano and pepper and stir through the mixture. Shape into balls and roll mixture over sunflower seeds. Place on baking tray lined with baking paper. Bake at 200°C (390°F) for 20-25 minutes or until golden and crisp.

Makes about 20 balls

Nutrition Notes Per Serve (1 ball): Energy - 42 calories (179 kj), Fat - 1.9 grams.

Salmon Packets

105 g (4 oz) can of red or pink salmon
1 tablespoon fresh coriander, chopped (or 1 teaspoon dried)
1 zucchini
1 small yellow squash
3 spring onions or shallots, finely chopped
2 level dessertspoons low-fat yoghurt
Freshly ground pepper
4 sheets filo pastry
Water for brushing filo sheets

Preheat oven to 200°C/400°F. Lightly brush a sheet of baking paper with some oil or alternatively give it a quick spray from a can of unsaturated oil. Drain salmon and remove any unwanted skin and bones. Place salmon in a bowl, add coriander and mix with a fork until salmon pieces are separated and coriander is mixed through well. Cut zucchini lengthways down the centre and cut squash in half. Place in a covered bowl and microwave on high for a minute or until the insides of these vegetables are soft. Remove and rinse these in cold water quickly to cool off slightly. Using a teaspoon, scoop out the flesh from each vegetable and mix in with salmon and coriander. Add shallots and pepper and mix. Place single sheet of filo pastry on a clean surface and lightly brush with oil or water. Cut into six squares, about 10 cm or 4 inches. Repeat with remaining sheets to have 12 squares in all. Place a spoonful of salmon mix on to each square. Brush the edges of the pastry with oil or water and then draw the edges together and press them to seal. Place on the baking sheet and bake for approximately 15 minutes, until golden brown. Serve warm with lettuce and spring onion salad.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve (1 packet): Energy - 30 calories (125 kJ), Fat - 0.46 grams.

Triple 'A' Paste

90 grams dried apricots (about 15 pieces)
90 grams whole almonds (about 75 nuts)
water
1 large apple, chopped

Place apricots and almonds in a bowl. Just cover them with water. Let them soak overnight. Put this mixture in a blender. Add in chopped apple (leave the skin on – 75% of the antioxidants are in the skin). Blend until smooth paste is attained. Store in a glass jar in the refrigerator. Can be used as a dip, on sandwiches or on toasted bread.

Nutrition Notes Total for Recipe: **Energy - 515 calories (2155 kj), Fat – 15g.**
1 heaped teaspoon (16g approx) **Energy – 17 calories (70 kj), Fat – 5g**

Tofu Dip

300 grams (bit over ½ pound) soft tofu
2 tablespoons mayonnaise (see recipe in this book)
2 teaspoons dried dill
1 teaspoon lemon juice
freshly ground black pepper

Puree all ingredients in a food processor or hand blender until smooth. Scoop into a glass bowl. Cover and refrigerate.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve (1 tsp): **Energy - 14 calories (66 kj), Fat – 0.76 grams.**

Lentil & Ginger Dip

½ cup red lentils
1 medium carrot, chopped
1 ½ cups water
¼ teaspoon mild curry powder
1 clove garlic, crushed or very finely chopped
1 tablespoon fresh ginger, grated
½ cup low-fat natural yoghurt
freshly ground pepper to taste

I use canned lentils for this recipe. Put water, lentils, carrot, curry, garlic and ginger in a saucepan. Bring slowly to the boil. Reduce heat and allow to simmer until carrot is soft, usually 10-15 minutes. Allow to cool a little and then place mixture in a food processor or blender. Add yoghurt. Blend. Season with pepper. Serve warm on toast hors d'oeuvres.

**Nutrition Notes Total Dish: Energy - 205 calories (664kj), Fat – 0.49grams.
Per teaspoon (approx): 303 calories (16kj), Fat - .012g**

Avocado Dip

Avocados are relatively high in fat, but it's certainly a good fat. They are great spread lightly on bread as a natural substitute for butter or margarine. This recipe has a higher fat content than other dips, so you might need to be careful how much you have.

1 tomato, chopped
½ teaspoon Tabasco sauce
½ small onion chopped
2 teaspoons lemon juice
½ cup ricotta cheese
1 tablespoon tomato sauce or low-fat salsa
1 avocado

Put all ingredients into a food processor or blender. Blend until smooth. Serve with crackers, carrot or celery sticks.

**Nutrition Notes Total Dish: Energy - 407 calories (1707kj), Fat – 28.7 grams.
Per teaspoon (approx): 20 calories (85kj), 1.435g**

SOUPS

Soups are fantastic sources of sustenance. They can provide lots of nutrients and usually place less of a burden on the digestive system. Many soups use a stock as their base. I've included recipes for vegetable, chicken and beef stocks below. They form the basis of many recipes or can be consumed as a soup themselves. You can also purchase some reasonably good low-fat stocks from health stores and supermarkets. Some commercially made stocks can have added fat, sugar and salt however so check labels. You can of course de-fat these stocks in the same manner you do the chicken and beef stocks below, that is by placing them in a refrigerator and allowing the fat to harden. This can be removed before use. Of course if you wish you can replace stock used in recipes by using the equivalent amount of water. Once prepared stock can be frozen in ice cubes or cups to be used when desired.

Vegetable Stock

2 medium onions, quartered
2 medium carrots, cut into large chunks
1 stick of celery, cut into large chunks
1 turnip, peeled and quartered
1 parsnip, peeled and quartered
1 bay leaf
1 tablespoon of favorite fresh herb (eg: basil, sage, chives, marjoram or parsley)
4 cups of water

Put all ingredients in a large saucepan. Cover and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer until all ingredients are soft. Strain liquid off and allow to cool. Place in an airtight container and put in refrigerator for use as required.

Nutrition Notes: Energy and Fat is negligible.

Chicken Stock

1 chicken (cut up, including bones but with skin removed)
1.5 litres of water (6 cups)
2 onions, roughly cut
Peppercorns (however many you like – say, somewhere between 5-15)
Large stick of celery chopped
1 carrot chopped
Bay leaf
1 teaspoon fresh oregano (or ½ teaspoon dried)

Place chicken pieces in a large saucepan and cover with water. Add all vegetables and herbs. Bring to boil. Reduce the heat and allow to simmer for up to another hour and forty-five minutes. Remove chicken and strain liquid to remove the vegetables. Allow stock to settle in a refrigerator and remove fat from the surface after it has formed. Return stock to refrigerator. Use in 3-4 days or alternatively place in freezer.

Variation: I also like to add a little fresh garlic and ginger to this recipe. Depends on your tastes.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve (1 cup): Energy - 40 calories (168 kj), Fat - 0.7 gram.

Beef Stock

1 kilogram (2 pounds) beef bones
1 carrot, chopped
1 large onion, chopped roughly
1 stick celery, chopped
2 bay leaves
2 teaspoons minced garlic
1.5 litres (6 cups) water
Peppercorns (again, as many as you like – around 5-15)

Heat pan and sauté bones (either with a little oil, or water) until brown. Add all the vegetables and water. Bring to boil then reduce heat and allow to simmer for 3-4 hours. Remove bones and larger matter remaining. Strain remaining liquid and store stock in refrigerator. When set, remove fat from surface. Return stock to refrigerator or freeze.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve (1 cup): Energy - 50 calories (210 kj), Fat - 1.0 gram.

Cream of Pumpkin Soup

2 teaspoons of cold-pressed light olive oil (alternatively you can use 2 teaspoons low-fat margarine or 4 teaspoons of water instead)
1 chopped onion
1 chopped stick of celery
500 grams or 1 pound of medium-sized pumpkin pieces (leave skin on for the time being)
1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups water, vegetable stock or low-fat chicken stock
1 tablespoon finely chopped parsley
1 teaspoon finely chopped marjoram
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups low-fat soy milk

In large saucepan, heat oil and fry onion until translucent. Add celery and cook for further 3 minutes. Remove from heat.

Place pumpkin pieces in a large saucepan and cover with water. Boil. Then lower heat and simmer until pumpkin is soft. Drain water. Remove skin. Place pumpkin, onion and celery mix, parsley, marjoram and soy milk in blender (or use hand held blender) and blend until smooth. Return soup to heat and bring to boil. Serve hot.

Variation: Try serving with pieces of hors d'oeuvre toast either on side or mixed in with soup. Can also replace soy milk with low-fat cow's milk if you prefer the taste.

Nutrition Notes Total for Recipe: Energy - 502 calories (2533 kj), Fat - 16.25 grams.

Chicken Broth With Pasta & Chives

1.5 litres (6 cups) low-fat chicken stock (see recipe above)
1 small onion, sliced
1 small carrot, peeled and coarsely chopped
1/8 teaspoon dried thyme
155 grams (5 oz) dried soup pasta (stelline, ditalini or farfalline)
1 tablespoon fresh chives, chopped finely
Salt and pepper to taste
2 teaspoons grated parmesan cheese
1 slice of low-fat cheese, chopped

I've used a combination of parmesan and a slice of the lowest fat cheese I could get my hands on. In this case a slice of supa-lite (21g slice = 1.5g fat). However, you may be able to get lower-fat varieties. You could also try to get a lower-fat replacement for the parmesan. The recipe is nice enough without the cheese, so if cheese is a problem for you just leave it out.

Heat stock in a large saucepan. Add pasta and cook as per the package instructions or until pasta is al dente. Add chives and salt and pepper. Stir to mix well. Mix parmesan and chopped cheese in a bowl. Ladle soup into individual bowls and sprinkle with cheese. Serve hot.

Serves 4.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve: Energy - 237 calories (954 kj), Fat – 2.85 gram

Chunky Veggie Soup

½ cup uncooked steel-cut oats or oat groats (or you can also try either barley or millet with this)
1 onion chopped
1 teaspoon minced garlic
1 fennel bulb, cut into fine slivers
2 carrots, chopped
1 swede, sliced
3 zucchini cut into chunks
6 florets broccoli
1 potato cut into chunks
½ cup peas
2 litres (8 cups) low-fat chicken or vegetable stock or water
Ground pepper to season
½ cup fresh parsley

Rinse grain in water. Heat a little water in large pot or saucepan. Add onion, garlic and fennel. Cook for 1-2 minutes until onion is clear. Add oats, vegetables and stock and bring to boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 1 ½ hours. Add pepper and parsley and serve.

Serves 5.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve: Energy - 184 calories (770 kj), Fat – 1.98 grams

Bill's Borsch

1 teaspoon cold-pressed olive oil
1 onion chopped
3 teaspoons minced garlic
1 teaspoon minced ginger
2 medium beetroot, peeled and grated
1.5 litres (6 cups) beef stock
2 ½ cups shredded cabbage
2 teaspoons fresh thyme (or ½ teaspoon dried)

Heat oil in large saucepan and add onion, garlic, ginger and beetroot. Reduce heat and cover pan for a few minutes. Add stock, cabbage and thyme and bring to boil. Reduce to simmer. Cook for 30 minutes. Season with salt and pepper if you so desire.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve: Energy - 117 calories (500 kj), Fat – 2.75 grams

Minestrone

Minestrone usually calls for bacon as the meat ingredient. Bacon is very fatty meat, so I've replaced it here with a little ham. Try to get the leanest slices you can.

- 100 g fresh pasta
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 2 small onions, chopped
- 2 slices of lean ham 50 grams
- 220 gram can red kidney beans
- ½ small cabbage
- 100 grams spinach, washed and chopped
- 3 small-medium potatoes, chopped
- 2 carrots, chopped
- ½ cup peas (fresh or frozen)
- 1 stick celery, chopped
- 2 litres chicken stock (see above recipe or purchase low-fat brand)
- 2 teaspoons grated parmesan cheese
- 1 slice of low-fat cheese, chopped

Heat garlic, onion and ham in a pan with a little water. Saute for 1-2 minutes. Add all other ingredients except pasta and cheese. Bring to the boil. Allow to simmer covered for 30-40 minutes. Stir in pasta and cook until it is al dente. Mix cheeses together in a separate bowl and sprinkle over each serving just prior to eating.

Serves 6.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve: Energy - 260 calories (1085 kj), Fat – 2.82 grams

Broccoli and Pasta Soup

100 gram fresh pasta, cooked al dente
1 kilogram (2 pounds) broccoli, cut into florets
1 teaspoon minced garlic
1 large onion
3 zucchini chopped
2 tablespoons parsley chopped
1.5 litres (6 cups) chicken stock

Cook garlic and onion in a little water. Add broccoli and sauté for a couple of minutes. Add zucchini, parsley and chicken stock. (add a little salt and pepper at this stage too if you like). Bring to boil, then allow mixture to simmer for 20-30 minutes until vegetables are cooked. Add cooked pasta and heat through. Serves 4.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve: Energy - 240 calories (1004kj), Fat – 2.15 grams

Variation: Similar to the minestrone, you can add a sprinkle of cheese to the top of each serving of this recipe too.

Chicken Udon Noodle Soup

450 grams or 1 pound udon noodles
1 litre (4 cups) chicken stock (see recipe above)
4-5 shallots or spring onions finely chopped
1 carrot chopped
Cooked and cut up breast of chicken or 100 grams tofu sliced

Prepare noodles as per instructions. Place stock in a large saucepan, add all ingredients and bring to the boil slowly. Simmer until carrot is tender. Add Udon noodles and allow to simmer for another 5-10 minutes. Serves 4.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve: Energy - 233 calories (981 kj), Fat – 1.9 grams

Beef Soba Noodles

10 dried shiitake mushrooms
1 tablespoon cold-pressed olive oil
175g/6ozs fillet or rump steak, fat trimmed and cut into strips
175g/6ozs firm tofu cut into 2 cm/3/4 inch squares
1.5 litres/6 cups beef stock
2 cups spinach roughly cut
6 spring onions sliced
Small Chinese cabbage or Pak Choy roughly sliced
450g/1lb of soba noodles (soba noodles are made from buckwheat) cooked

Soak the mushrooms in a tea cup of hot water for 20 minutes. Remove hard stems and slice the caps thinly.

Heat oil in wok or large pan and stir fry steak, turning constantly until it is sealed. Don't overcook. Remove meat and put aside. Add other vegetables and stir-fry for 2 minutes. Add beef stock and bring to boil. Add mushrooms and allow mixture to simmer for 10 minutes. Add noodles and steak and cover on low heat for another 2 minutes. Serve hot.

Nutrition Notes. Per Serve (8 serves in total): Energy - 170 calories (714 kj), Fat – 6.075 grams

Cauliflower Soup

¼ fresh cauliflower
1 small onion, chopped
1 small potato, chopped
2 cups low-fat chicken stock (see above or you can use packaged, low-fat stock or water)
1 tablespoon cornflour
¼ cup skim-milk powder or soy milk powder

Put all ingredients except the cornflour and milk powder in a saucepan. Bring to boil and simmer for 25 minutes.

Gently mash all ingredients with a potato masher for a chunky consistency or use a blender if you prefer a smoother texture. Mix cornflour and skim milk to a paste in a little water. Then add to the soup mix to thicken. Serves 2.

Variation: You could add a little garlic to the mix for extra flavour.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve: Energy - 197 calories (830 kj), Fat – 0.7 grams

Corn and Crab Chowder

2 cups fresh corn cut off the cob
200g canned crab meat, drained
2 medium potatoes, diced
1 medium onion, diced
3 cups low-fat chicken stock (see above)
½ cup skim milk powder or soy milk powder

Place all ingredients except crab meat and milk powder in a saucepan and gently simmer until cooked. Add crab meat. Before serving add skim milk powder mixed in a little water. Serves 4.

Variation: Of course you can use fresh cooked crab meat, it's just that canned is more convenient. However, look out for additional ingredients in the canned version (eg: sugar and salts). This is also nice with fresh fish. Cut the fish into small slices and stir-fry in a little oil prior to adding to the soup mix.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve: Energy - 235 calories (987 kJ), Fat – 1 gram

Potato & Corn Chowder

1 tsp olive oil
1 medium onion, diced finely
3 potatoes peeled and diced finely
2 cups low-fat soy milk (or low-fat milk)
2 cobs corn
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
1 cup water
Pinch nutmeg

Heat oil in a saucepan. Stir in onion and fry for 2 minutes. Add potato and water. Cover and bring to boil.

Use sharp knife to remove corn kernels from the cobs. Add to saucepan with milk, nutmeg and parsley. Reduce heat and simmer uncovered for 8-10 minutes or until potato is very tender and soup has thickened.
Serves 4.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve: Energy - 198 calories (713 kJ), Fat – 2 1 grams

Quick Vegetable Soup

You can try any combination of veggies with this recipe, but here's some for starters.

- 1 medium potato, chopped
- 1 carrot, chopped
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 cup of cauliflower
- 1 zucchini, chopped
- 1 stick celery
- ½ pumpkin, diced (remove skin)
- ½ cup corn cut from the cob
- ½ cup beans, sliced
- 2 small yellow squash, sliced
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon minced ginger
- 4 cups low-fat beef stock (see above)
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste (salt-free)

Put all ingredients into a large saucepan and simmer gently for 30-40 minutes until vegetables are tender and the soup is reasonably thick. Add extra water if you wish. Add tomato paste for extra flavour. Serves 4.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve: Energy - 191 calories (788 kJ), Fat – 1.27 gram

Vegetable and Rice Soup

2 carrots sliced
2 sticks celery, chopped
2 medium onions, chopped
1 zucchini, chopped
4 medium sized florets broccoli
1 cup mushrooms, chopped
4 cups low-fat, chicken or beef stock (see above recipes)
½ cup brown rice, raw
1 tablespoon tomato paste, salt free
½ cup skim milk powder

Place all ingredients except soy milk powder into a saucepan and bring to the boil. Simmer gently until rice is cooked.

Add soy powder mixed with a little water just before serving. Serves 4.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve: Energy - 239 calories (981 kJ), Fat – 1.34 grams

Variation: You can replace the rice with the equivalent amount of barley grain.

Crab & Tofu Soup

2 teaspoons olive oil
2 shallots sliced
1 teaspoon minced garlic
3 mini squash, sliced
6 florets of broccoli
2 carrots sliced
500 mls (2 cups) chicken stock (use recipe in this book or 99% fat-free variety)
1 cup water
½ cup crab meat (canned or fresh)
1 tablespoon low-salt fish sauce
1 tablespoon low-salt soy sauce
1 cup cooked brown rice

Heat oil in pan. Add shallots and garlic and stir fry for 1 minute. Add other vegetables and stir for a couple more minutes. Add chicken stock, water, crab meat and sauces and bring to boil. Turn down heat and allow to simmer for 10 minutes. Add rice and stir through. Simmer again for a few minutes and serve. Serves 3.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve: Energy - 210 calories (855 kj), Fat – 5.4grams

Variation: You can replace rice with noodles for an equally nutritious meal.

Tomato Minestrone

500 g (1 pound) tomatoes
1 onion
1 teaspoon minced garlic
1 carrot, diced
2 sticks celery, chopped
½ red capsicum or bell pepper, chopped
1 bay leaf
1 tablespoon low-salt tomato paste
1 litre (4 cups) chicken stock or water
½ cup small macaroni shells
1 zucchini
½ cup green beans, sliced
2 teaspoons grated parmesan cheese
1 slice of low-fat cheese, chopped

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Peel tomatoes by dropping them into boiling water for about 10 seconds. Then put them into cold water. The skin should now peel off easily.

In a large pot, sauté onion and garlic in either a little olive oil or water. Add carrot and celery and cook for a few minutes. Stir in chopped tomatoes, capsicum, bay leaf, tomato paste and stock. Bring to the boil and add macaroni, simmer for 10 minutes or until macaroni is soft. Stir in beans and zucchini. Simmer for another 3 minutes, add salt and pepper and serve sprinkled with a little cheese. Serves 4

Nutrition Notes Per Serve: Energy - 169 calories (693 kJ), Fat – 2.22grams

BREAKFAST

Bill's Big Breakfast

This is a modification of a breakfast meal made by fitness guru Clarence Bass. This meal might be a little too big for some with pancreatitis. Just cut down on the individual ingredients proportionally if you prefer. As it is, it makes a huge bowl of food and is very nutritious.

- 1 cup of cooked mixed grains
- ½ cup of your favorite low-fat muesli
- 1 peach sliced (I often use canned peaches) or a banana
- 1 cup low-fat soy milk
- Around ½ cup water
- 1 heaped tablespoon flax seed meal
- 1 heaped tablespoon oat bran
- 1 heaped tablespoon protein powder
- 1 apple chopped
- ½ teaspoon stevia powder
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon

The mixed grains need to be prepared beforehand. Choose 2-3 grains from your health store or supermarket (millet, barley, oats, brown rice, etc. Some like wheat, but personally I've found it gives me an upset stomach!). I put 3 cups of grain mixed with 9 cups of water into a rice cooker and let it cook. Alternatively, you can boil it in a saucepan. Eventually you'll get a porridge-like mixture. Let it cool and refrigerate. You can then take out the amount you need each morning.

Take one cup of grain mixture from refrigerator. Add muesli and half soy milk. Add enough of the water to just cover ingredients with liquid. Microwave on high for 2 minutes. Remove from microwave and stir. Put in more soy milk or water if necessary. Microwave on high for another minute.

Remove porridge from microwave and mix in flax seed meal, oat bran, protein, cinnamon, apple and stevia. Add remaining milk and water sufficient to give you the consistency you like.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve: Energy - 787 calories (2892 kj), Fat – 14 grams

Apple Cinnamon and Rice Porridge

1 cup of low-fat soy milk
1 cup cooked brown rice
½ cup rolled oats
1 apple grated
½ teaspoon cinnamon powder
½ teaspoon stevia

Brown rice can be cooked earlier and kept in the refrigerator for later use. Put rice and rolled oats in a bowl, add enough of soy milk to just cover. Microwave on high for a minute or so. Check and add more soy milk as required. Cook some more until porridge is formed. Remove and mix in remaining ingredients.

Nutrition Notes: Energy - 539 calories (2319 kj), Fat – 13.7grams

Swiss Muesli

1 cup rolled oats
2 tablespoons wheat germ
½ cup water
¼ cup low-fat soy milk
1 apple grated
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1 teaspoon stevia powder
2 tablespoons sultanas
2 tablespoons pumpkin seeds, chopped (can also try chopped almonds or sunflower seeds)
½ cup low-fat natural yoghurt
Ground cinnamon

Mix oats, wheat germ, water, soy milk, apple, sultanas and pumpkin seeds in a bowl. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Stir in stevia in the morning (can also use liquid stevia or if you feel like it, a tablespoon of honey is also nice!). When serving top the muesli with the yoghurt and sprinkle with cinnamon. This is also good as a topping on your favorite fruit – a sliced banana, 3-4 strawberries and a sliced peach is great! Serves 4.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve: Energy - 206 calories (870 kj), Fat – 5.5grams

Bubble & Squeak

An old favorite and less than 2 g of fat in each serve.

1 cup mashed potato
1 cup mashed pumpkin
1 tablespoon of mixed herbs (parsley, oregano and chives are good, but whatever are your favorites)
1 Egg white or egg substitute mix
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
2-3 teaspoons grated low-fat cheese
1 teaspoon of olive oil

Combine potato, pumpkin, herbs, cheese, egg and pepper. Form the mixture into patties by rolling them in your hands or using a pattie ring. Lightly brush pan with oil. Cook patties for 2 minutes on each side. Number made depends on size of each pattie made.

Nutrition Notes Total Recipe: Energy - 405 calories (1730 kj), Fat – 11.5grams

Variation: These can be cooked under an oven or BBQ grill. Nice served with grilled tomatoes.

Mushroom Omelette

1 teaspoon olive oil
12 medium mushrooms, roughly sliced
2 shallots or spring onions finely chopped
1 medium tomato, chopped
1 teaspoon freshly chopped parsley
2 eggs, beaten

Heat olive oil in pan. Stir in mushroom and onions and stir fry for 2 minutes. Add tomato and stir. Pour beaten eggs over ingredients and allow to cook. Either fold mixture and allow to cook until top is also ready or alternatively place pan under hot grill and allow top to cook that way (provided you have an appropriate type of pan!)

Serves 2.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve: Energy - 145 calories (495 kj), Fat – 7 grams.

Banana Porridge

½ cup rolled oats
1 cup water
1 large banana, mashed
Nutmeg or cinnamon
120 ml (½ cup) soy milk or low-fat cow's milk
Few drops of stevia liquid

Mash banana in a bowl. Add oats and water. Microwave on high for 2 minutes. Remove and stir. Microwave on high for 1 minute, watching it to ensure it doesn't boil over. Stir in spice, stevia and milk. Serve hot.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve: Energy - 291 calories (1366 kj), Fat – 4.5 grams.

Variation: for extra creaminess add in ½ cup of either low-fat natural set yoghurt or ½ cup soft low-fat ricotta cheese

Triple 'A' Porridge

½ cup rolled oats
1 cup water
3 heaped teaspoons 'Triple A' paste (see recipe in this book)
120 ml (½ cup) low-fat soy milk or low-fat cow's milk
Few drops of stevia to taste

Place rolled oats, water and Triple A paste in a bowl and mix. Microwave on high for 2 minutes. Remove and stir. Microwave again for another minute. Add milk and stevia. Serve.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve: Energy - 247 calories (1181 kj), Fat – 6 grams.

Mushrooms on Toast

250 g (1/4 pound) mushrooms
1 tablespoon low-salt soy sauce
1 teaspoon cold-pressed olive oil or alternatively 1 tablespoon water or chicken stock
1 tablespoon arrowroot
1 tablespoon lemon juice
Pepper to taste
1 slice wholemeal bread, toasted
Chopped parsley

Slice mushrooms roughly. Add olive oil to hot pan and add mushrooms. Stir in soy sauce. Cook for 5-10 minutes. Thicken with arrowroot dissolved in a little water. Add lemon juice and pepper. Serve on toast and garnish with parsley.

Nutrition Notes Total: Energy - 242 calories (1010 kJ), Fat – 6 grams. NB: You can reduce the fat content of this meal to 1 gram if you replace the olive oil with water or chicken stock.

Rolled Oats Pancakes

2 cups skim milk (0.1% fat)
1 teaspoon stevia powder
1 ½ cups rolled oats
1 cup stoneground wholemeal flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
4 large egg whites or equivalent egg substitute
1 ½ tablespoons olive oil

Put milk in a small bowl and add oats and mix. In another bowl, stir together flour, baking powder and stevia. Add oat and milk mixture, egg whites and 1 tablespoon of oil. Mix well with a wooden spoon.

In a non-stick pan, use a kitchen brush dipped in remaining ½ tablespoon of oil and brush the pan with a light coating of oil. Heat to a moderate-hot temperature. Pour in about a quarter of cup of the batter. When pancake bubbles in the centre and is reasonably dry around the edges, flip it and cook other side.
Makes 8 pancakes

Nutrition Notes Per Serve: Energy - 168 calories (722 kj), Fat – 5.3 grams.

Variation: This mixture makes a thick pancake. If you prefer them thinner you can either add more milk (or water) to the mix, or alternatively spread the mixture around the pan when cooking. These go nicely with a little 'Triple A' spread (see recipe in this book) topped with a little low-fat yoghurt and strawberries.

Kumera Shake

1 cup (200g) cooked kumera (orange sweet potato)
Egg substitute equivalent of 1 egg. (I use a powdered form of egg substitute mixed well in a little water, but there are numerous others available on the market)
½ cup low-fat natural set yoghurt (99.8% fat free)
1 teaspoon stevia powder
1 ½ cups low fat skim milk (0.1% fat)

Mix all ingredients in a blender and serve chilled. This makes up 2 serves of about 1 ½ cups each.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve: Energy - 166 calories (693 kJ), Fat – 0.1 gram

Variation: Freeze the yoghurt beforehand. It makes the shake a colder drink. You can replace the stevia with honey or syrup if you wish. Of course, you don't have to have this shake for breakfast. It can be enjoyed any time of the day.

LIGHT MEALS

Burritos

2 teaspoons cold pressed, extra-virgin olive oil
1 shallot or spring onion chopped
1 tablespoon ground cumin seeds
1 tablespoon sweet paprika
2 tablespoons chopped coriander
500 g (1/2 pound) finely chopped or shredded chicken
2 tablespoons low-fat tomato salsa
1 tablespoon, low-fat mild sweet chilli sauce
420 g can red kidney beans, drained and rinsed
6 soft tortillas
10-12 lettuce leaves, shredded
3 tomatoes, chopped
3 small carrots, grated
1 small avocado, chopped
½ cup low-fat natural set yoghurt
½ cup grated low-fat mozzarella style cheese

Heat oil in a large non-stick saucepan. Add shallots, cumin, paprika and coriander. Cook for 1 minute. Add chicken. Cook, stirring for 5 minutes. Add salsa, chilli sauce and beans. Cook for another 5 minutes. Cut tortillas in half. Place mixture evenly between the tortillas. Top with lettuce, tomatoes, carrot, avocado, yoghurt and cheese. Roll up and enjoy!

Makes 12 burritos.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve (12 serves in total): Energy - 186 calories (766 kJ), Fat – 5.2 grams

Beef Burgers

500 g lean beef mince

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup fresh breadcrumbs (take a couple of slices of 1-2 day old bread, preferably wholemeal, and pick out small pieces until you have enough)

1 small onion chopped

1 tablespoon fresh parsley chopped

2 teaspoons soy sauce

1 tablespoon, low-fat mild sweet chilli sauce

Pinch of salt and pepper

Combine all ingredients in a bowl and mix them together well. Shape into 8 patties. BBQ or grill patties in a non-stick frying pan until cooked. Place pattie on wholegrain bun with your favorite salad.

Nutrition Notes Per burger: Energy - 131 calories (549 kj), Fat – 6.4 grams

Pita Bread and Vegie Salad

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup grated beetroot

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup shredded lettuce

3-4 sliced mushrooms

2-3 slices cucumber

$\frac{1}{2}$ small wholemeal pita bread

$\frac{1}{8}$ slice of avocado or 2 teaspoons low-fat mayonnaise

Combine vegetables. Spread avocado or mayonnaise on inside of pita bread. Place vegetable mixture into pita pocket and spread. Sprinkle with pepper or some dill to taste.

Nutrition Notes Total: Energy - 157 calories (645 kj), Fat – 3.75 grams

Chicken and Salad Pita

¼ cup grated carrot
1/8 cup grated low-fat cheese (1% maximum if you can get it)
½ cup shredded lettuce
2-3 tablespoons diced cucumber
1 chopped spring onion
1 small pita bread
1 teaspoon chopped parsley

Remove skin and fat from chicken. Combine all ingredients and spoon into pita bread. Sprinkle with pepper and some chopped parsley.

Variation: Can spread 1/8 slice of avocado or 2 teaspoons low-fat mayonnaise to pita bread before spooning in mixture.

Nutrition Notes Total Dish: Energy - 319 calories (1285 kj), Fat – 7.75 grams

Tuna & Salad Pita

1 small wholemeal pita
Small can of tuna slices in springwater
½ teaspoon lemon juice
2-4 heaped teaspoons low-fat natural yoghurt
3-4 slices of cucumber, chopped
¼ cup carrot, grated
½ cup shredded lettuce
½ medium tomato, chopped
Sprinkle of chilli powder (if it agrees with you)
1 teaspoon chopped parsley

Slice open pita bread. Drain water from tuna. Mix all other ingredients except lettuce. Add to pita and then top with lettuce. Again, you can add pepper if you like.

Variation: This is also good spread on toasted low-fat wholemeal bread.

Nutrition Notes Total Dish: Energy - 268 calories (1072 kj), Fat – 2.1 grams

Banana Sandwich with Spice!

A banana sandwich for lunch makes a quick and easy meal. This recipe adds some protein in the form of the cottage cheese and a little spice makes it all the more enjoyable.

1 mashed medium banana
1/3 cup low-fat cottage cheese
4 chopped dates
Sprinkle of mixed spice powder
2 slices low-fat wholegrain bread.

Combine banana, cheese, dates and spice. Spread over bread and enjoy!

Nutrition Notes: Energy - 430 calories (1653 kj), Fat – 3.8 grams

Salmon Sandwich

80 g can salmon (drained)
2-3 slices cucumber
Small amount of thinly sliced red onion
Some alfalfa or mung bean sprouts
Ground pepper
2 slices low-fat wholemeal bread
Squeeze lemon juice (optional)

Place salmon on one piece of bread. Add cucumber, onion, sprouts and pepper. Add lemon juice if you prefer. Top with other slice.

Nutrition Notes Total: Energy - 307 calories (1248 kj), Fat – 5.5 grams

Tuna Mornay on Toast

95 gram can tuna in springwater
½ cup low-fat cottage cheese or
1 shallot chopped finely
½ medium tomato chopped
Sprinkle of chilli powder (depending on your sensitivity to chilli)
2 slices of multi-grain bread toasted.

Mix tuna, cheese, shallot, tomato and chilli powder. Spread evenly on each piece of toast.

Variation: you can replace the cottage cheese with 1/3 cup low-fat plain yoghurt.

Nutrition Notes Total Dish: Energy - 345 calories (1431 kj), Fat – 5.25 grams

Veggie Muffins

These are a good lunch or a tasty mid-morning or afternoon snack

200 g (approx ½ lb) broccoli florets
200 g (approx ½ lb) cauliflower florets
2 cups of oat bran
1 teaspoon grated low-fat cheese
2 cups wholemeal stoneground flour
6 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon nutmeg
1 ¼ cup low-fat soy milk
½ cup cold pressed grapeseed oil
¼ cup apple juice concentrate
Egg substitute (equivalent of 4 egg whites)

Preheat oven to 180° C (360 F). Microwave or steam veggies until just tender. Sift flour, baking powder, nutmeg. Add oat bran and cheese. Chop veggies to desired size. Add to flour mixture and mix well.

Combine soy milk, oil and apple juice concentrate and stir into flour mixture. Add egg substitute and fold through mixture. Spoon mixture into muffin cups and into muffin tray. Bake for 25-30 minutes. Remove from oven and allow to cool. Makes 12 large muffins.

Variation: Where oil is a problem for you replace grapeseed oil with ½ cup low-fat yoghurt or non-fat buttermilk or an additional ¼ cup apple juice.

Nutrition Notes Per Muffin (12 in total) Energy - 279 calories (1166 kj), Fat – 13.4 grams

Baked Potatoes with Yoghurt and Salsa

2 medium potatoes
¼ cup Low-fat yoghurt
¼ cup Low-fat, low-salt salsa
2 large lettuce leaves or 1 cup of mixed lettuce
Grated carrot
Balsamic vinegar

Pierce potatoes with a fork. Place in microwave and cook on high for 3-4 minutes. Remove and place on a baking tray. Put in pre-heated oven (180C, 360F). Bake until fork runs through potatoes easily. Remove and cool slightly. Place on plate and slice potatoes down middle and across. Put in desired amount of yoghurt and salsa. Cut up lettuce and place beside potatoes. Sprinkle carrot on top of lettuce and sprinkle small amount of vinegar over salad. Serves 2.

Nutrition Notes. Per Serve: Energy - 169 calories (692 kj), Fat – 1.1 grams

Pizza

4 ripe tomatoes
1 medium onion, chopped
½ teaspoon minced garlic
3 mushrooms, sliced
125 g/ 4 oz can corn kernels (drained and rinsed if the can contains added salt and sugar)
200 g tomato paste, salt free
Pinch of dried basil and oregano
½ cup cheese (1% fat maximum), grated
½ cup drained pineapple pieces
1 large wholemeal pita bread

Pre-heat oven to medium heat (180°C/360°F).

Simmer tomatoes, onion, garlic, mushrooms, corn kernels in a non-stick pan until they are soft. Add basil and oregano and tomato paste. Spread the mixture on the pita bread on a pizza tray. Top with the grated cheese and spread pineapple pieces. Bake for 15-20 minutes.

Nutrition Notes Per Slice (8 in total) Energy - 113 calories (470 kj), Fat – 2.3 grams

Pasta and Anchovies

The flavours in this dish are pretty intense and might not be to everyone's liking. You can manipulate this by cutting back on the amounts given for herbs, olives, anchovies and capers.

1 medium onion chopped
1 clove of garlic, finely chopped
1 teaspoon fresh basil, chopped
1 teaspoon fresh parsley, chopped
1 teaspoon olive oil
1 400g can tomatoes
6 black olives, pitted and chopped
2 tablespoons capers
Small bottle or can of anchovies (15g / ½ oz – if in oil, drain then rinse fish in water and pat dry with paper towel)
500 g (1 pound) cooked pasta (from about 135g / touch over 4 ½ ozs dry)

Saute onion, garlic in the oil. Add basil, parsley, tomatoes, olives capers and anchovies. Reduce heat, cover and allow to simmer for 15-20 minutes. During the last 10 minutes remove cover to reduce the amount of liquid. Add to sauce mixture and stir for a minute. Pour sauce over hot pasta and serve. Serves 4.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve: Energy - 270 calories (1098 kj), Fat – 4.35 grams.

SIDE DISHES AND SALADS

‘Creamed’ Mashed Potatoes

5 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into rough quarters
1 tablespoon low-fat, milk-free margarine
2 tablespoons soy flour
1 teaspoon olive oil
¼ cup water
2 egg whites or equivalent egg substitute

Place potatoes in saucepan and cover with water. Boil until soft. While potatoes are cooking, in separate saucepan, mix margarine, soy flour and oil. Cook over gentle heat until mix bubbles. After a minute of stirring, remove from heat and add water, mixing to a smooth paste. Return to heat and cook through for a further 2 minutes until mixture thickens. Remove and allow to cool.

Mash potatoes. Take half of this mixture and blend it in a food processor. Add cooled soy paste and continue to blend. Add other half of mashed potatoes, then egg whites and blend.

Season to taste and serve with main meal. Alternatively mix can be placed on hors d’oeuvre toasts. Serves 6.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve : Energy - 130 calories (543 kj), Fat – 2.9 grams

Variation: Add small amount of spring onion or shallots (finely chopped) to the mashed potatoes for added flavour.

Herb Pasta

500 grams or 1 pound pasta
1 tablespoon cold-pressed light olive oil
½ teaspoon finely chopped basil
½ teaspoon minced garlic
1 tablespoon finely chopped parsley
1 teaspoon finely chopped chives and oregano

Boil pasta. Check the pasta regularly to make sure it doesn’t over cook. Try to get it *el denté*. Drain. Return pasta to saucepan, place olive oil on top and toss through over a low heat. Add herbs and mix. Serves 6.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve : Energy - 158 calories (676kj), Fat – 3.75 grams

Stir Fried Chinese Vegies

1-1 ½ tablespoons of cold-pressed light olive oil
2 cms (1 inch) fresh ginger grated
1 teaspoon minced garlic
2-3 cups of your favorite vegies – whatever is in season – I like cauliflower, broccoli, beans, celery, capsicum, carrots.
1-2 cups of roughly cut Chinese cabbage – bok choy is a favorite
½ cup of low-fat vegetable or chicken stock (or water if you don't have the stock)
2 tablespoons home made oyster sauce marinade (see above recipe)
¼ cup low-fat yoghurt (optional)

Heat oil in a wok. Add veggies and toss for 2-3 minutes. Stir in stock, oyster marinade and yoghurt. Cover and cook until tender (another 2-3 minutes). Serves 2.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve : Energy - 135 calories (554 kj), Fat – 3 grams

Variation: Stir in some cooked, egg-free noodles prior to serving.

Rice Pea & Corn Salad

1 cup frozen peas
2 carrots diced
½ cup beans (frozen is OK)
1 cup corn kernels (these can be canned or fresh)
2 cups cooked brown rice
2-3 teaspoons of your favorite herbs chopped (parsley, mint and a little basil and or chives)

Place peas, carrot, beans and corn (if using fresh) in microwave proof dish and microwave on high for 1 minute. Stir and repeat for 1 minute until cooked (don't overcook though!). Combine vegetable and rice in a salad bowl, add the herb mixture and toss. Serves 4.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve : Energy - 177 calories (733 kj), Fat – 1.56 grams

Moroccan Couscous

250 grams or 8 ozs pre-cooked couscous (a bit over a cup full)
1 1/3 cups of boiling water
1 1/2 cups of low-fat chicken stock
Sesame Oil
1/2 cup chick peas cooked
1/2 cup raisins
Juice and grated skin of one medium orange
2 tablespoons of chopped parsley

Place couscous in saucepan and add boiling water. Stir and let stand for five minutes. Allow couscous to swell. Stir occasionally.

Place chicken stock in large saucepan and bring to the boil. Add couscous, chickpeas and raisins. Reduce heat and simmer. Stir regularly for 5 minutes. Add orange juice and grated peel and parsley. Before serving stir in a few drops of sesame oil. Makes approximately 7 cups.

Nutrition Notes Per Cup : Energy - 191 calories (803 kj), Fat – 1.2 grams

Fried Rice and Vegetables

1 tablespoon cold pressed light olive oil
1 1/2 cups beans (lopped and topped)
1/4 red bell pepper or capsicum chopped
4 small yellow squash sliced
2 shallots (or spring onions) chopped
2 carrots sliced
1 cup basmati rice cooked
1/4 cup home-made oyster sauce and marinade (see recipe above)
6 drops sesame oil
10-12 unsalted cashews

Heat olive oil in wok. Add vegetables and stir fry turning vegetables constantly for 2-3 minutes. Turn off heat. Stir through cooked rice. Add oyster sauce, sesame oil and cashews and stir through. Return wok to low heat and stir.

Season with cracked pepper and serve. Serves 4.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve : Energy - 148 calories (613 kj), Fat – 5.33 grams

Low-fat Mayonnaise

½ cup natural set yoghurt (99.8% fat free)
½ cup non-fat uncreamed cottage cheese
¼ cup ricotta cheese, non-fat if possible or low-fat
1 tablespoon vinegar
Juice of 1 lemon
¼ teaspoon garlic powder
¼ teaspoon mustard powder
1 level teaspoon stevia powder or 1 tablespoon stevia liquid

Put all ingredients in a bowl and blend.

Nutrition Notes Total Energy - 205 calories (845 kj), Fat – 6.89 grams
For one serve of 1 tablespoon: 13 calories (54kj), Fat – 0.42 grams

Coleslaw and Pasta

1 cup of cabbage, shredded
1 green capsicum or bell pepper
1 carrot, grated
1 cup wholemeal pasta noodles, cooked
½ cup low-fat mayonnaise (see above recipe)

Combine all the ingredients and mix them in a large bowl.
Serves 4.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve : Energy - 126 calories (521 kj), Fat – 1 gram

Low-Fat Waldorf Salad

5 litres (20 cups) water
375 g (12 oz) packet of orecchiette or shell pasta
1 tablespoon cold-pressed extra-virgin olive oil
2/3 cup mayonnaise (see recipe in this book)
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
Salt and pepper to taste
1 stick celery with leaves, sliced
2 granny smith (green) apples, cored and diced
30 seedless red grapes, halved
½ cup walnuts, toasted (Note: Toasting brings out the flavour in nuts. To toast nuts either place them on a baking tray in a moderate oven (180°C/360°F) for 5-10 minutes or toast them in a dry frying pan or wok, stirring frequently for 3-5 minutes)

Bring water to boil in a large pot. Add pasta and cook as per the instructions until pasta is al dente. Drain water and toss olive oil through pasta. Cover and cool in the refrigerator.

In a large bowl combine the mayonnaise, lemon juice and salt and pepper. Mix well. Add the pasta, celery, apples, grapes and walnuts. Mix well. Serve cold. Serves 6.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve : Energy - 328 calories (1371 kj), Fat – 7.19 grams

Farfalle Pasta Salad with Caesar Dressing

5 litres (20 cups) water
375 g (12 oz) dried farfalle pasta
1 tablespoon cold-pressed extra virgin olive oil
125 g (1/4 pound) or about 4 large slices of wholegrain bread
1 ½ teaspoons minced garlic
Salt and pepper to taste
½ cup grated low-fat cheese

Caesar Dressing

1 teaspoon minced garlic
2 teaspoons Dijon-style mustard
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
4 anchovy fillets (if in oil, drain oil and rinse in water to remove remaining oil) then mash the fillets with a fork
¾ cup of mayonnaise (see recipe this book)
2 tablespoons flax seed oil

Preheat oven to 180°C/360°F. In large pot, bring water to boil. Add farfalle pasta and cook until al dente. Drain water. Cover pasta and refrigerate.

Prepare Caesar dressing – In a large bowl, mix garlic, mustard, lemon juice, anchovies and mayonnaise. Pour in flax seed oil while mixing.

To make croutons, lightly brush each piece of bread with some olive oil. Then cut into 2 cm (3/4 inch) cubes and place on baking tray and place in oven for 10-15 minutes until crisp.

Serve by placing pasta in a serving bowl and mixing in Caesar dressing. Salt and pepper to taste. Mix well. Garnish with the croutons and cheese.

Serves 8.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve : Energy - 326 calories (1357 kj), Fat – 9.04 grams

Apple Rice

2 cups brown rice
2 cups unsweetened apple juice
2 cups water
1 bay leaf
1 stick cinnamon
2 medium apples grated (leave skin on)
2 teaspoons lemon juice
2 tablespoons fresh coriander leaves

Combine rice, apple juice, water, bay leaves and cinnamon in a saucepan and heat to boiling. Stir the mixture. Reduce heat. Place lid on pan and allow rice to cook for approximately 45 minutes. Remove from heat and pour into a sieve. Remove bay leaf and cinnamon. Place rice in casserole dish. Add apple and lemon juice and stir through rice. Add coriander and serve.

Serves 4.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve : Energy - 203 calories (850 kj), Fat – 1.1 grams

Lemon Millet

1 cup organic hulled millet
4 cups water
Juice and zest of one lemon

Bring water to boil. Add millet and stir. Reduce heat. Cover pan and allow mixture to simmer for approximately 30 minutes. Add juice and zest and stir through. Nice as a bed for Irish Stew or with a nice warm soup.

Serves 2.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve : Energy - 110 calories (475 kj), Fat – 1 gram

Pasta Salad

250 g spiral pasta
250 g broccoli florets
2 sticks celery, sliced
1 red capsicum or bell pepper, seeded and diced
1 green capsicum or bell pepper, seeded and diced
1 punnet of cherry tomatoes

Dressing:

200 g low-fat natural set yoghurt
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 tablespoon chives
½ cup fresh coriander or parsley
2 teaspoons paprika
1 tablespoon low-fat grainy mustard

Cook pasta according to instructions. Drain. Steam or microwave broccoli for 2 minutes. Combine pasta, broccoli, celery, capsicums and tomatoes in a salad bowl.

For dressing: mix yoghurt, lemon juice, chives, coriander, paprika and mustard. Pour over pasta and mix well.

Serves 6

Nutrition Notes Per Serve : Energy - 142 calories (602 kj), Fat – 1.78 grams

Orange Coleslaw

2 large oranges, segmented
2 cups cabbage, shredded
3 sticks celery, chopped
½ red capsicum or bell pepper, chopped
½ green capsicum or bell pepper, chopped
2 tablespoons walnuts, chopped
¼ cup sultanas
1 large apple, grated
1 tablespoon lemon juice

Dressing:

½ cup low-fat natural set yoghurt
1 teaspoon grated orange rind
2 tablespoons orange juice
1 tablespoon mayonnaise (see recipe in this book)
2-3 drops low-sodium soy sauce

Place all coleslaw ingredients in a bowl and toss. Place all dressing ingredients in a bowl and mix through with a wooden spoon. Add dressing to coleslaw and mix through thoroughly.

Serves 4.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve : Energy - 156 calories (655 kj), Fat – 3.23 grams

Stir Fry Silver Beet and Celery

3 cups silver beet, chopped
4 sticks celery chopped
100 g (4 ozs) snow peas
1 cup cherry tomatoes, sliced in half
1 teaspoon ginger minced
2 tablespoons pure apple juice
1 cup bean sprouts
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 tablespoon finely chopped parsley

Heat wok. Add apple juice and bring to boil. Add silver beet, celery, snow peas, tomatoes and ginger and stir fry for 3 minutes. Turn off heat. Add bean sprouts, lemon juice and parsley.

Serves 2

Nutrition Notes Per Serve : Energy - 114 calories (436 kj), Fat – negligible

MAIN MEALS (and other bits and pieces!)

Meat-Free Bolognese Sauce

2 tablespoons of cold-pressed light olive oil (alternatively you can use 2 tablespoons low-fat margarine or ½ cup of water instead)

1 onion finely chopped

1 teaspoon minced garlic

2 red capsicums (red peppers) seeded and finely chopped

1 carrot finely chopped

4-5 mushrooms chopped

1 tablespoon finely chopped parsley

1 teaspoon finely chopped chives

1 teaspoon finely chopped oregano

2 tablespoons unbleached plain flour

1-2 cups water

In saucepan, heat olive oil and fry onion until transparent. Add garlic and cook for 1 minute. Add capsicums, carrot, celery, mushrooms and herbs and toss for 2-3 minutes. Add flour to the vegetables and cook for an additional 2 minutes. Stir in 1 cup of water and allow mixture to boil and thicken. Reduce heat and simmer for 5-10 minutes. Add more water until the mix is to your desired thickness.

Add to boiled spaghetti.

Serves 2.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve : Energy - 235 calories (993 kj), Fat – 10.4 grams

Home Made Oyster Sauce Marinade

Those who have difficulty with food odors may find this recipe difficult as the oysters smell quite strong while cooking. You might be able to pick up some fairly good low-fat, low-preserved oyster sauce from health food shops, if you prefer.

12 oysters
1 tablespoon low-salt soy sauce
¼ teaspoon stevia powder
½ cup water

Place oysters, soy sauce, stevia and a little of the water in a blender and blend until smooth. Pour into saucepan and bring to boil. Simmer for 10 minutes, stirring regularly. Add a little water at a time until you get the consistency you prefer. Cool. Use sauce as a marinade or add to stir-fry dishes.

Makes approximately 3 tablespoons.

Nutrition Notes Per Tablespoon : Energy - 30 calories (125 kj), Fat – 1 gram

Variation: You can replace the stevia with sugar which will help make a thicker sauce.

Baked Fish

½ cup breadcrumbs
freshly ground pepper
1 teaspoon dried tarragon
1 tablespoon parmesan cheese, grated
1 tablespoon low-fat cheese, grated
½ cup skim milk
500 grams (1 pound) fish fillets (cod is good, but other varieties are fine too)
lemon wedges

Preheat oven to 205°C/400°F. Mix breadcrumbs with a little pepper and tarragon and cheeses. Pour milk into a separate shallow dish. Dip each fish fillet into the milk, then coat with the breadcrumb mix. Place in a baking dish. Bake for about 20 minutes until cooked. Serve hot with lemon.

Nutrition Notes Total Dish : Energy - 838 calories (3500 kj), Fat – 16 grams

Vegetable Pie Base

2 cups of cooked brown rice
2 broccoli florets
2 medium carrots, grated
Egg substitute (equivalent to one egg)

Mix rice with broccoli and carrots. Place in a blender and add 1 teaspoon of egg substitute (if using a powdered form, mix with a little water and then add to blender). Once thoroughly blended, press into base of pie dish and around edges.

Variation: For added flavour you can add your favorite herbs into the blender.

Nutrition Notes Total Dish : Energy - 510 calories (1983 kj), Fat – 4 grams

Chicken Fajitas

1 tablespoon olive oil
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
½ teaspoon paprika powder
Sprinkle of chilli powder
1/4 of a 425 g can of refried beans
750 grams fresh stir-fry chicken strips
1 green capsicum or bell pepper, seeds removed and sliced
1 red capsicum or bell pepper, seeds removed and sliced
6 soft flour tortillas

Combine olive oil, lemon juice, paprika, chilli powder in bowl. Place chicken in the mixture, add capsicum and mix until chicken is well coated. Cover and place in refrigerator for 45-60 minutes.

Remove from fridge and mix in refried beans. Stir-fry the mixture in a non-stick pan until chicken is cooked. Warm tortillas either in a conventional oven or microwave.

Put an equal amount of chicken and vegetable mix in each tortilla, roll and serve.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve: Energy - 350 calories (1457 kj), Fat – 18.4 grams.

Bill's Mock Shepherd's Pie

Vegetable Pie Base (see recipe this book)
Meat Free Bolognese Sauce (see recipe this book)
Creamed Mashed Potatoes (see recipe this book)
¼ cup low-fat grated cheese

Make up Vegetable Pie Base. Then add Meat-Free Bolognese Sauce and top with Creamed Mash Potatoes. Grate some low-fat cheese and bake in medium-hot oven until cheese is melted.

Serves 8.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve : Energy - 233 calories (955 kj), Fat – 6.18 grams

Vegetable Fried Rice

1 tablespoon of cold-pressed light olive oil
2 cms (1 inch) fresh ginger grated
1 teaspoon minced garlic
8-10 mushrooms sliced
2 small spring onions or shallots sliced
2 sticks celery sliced
½ cup beansprouts
Cup of beans sliced
1 large cob of corn (kernels removed by slicing down sides of cob with sharp knife)
2 cups cooked brown rice
2 tablespoons soy sauce
1 tablespoon of home made oyster sauce marinade (refer recipe above)
1 cup water

Heat oil in wok, add ginger, garlic, mushrooms and spring onions (leave shallots till last if you are using these instead of spring onions). Stir well. Add remaining vegetables and stir fry for 3-4 minutes. Add rice and toss well until mixed through. Mix water, soy sauce and oyster marinade and stir through. Serve hot.

Serves 6 as side dish.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve : Energy - 143 calories (584 kj), Fat – 4.2 grams

Baked Tuna & Rice

2 tablespoons of cold-pressed olive oil or 2 tablespoons water
1 onion finely chopped
1 stick celery finely diced
½ green capsicum or bell pepper, finely diced
½ red capsicum or bell pepper, finely diced
1 carrot finely diced
½ teaspoon ginger minced
½ teaspoon garlic minced
1 cup beans sliced
1 cup corn kernels
1 ½ cups canned tuna
3-4 cups cooked brown rice
½ cup water
Low-fat cheese grated

Heat oil in large pan and fry onion until soft. Add celery, capsicum, ginger, garlic, carrot, beans and corn. Fry for another 2-3 minutes. Add tuna, rice and water. Place in ovenproof dish. Sprinkle on cheese and bake in oven (180° C or 350° F) for 12-15 minutes.

Serves 6.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve : Energy - 236 calories (972 kj), Fat – 6.2 grams

Fish Tomato Casserole

500 g (1 pound) white fish fillets
2 tablespoons lemon juice
Ground black pepper
1 teaspoon olive oil
2 medium onions, sliced
1 tablespoon low-salt tomato paste
½ red capsicum, sliced
1 cup fresh string beans, cut
3 medium tomatoes, chopped
3 tablespoons parsley, chopped
2 teaspoons low-fat parmesan cheese, grated
¼ cup fresh breadcrumbs

Lay out fish on plate and sprinkle lemon juice over fillets. Sprinkle pepper over fish. Heat oil in non-stick fry pan. Add onions and fry for 2 minutes or until onions are soft. Add tomato paste and cook for a further 1-2 minutes. Add capsicums, tomatoes and parsley. Simmer for 5 minutes. Arrange vegetables over fish. Combine cheese and breadcrumbs and sprinkle over vegetables. Bake at 190°C (370°F) for 15-20 minutes (until fish is cooked – but don't let it get too dry). Serve with your favorite bread and garden salad.

Serves 4.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve : Energy - 213 calories (885 kj), Fat – 4.62 grams

Thai Scallop Laksa

I just love the taste of Thai cooking and a common ingredient is coconut milk which unfortunately is high in saturated fat (the 'bad' type!). Thankfully there are a number of light coconut milks available now (although be careful, some can be called light but are still high in total saturated fat). Another alternative is to replace coconut milk with a few drops of coconut essence in evaporated skim milk. The following recipe uses a light form of coconut milk, however if you have a low tolerance or want to go for a lower-fat version try the alternative.

- 1 teaspoon olive or peanut oil
- 1 medium onion
- 1 shallot or spring onion chopped
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon minced ginger
- 2 tablespoons laksa paste (low-fat, low-sodium)
- 1 cup beans chopped
- 8 broccoli florets
- 1 medium carrot, chopped
- ½ red capsicum, chopped
- 200 g sea scallops (fresh or frozen)
- 1 tablespoon low-salt fish sauce
- 2 x 270 ml cans light coconut milk
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 cups long-grain brown rice, cooked

Heat oil in wok. Stir in onion, garlic and ginger and stir for 1 minute. Add laksa paste and stir for another minute or two. Add beans, broccoli, carrot, capsicum, fish sauce and scallops and stir for another 2 minutes. Add coconut milk. Place lid on wok and bring to boil slowly. Then reduce heat and simmer for 15-20 minutes.

Serve rice into bowls and pour over scallop, vegetable and coconut sauce mix.

Serves 6.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve : Energy - 236 calories (962 kj), Fat – 11.8 grams

Thai Red Chicken Curry

4 Chicken breast fillets
1-2 tablespoons red curry paste
1 tablespoon liquid stevia
1 tablespoon fish sauce
½ cup green beans, chopped
400 mls low-fat coconut milk or evaporated skim milk
100 g fresh pineapple, diced
12 small tomatoes, quartered
¼ cup fresh basil leaves, chopped
1 cup cooked Basmati rice bed per serve

Remove skin from chicken. Heat non-stick pan and cook chicken until brown on both sides. Remove from pan and slice chicken into strips. Add curry paste to pan and cook. Add fish sauce and stevia and stir through. Add coconut milk and bring mixture to the boil. Return chicken and add beans. Cook until beans are tender. Add pineapple and tomatoes and gently heat through. Stir through basil leaves and serve with steamed basmati rice.

Serves 4

Nutrition Notes Per Serve : Energy - 499 calories (2144 kj), Fat – 14.8 grams

Osso Bucco

500 g firm tofu (or lean diced beef or veal if you prefer)
2 medium onions chopped
2 carrots chopped
2 sticks of celery chopped
1 teaspoon minced garlic
2 teaspoons of grated lemon rind
1 bay leaf
½ teaspoon of dried mixed herbs
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
425 g canned low-sodium tomatoes
Small amount of chopped parsley

If using meat, cook in a non-stick saucepan or wok until brown (You can use a little olive oil if you like to help the process). Add onions, carrots, celery and garlic and stir fry for 3-4 minutes. Allow to boil. Reduce heat and let simmer for 8-10 minutes, stirring regularly. Discard bay leaf. Sprinkle with parsley and serve with steamed rice and favorite vegetables. This can be nice if mix is refrigerated and heated the next day, allowing all the flavors to soak in.

Serves 3

Nutrition Notes Per Serve : Energy - 257 calories (1069 kj), Fat – 8.44 grams

Seafood Risotto

1 medium onion, diced
1 teaspoon minced garlic
1 teaspoon minced ginger
½ tsp cumin powder
½ tsp coriander powder or 1 tsp fresh
1 tsp cold-pressed olive oil (or 4 tsp water)
1 green capsicum (bell pepper), thinly sliced
1 cup frozen peas
225 g (1/2 lb) cooked brown rice (equals about 1 ½ cups)
500 g (1 lb) seafood (prawns, scallops, fish mix)
12 cherry tomatoes cut in halves
Freshly chopped coriander for garnish

Cook onion, garlic, ginger, cumin, and coriander in oil until onion is transparent. Add capsicum and peas and toss until soft. Add rice, seafood and tomatoes. Cover for a few minutes and serve.

Serves 4

Nutrition Notes Per Serve : Energy - 241 calories (798 kj), Fat – 3.78 grams

Irish Stew

4 x 100g pieces of lean round steak
4 medium potatoes, peeled and chopped
2 medium onions, sliced
1 cup beef stock (see above)
1 bay leaf

Prepare a steamer for cooking meat. A steaming tray is placed in a saucepan of boiling water. Add beef and steam to remove the fat. Place all ingredients into a large saucepan. Gently simmer for 2 hours. Serve when meat is tender and the soup is thick.

Serves 4

Nutrition Notes Per Serve : Energy - 263 calories (1112 kj), Fat – 4.25 grams

Seafood Fettuccine

500g (1 lb) fettuccine
1 medium onion, diced
1 large clove of garlic or 1 tsp minced garlic
¼ cup grape juice
500 g (1 lb) chopped mixed seafood (prawns, scallops, fish, calamari etc)
2-3 leaves spinach chopped
2 ½ cups low-fat soy milk
2 ½ tablespoons cornflour
2 tsp wholegrain mustard
½ tsp dry mustard

Cook fettuccine as per instructions. Place onion and garlic in saucepan, add grape juice and cook for 2-3 minutes. Add fish mixture. Turn down heat and cover saucepan. All fish to cook until tender. Add spinach and cover again.

In a bowl mix a little of soy milk with cornflour and make a paste. Add mustards and remaining milk. Pour into the pan with the seafood and stir until sauce thickens. Place portions of fettuccine on 4 plates and spoon on seafood and spinach.

Serves 4

Nutrition Notes Per Serve : Energy - 610 calories (2548 kj), Fat – 5.5 grams

Stir-fried Honey Chicken

2 teaspoons sesame oil
1 large onion, peeled and cut into wedges
400g skinless stir-fry chicken (or if you can only get breasts, cut them into strips)
250 g green beans, sliced
200 g honey snap peas
1 red capsicum or bell pepper, seeded and sliced
1 teaspoon minced ginger
1 tablespoon honey
1 tablespoon low-salt soy sauce
1 tablespoon lemon juice
½ cup orange juice
1 cup Basmati rice cooked (for each serve)

Heat oil in wok or non-stick fry pan and cook onion and chicken, stirring frequently until chicken is brown. Add beans, peas, capsicum and ginger and stir fry for another 3-4 minutes. Combine honey, soy sauce and juices in a separate bowl and stir. Add to chicken and stir until boiling. Serve at once on bed of steamed long-grain basmati rice.

Serves 4

Nutrition Notes Per Serve : Energy - 431 calories (1790 kj), Fat – 6 grams

Grilled Grapefruit Chicken Legs

8 large chicken legs (skin removed)
2 teaspoons minced garlic
1 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
1 cup grapefruit juice
1 cup chopped parsley
2 tablespoons chopped fresh oregano

Place chicken in a shallow dish. Mix garlic, pepper, grapefruit juice, parsley and oregano in a bowl and pour over chicken. Refrigerate for at least an hour or if possible, over night.

Place chicken on a grill or BBQ for about 30 minutes, brushing with marinade on several occasions. Serve chicken with your favorite pasta salad and lettuce and tomato.

Nutrition Notes Per Leg (with equal portion of marinade) : Energy - 138 calories (577 kj), Fat – 4 grams

Salmon Bake

Filling:

2 cups cooked brown rice
¼ cup parsley, chopped
Egg substitute, equivalent of two eggs
2 x 220 g/8 oz cans pink or red salmon
1 cup cooked silver beet, chopped
½ cup shallots, chopped
1 red capsicum or bell pepper

Topping:

1 cup natural set 99% fat free yoghurt
Egg substitute, equivalent of 1 egg
1 cup low-fat soy milk
½ cup grated low-fat cheese

Mix the rice, parsley and egg substitute and press mixture into an ovenproof dish. Remove skin and bones from salmon. Wash under clean water if the can contains brine. Arrange layers of silver beet, salmon, shallots and capsicum on top of rice.

Mix yoghurt, egg substitute and soy milk. Gently pour this over the salmon mixture. Sprinkle the grated cheese. Bake in moderate oven for approximately 40 minutes. Serve with your choice of vegetable or salad.

Serves 8

Nutrition Notes Per Serve : Energy - 221 calories (916 kj), Fat – 9.44 grams

Deep Dhansak Vegetable Pie

Bread Crust

½ loaf of low-fat, wholemeal bread

Egg substitute (equivalent of two eggs)

Remove crusts from slices of bread. Cut slices to sufficient size to line a pie dish. Overlap edges of bread slices a little as they will shrink while cooking. You may need more or less bread depending on the size of your dish. Dip bread into egg substitute mixture and press into a non-stick pie dish. (If you don't have a non-stick, lightly brush your dish with a little olive oil). Place pieces of bread around bottom and sides. Place dish in pre-heated oven (200°C/400°F) for 20 minutes. Remove and cool. Cover any gaps between slices that may have formed from baking by adding a little more bread.

Filling

500 g (1 lb) mushrooms

1 onion chopped

1 teaspoon garlic, minced

2 ½ cups organic vegetable juice

250 g (1/2 lb) broccoli florets

1 cup cooked brown lentils

3 tablespoons arrowroot

1 teaspoon fresh basil

250 g (1/2 lb) cooked potatoes, sliced

½ teaspoon ground turmeric

1 teaspoon ground coriander

1 teaspoon ground cumin

½ teaspoon garam masala

2/3 cup wholemeal breadcrumbs

Wipe mushrooms and slice. Simmer mushrooms, onion and garlic in a little water and a little of the vegetable juice for 5 minutes. Add broccoli, herbs and spices and a little more juice and simmer for another 5-7 minutes.

Thin arrowroot in a little vegetable juice in a cup. Mix the vegetable juice and any juices drained from the onion, garlic, mushroom and broccoli mixture and add the remaining arrowroot. Mix the onion, mushrooms, broccoli together with the lentils.

Place a layer of potatoes on the base of the bread crust and then add a layer of the mixed vegetables. Then pour over some of the sauce. Repeat layers of potato, followed by vegetables then sauce. Finish with a layer of sauce.

Sprinkle dried breadcrumbs over the top of filling and bake at (200°C/400°F) for 25 minutes. Serve with lettuce and tomato salad.

Serves 8

Nutrition Notes Per Serve : Energy - 220 calories (914 kj), Fat – 1.38 grams

Grilled Salmon with Mayo & Salad

200 g (7 oz) piece of salmon

Small amount of cold-pressed olive oil or olive oil cooking spray.

¼ cup low-fat mayonnaise (see recipe)

2 lettuce leaves

1 medium tomato, sliced

4 slices beetroot

3 slices asparagus spears

Heat open grill or BBQ. Brush sides lightly with oil or quickly spray. Place fish on grill. Cook each side until light brown. Try not to overcook as fish will become dry.

Place mayonnaise on main dish together with lettuce, tomato slices, beetroot and asparagus on main dish. Place cooked fish beside salad and serve. Great summer lunch!

Nutrition Notes Total Dish : Energy - 389 calories (1592 kj), Fat – 18.26 grams

Variation: Replace the fish with a small chicken breast.

Vegetarian Soy Grit Loaf

2 cups cooked green peas, pureed in blender

Plain flour

3 medium-large carrots, grated

2 sticks celery, chopped

1 ½ cups soy grits

¾ cup low-fat chicken or beef stock

1 small onion, chopped finely

1 cup wholemeal breadcrumbs

¼ teaspoon sage

1 teaspoon fresh basil

½ cup water

Place soy grits in a bowl and pour in stock. Leave grits to soak up stock for 1-2 hours.

Dust a non-stick loaf tin with flour. Mix 1 cup of green pea puree with grated carrots, celery, soy grits, onion, breadcrumbs and herbs. Press mixture into loaf tin and bake in moderate oven (180°C/360°F) for 45 minutes. Allow to cool slightly and loosen sides of tin with a knife. Turn over onto cooling tray or serving dish.

Mix remaining puree and water and simmer for 2-3 minutes. Cover the loaf with the puree mix. Garnish with some chopped parsley and season with salt and pepper if you wish.

Serves 6

Nutrition Notes Per Serve: Energy - 280 calories (1176 kj), Fat – 9.45 grams

DESSERTS AND TREATS

Fruit & Bran Muffins

1 ½ cups stoneground wholemeal plain flour
2 cups rolled oats
½ cup natural set low-fat yoghurt
¼ cup oat bran
1 teaspoon baking powder
Egg substitute (equivalent of two eggs)
¼ cup sultanas
¼ cup dates, chopped
½ cup unsweetened apple juice

Mix flour and oats in a large bowl. Mix in yoghurt, oat bran, baking powder, egg substitute, sultanas, dates and apple juice.

Line a baking tray with baking paper. Cup handfuls of mixture into shape and place on tray. Hint: This is a pretty sticky mixture so it helps to keep your hands wet. Bake in a moderate oven for 30-40 minutes.

Makes 12 muffins

Nutrition Notes Per Muffin: Energy - 161 calories (678 kj), Fat – 2.25 grams

Variation: Replace yoghurt with low-fat buttermilk. Replace apple juice with low-fat soy milk. Replace sultanas and dates with other fruits (eg: mashed banana, cut up dried apricots).

Stewed Apples

6 granny smith apples, peeled, cored and sliced

Water

6 cloves

Cinnamon

Place apple slices in a large saucepan and put in sufficient water to just under half the height of the apples. Be careful not to put in too much liquid as this could make the finished product a runny mixture. Add cloves. Bring to the boil slowly. Then reduce heat and simmer until apple is tender. Remove cloves. Stir and mix the apples so that the mixture has a nice consistency with larger soft chunks of soft apple. Mix in cinnamon.

Makes approximately 3 cups of apple mix

Nutrition Notes Per Serve (1 cup): Energy - 174 calories (720 kj), Fat – negligible

Variation: For a sweeter mixture you can stir in some stevia once the apples have cooked. Also, replace water with some fruit juice for different flavor.

Sweet Creamed Rice

1 cup brown rice
1½ cups water
1½ cups low-fat soy milk
3 tablespoons skim milk powder
1 ½ cups stewed apples (see above)

Place rice, water and soy milk in saucepan. Bring to boil and then simmer until rice is thick and swollen. Add more water or soy milk if necessary. When rice is cooked, add skim milk powder mixed with a little soy milk liquid. Mix in stewed apples and serve warm.

Serves 4

Nutrition Notes Per Serve: Energy - 305 calories (1275 kj), Fat – 2.19 grams

Variation: If you'd like an even sweeter version you can add a few drops of liquid stevia to the mix.

Pancakes with Banana and Blackberry Yoghurt Topping

Pancake mix:

1 cup stoneground wholemeal self-raising flour
Egg substitute (equivalent of 1 egg)
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup low-fat soy milk

Mix all the ingredients until smooth consistency is achieved. As with most pancake mixes you can make them thinner by adding more milk to the mix. How large you make them depends on your preference.

Topping:

1 banana
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup natural set low-fat yoghurt
1 heaped teaspoon of 100% spreadable Blackberry fruit jam (no additional sugar)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon stevia powder

Mash banana with a fork in a small bowl. Add in yoghurt, jam and stevia. Mix and serve as topping on hot pancake.

Nutrition Notes. 4 pancakes with equal proportion of topping. Per pancake = Energy - 172 calories (748 kJ), Fat – 1.25 grams

Apple and Banana Spread

2 apples, peeled and grated
1 banana, mashed
Sprinkle of cinnamon, nutmeg or ground cloves
¼ cup low-fat natural set yoghurt
½ teaspoon stevia

Mix apples and banana. Sprinkle in selected spice, yoghurt and stevia and mix. Nice as a summer dessert or as a spread on warm toast or in a wholemeal pita wrap.

Serves 4

Nutrition Notes Per Serve: Energy - 60 calories (246kj), Fat – 0.56grams

Nana's Low-Fat Fruit Cake

3 cups (about 400g or 6 ozs) Mixed Fruit (no sugar, no oil)
1 x 425 g can Mango pieces in natural juice
1 beaten egg or equivalent egg substitute
1 cup stoneground wholemeal self-raising flour
1 teaspoon bi-carbonate soda

Boil fruit and mango together for 10 minutes. Allow to cool. Mix egg, flour and bi-carbonate soda and fold through fruit mixture. Place in non-stick cake tin and cook in low oven for 45 minutes.

Nutrition Notes. Approx 10 slices. Per Slice = Energy - 175 calories (733kj), Fat – 1.1grams

Mock Cream

1 cup low-fat ricotta cheese
Water
½ teaspoon Stevia

Place cheese in a blender or use a hand held blender and mix until smooth and creamy. You may need to add a little water to get the consistency you prefer. Mix through stevia and serve.

Nutrition Notes Per Serve: Energy - 132 calories (552kj), Fat – 4.56grams

Variation: Add a few drops of vanilla essence.

Soy Custard

2 tablespoons soy flour
1 tablespoon corn flour
1 tablespoon cold-pressed olive oil
¾ cup water
1 cup soy milk (try with low-fat soy milk)
1 flat teaspoon stevia powder
1 teaspoon vanilla essence
1 egg white or equivalent egg substitute

Heat olive oil in a saucepan. Don't overheat. Combine soy and corn flours and add to oil. Reduce heat and mix to a smooth paste. Cook over gentle heat until mixture bubbles. Stir for a few minutes. Remove from heat and add water and soy milk gradually mixing as you go. Return to heat, stir constantly. Cook for 5 minutes. Remove from heat and allow to cool slightly. Add stevia and vanilla essence. Mix in egg white and return to heat for 2 minutes.

Makes about 1 cup of custard. Serves 2

Nutrition Notes Per Serve: Energy - 214 calories (900kj), Fat – 13.7grams

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