

Natural Lifestyle

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January 2023

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MAGAZINE

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Tips on making the
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Welcome

January 2023



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January, that traditional time of year when we start afresh in so many ways, and none more so than when it comes to our health. Perhaps because we allow ourselves a little too much in the way of festive overindulgence in December, many of us can arrive in the New Year carrying a few extra pounds, feeling sluggish, bloated and ready to restore ourselves to better health.

It is for this reason that January is the time of year we commonly see a massive influx of

people joining gyms, and it is also the time that people can launch into sometimes too strict and severe cleansing and detox programmes. While a focus on your health is a great thing any time of the year, overly restrictive plans that cut out food groups are not achievable long-term and can actually leave you nutrient depleted if not thought out properly. And all of this can have an adverse effect. Here at *Natural Lifestyle*, we would always advocate a sensible approach, and a holistic one, making achievable and long-term changes to your diet and lifestyle, and not letting poor choices become so commonplace that your system becomes overloaded in the first place.

It is a topic that has so many questions and so in this issue of *Natural Lifestyle*, we ask a range of natural health experts about the best approach – you can read their advice on page 14.

January these days has also become synonymous with the Veganuary challenge – that is, people trying a plant-based diet for the month of January, with more people than ever taking the pledge last year. We highlight the ways you can make the plant-based switch, whether it's through sensible food choices to the nutrients you need to remain in good health. You can read the tips on page 22, and don't forget that you can head over to www.mynaturallifestyle.co.uk, where you can find out special *Inside Veganuary* magazine, packed full of tips and advice for every aspect of a vegan lifestyle, not to mention being able to enter a range of plant-based giveaways.

The whole team at *Natural Lifestyle* wish our readers a healthy start to 2023.



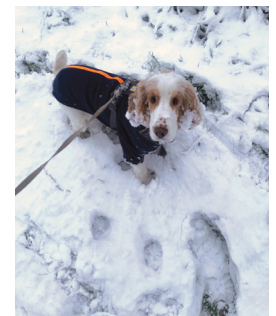
Rachel Symonds,
Editor

THE BEST BITS

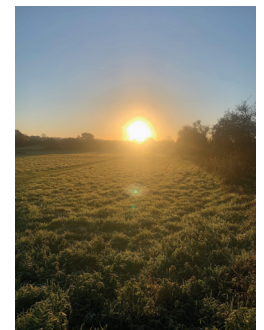
An insight into what the *Natural Lifestyle* team have been up to this month.



It was to the slopes for Sales Exec, James, who enjoyed a weekend of skiing in Val-d'Isere recently with wife, Anna.



It was a day of snow ears and wrapping up warm as Editor Rachel's dog, Gus, had his first experience of the white stuff.



Frosty yet stunning mornings have arrived at *Natural Lifestyle* HQ.



VISIT OUR WEBSITE
www.mynaturallifestyle.com



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2023

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Inside... HEALTH

THE VEGAN SWITCH

With Veganuary upon us, The Vegan Society is helping Brits make the switch from one of the most common animal-derived foods.

With the UK's egg shortage continuing, The Vegan Society has shared top egg alternatives for everything from cakes to scrambles.

As the cost of living and the avian flu outbreak continue to impact the farming industry, farmers are having problems meeting the demand for eggs, resulting in shortages here in the UK. The continuing spread of the virus between wild birds and domestic birds has forced both the culling of poultry and, in some areas, mandatory housing orders, which means that free range hens must be moved indoors. Consumers may be concerned that the eggs they usually buy will no longer be free-range, and for those worried about animal welfare, the society says now is a perfect time to explore one of the many alternatives for eggs. It suggests:

- **Breakfasts:** Eggs are a classic component of the typical English breakfast, but luckily, there are now a host of egg alternatives on the market, including the versatile Crack'd No Egg Egg and The Tofoo Co. Scrambled. Or, why not try making your own tofu scramble at home? This is a great way to get in a protein hit to start your day, and tofu is a perfect vessel for experimenting with different spices and seasonings. For a true 'egg' flavour, try using kala namak (or black salt) – the sulphur content replicates an authentic egg taste.
- **Baking:** Many recipes omit the use of eggs entirely, other recipes include alternatives such as flax and chia – both which offer excellent nutritional benefits, including being a great source of omega 3s, as well as replacing egg as a binding agent in your baked goods.
- **Egg whites:** Egg whites in recipes like meringues, macarons and mousses can be easily replaced with aquafaba. Aquafaba – the water in which legumes (such as chickpeas) have been cooked – mimics the properties of egg white, meaning it can foam and emulsify in much the same way. The low cost of pulses and beans make this an incredibly budget friendly way of replacing eggs, whilst those who want the simplicity of grabbing eggs off the shelf can opt for a carton of ready-to-use aquafaba from Vegan Trademark-registered Oggs.
- **Quiches and omelettes:** Try swapping out the eggs for silken tofu and gram flour (a pulse flour made from chickpeas). These protein packed alternatives can replicate the texture and setting properties of eggs in some of your favourite dishes. Add leftover veggies and vegan cheese to a gram flour batter for a simple and nutritious breakfast omelette.
- **Pancakes:** Think it could be difficult to embrace pancake day without eggs? Think again! It's easy to make pancakes with a simple batter of plant-based milk and flour.



Wellbeing support created for mums

The people behind a fitness programme for mums have launched a new breastfeeding guide.

Nordic Fit Mama is a health and wellbeing programme now available in the UK to support mothers in their post-partum journey. Whether a mum chooses to breastfeed or not is entirely a personal choice but for those who would like to give it a try, Nordic Fit Mama now offers a comprehensive breastfeeding guide to help them along the way.

The breastfeeding guide features 19 topics, each packed full of useful information and advice for mums. From 'how to tell if your baby is hungry', to advice on 'the best nursing positions', 'nipple problems' and 'breast infections', the guide covers everything a new mum might be frantically Googling in the middle of the night.

Nordic Fit Mama was created by Riina Laaksonen, Finland's best-known influencer in pre- and postnatal exercise. A mother of three boys, Riina is a personal trainer and it was her own experiences of postnatal recovery which inspired her to start Nordic Fit Mama in 2017. Since then, she has brought together experts in maternal wellbeing to create a holistic postnatal health programme.

She explained: "Breastfeeding is, of course, a very emotive topic. We want to be very clear that we support all mothers and we agree with the saying, 'fed is best', whether that's breast or bottle feeding. What we do know is that many mothers who choose to breastfeed really struggle with it and don't feel they have enough help and advice available to them, as it can be very challenging to master.

"I developed Nordic Fit Mama to help mums get back to feeling strong and capable after giving birth and their wellbeing is very much my top priority, so if our breastfeeding guide helps just one mum feel more supported, then that's important to me."

Find out more at www.nordicfitmama.com/

We love♥

GOOD HEALTH NATURALLY IONIC IRON AND IONIC VITAMIN B12

If you are planning on trying plant-based this January, these are for you. Iron and B12 are notable vegan essentials as dietary sources may be low. They each play a role in important bodily functions such as energy production and reduced tiredness and fatigue. When opting for liquid ionic vitamins and minerals, you are assured of fast and effective absorption and a form that is gentle on the digestive system.

PURE ENCAPSULATIONS PRENATAL NUTRIENTS

This multivitamin and mineral complex is designed for women of childbearing age, pregnant and lactating women. Convenient and easy to take vegetarian capsules, it features iron as well absorbed and tolerated iron glycinate, 100mg of choline, which contributes to normal homocysteine metabolism, and folate as both folic acid and 5-methyltetrahydrofolate (5-MTHF), the universally metabolised and biologically active form of folate. It also contains iodine, which contributes to the normal production of thyroid hormones and normal thyroid function and vitamins B1, B3, and B6 contribute to normal functioning of the nervous system.

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SKIN RESTORATION



Soothe tired muscles and hydrate skin with this luxurious addition to the Alexandra Kay range.

Time to Restore Magnesium Lotion is designed to ease muscle fatigue and reinforce the skin barrier. Intensely hydrating, the lotion is suitable for daily use and recommended after any physical activity or prior to sleep.

To support skin from the inside out, Green People – the brand behind the Alexandra Kay range – infuses this skin-barrier supporting body lotion with a moisture-binding matrix of red

algae and amylopectin. These work in synergy with a skin-softening base oil blend of nourishing jojoba, sunflower, safflower, hemp, rosehip and grapeseed plant oils, to lock in intense hydration, enhance skin barrier function, and help magnesium to be transported through the skin without causing a stinging sensation or discomfort.

Inside... BEAUTY

MALE SKIN MATTERS

Male skin has been catered for with this new range from natural experts, benecos.

The organic collection includes two Sports Oils (with Arnica and St John's Wort), 3-in-1 Body Wash Gel,

Deodorant and finally, Hand Cream.

The range is certified organic, vegan, cruelty-free, and is dermatologically tested and approved – what's more, the products don't include any synthetic dyes, fragrances, silicones, parabens, phthalates, petrochemicals, microbeads or nanoparticles.



We love the Organic St John's Wort Infused SOS Sport Oil, combined with the nourishing properties of olive oil to provide deeply warming and soothing relaxation. Perfect for post exercise due to its calming, anti-inflammatory and circulation-enhancing effects for muscle tension and bruises, as well as a massage oil.

Meanwhile, the 3 in 1 Sport Body Wash Gel gives a powerful boost of power with a fresh scent, perfect for after sport and exercise. With regional organic apple juice and organic coffee bean oil, this invigorating shower gel is a perfect all in one pamper for body, face and hair.

Soothing and sustainable

Ease dry, itchy and eczema-prone skin with this new solid skin treatment bar.

Beauty Kin has created Soothing Bar, described as the first solid treatment bar suited towards eczema and dry skin.

The plastic-free, vegan and cruelty-free bar provides a solid solution to skin issues, and with a pH balance of 5.5, the fragrance-free bar contains prebiotics, probiotics and postbiotics that work with the skin's natural microbiome.

Suitable for everyone from children (six months-plus) to older skin, the bar can be used on both body and face (avoiding the eye area).



HAPPY SKIN, HAPPY YOU

Nature meets science with this range designed to target acne-prone skin.

Wild Science Lab created its Happy Skin collection as a three-step routine, thoughtfully formulated to help people of all ages and skin types embrace the imperfections of a healthy complexion, and clinically proven to smooth out and reduce roughness in skin by keeping it healthy and clear from blemishes.

The Happy Skin range is designed to help combat acne, reduce blemishes and clear up skin texture in order to provide a smoother, radiant complexion.

Formulated with powerful ingredients such as niacinamide, azelaic acid, AHA, BHA, salicylic acid and more, whilst all being vegan friendly, it features a blend of natural, paraben-free ingredients.

The range includes Cleansing Foam, Clarifying Essence, and Blemish Gel.



TAKE BETTER CARE

We use toiletries day in, day out, making them one of the biggest household polluters. But you can make your personal care routine more natural and sustainable.

Our every day personal care routine can involve all manner of products, making it really easy to quickly overload on the amount of plastic in the home, not to mention what we wash down the sink. If such products do not come from brands with an eye on sustainability, and on being naturally sourced, this can have a huge impact on people and planet.

If we put this into perspective, according to the *Greenpeace Unpacked Report*, bath and shower products alone account for 10,000 tonnes of plastic waste. A cut of 70 per cent would lead to savings of 7,000 tonnes.

Among the most common offenders in terms of plastic use, it is the ones we would use on a routine basis, such as shampoo and conditioner, shower wash, toothpaste and period products. But the good news is there are a range of alternatives that are better for you, and for the environment.

EVERYDAY SWITCHES

There are certain products that fall under personal care we use day in, day out, and often, we might not think about what's in it or what effect it could be having on us. This includes the likes of hair care, deodorants, toothpastes, and shower washes, among much more.

First, we need to keep a check on some of the more harmful chemicals which can be found in such products. The likes of SLS and SLES will often be in products that foam, and are known to be irritants, not to mention being no good for the planet, while parabens and drying minerals oils are also common and best avoided.

If we turn to toothpastes, one common ingredient is triclosan, which although useful, can be an endocrine disruptor and an irritant, while some prefer to opt for those free from fluoride. Aluminium is often used in conventional deodorants but can actually block the sweat duct, potentially leading to a build-up of toxins.

So, when it comes to switching, from a sustainable perspective, choose products that can be refilled, with your health store being the ideal place as they often stock shampoo, conditioners and body washes – just bring in your bottle. There are also shampoo and hair care bars, which last longer, so are better for your pocket, and are kinder to the planet, as well as usually containing less in the way of undesirable chemicals.

To be sure they are kinder to you, opt for products with certifications proving their organic or natural credentials, as this means they will use plant extracts instead of synthetic chemicals.

TRY THIS

Natracare Regular
Ultra Pads

We Love The Planet
Natural Deodorant
Cream Orange

Mouncup Menstrual Cup

Kingfisher Fennel
Fluoride Free
Toothpaste

Weleda Ginger &
Petitgrain Shower Bar

CHECK YOUR PERIOD CARE

Some conventional period care products can have a worrying effect on both our health and the planet.

If we start with the facts, it is estimated that an individual will use an average of 11,000 disposable period products in their lifetime, meaning a large amount will end up in landfill. And then there's the worrying statistic that some 1.5bn sanitary products are flushed away every year in the UK alone.

We should also note that there is a health aspect as the vagina can absorb toxins – which is concerning when you consider that materials used in tampons and sanitary pads can come from materials bleached with chlorine, and other toxins, such as crude oil, perfumes and dyes, that aren't desirable, especially for such a sensitive area.

When seeking an alternative, there are now many more choices. As a starting point, if you use tampons and pads, try to choose those that are organic as this means they have certain standards to meet when it comes to materials and where they are sourced from, and also check that they are plastic-free.

Menstrual cups are growing in popularity and for good reason; they are made of medical grade silicone, and do not contain the chemicals nasties conventional products do. They are also reusable, meaning you are throwing far less into landfill than if you were using conventional products. Reputable menstrual cup brands will offer different sizes and guides to help you make the transition.

We're also seeing more in the way of period underwear, which usually have a reusable pad inside so you can use again and again. This type of product can be especially popular for overnight period care.

BALANCE AT BREAKFAST

Whatever your taste, goal or dietary need, there is a healthy breakfast option for everyone.

As the first meal of the day, breakfast is the time where we break the fast that has occurred overnight. It can help set us up for the day, get our metabolism going, and give us key nutrients – providing we plan it properly. Where people can go awry is in making the wrong choices for their first meal of the day, opting for sugar-laden cereals, too much refined carbs, and not enough of the foods that will set you up for a healthy day.

So, what do you need to know to keep your breakfast well-balanced?

WINTER WARMERS

The shift to colder weather is the perfect time to change up your breakfast routine to add in some winter nourishment.

Porridge is a great choice, as it's low GI, helping to keep your blood sugar stable for longer. You can add everything from protein-rich nut butters and simple nuts and seeds, to antioxidant berries, or some brilliant superfoods, such as chia or flaxseed.

If you want something you can prep in advance still using oats, try overnight oats, which can be mixed with Greek yoghurt and fruits of your choice, and left in the fridge – they are then ready to grab and go in the morning.

TRY THIS

Suma Jumbo Oats

Higher Living Organic Morning Mojo Tea

Kallo Apple & Cinnamon Rice & Corn Cakes

Planet Paleo Pure Collagen Turmeric Latte

Doves Farm Fruit and Fibre Flakes

BREAKFAST BASICS

Let's start with what a breakfast would ideally be made up of, and why this is so important.

Protein is an important one as it helps to sustain you through the day and keeps you fuller for longer than carb-rich foods, such as bread, will – meaning you are less likely to snack. Protein-rich breakfast ideas include eggs, tofu, Greek yoghurt, and nuts and seeds, which also contain beneficial fats.

If you have the time, omelettes with the likes of cheese and vitamin and mineral-rich spinach are a great brunch choice that is also packed with protein, while avocados are rich in good fats and a great choice topped on wholegrain toast.

When including carbs in your breakfast, try to avoid those contained in white bread, processed cereals, and pastries as these can send your blood sugar spiralling and load up on extra calories. If you enjoy cereal, choose wholegrain varieties and resist adding extra sugar to them. Another option is to make your own granola, using nuts and seeds, with all kinds of healthy recipes found online.

As a basic rule, try to get familiar with checking labels on breakfast products, with the ones with the least ingredients being the best, and watch out for sugar on the list. Where you can, buy the ingredients and create your own healthy breakfast.

THINK DRINK

While some people don't like to eat much, if anything, at breakfast, you can still get some nourishment in through a healthy drink choice – which also helps to keep you hydrated.

Herbal teas offer a great choice to get your metabolism started and to lighten your caffeine load. Excellent morning teas include dandelion and fennel, which are cleansing, along with citrus teas, including lemon, and the ginsengs.

Let's also remember smoothies, as they can include a host of fruit and veg, helping you to get plenty of vitamins, minerals, good fats and antioxidants, all of which we need for good health. You can also add in your choice of superfood powders, and top with your favourite seeds. These are a great choice for taking with you on the go.

And let's not forget that it's a great idea to start your day with good old fashioned water as this will help you stay hydrated through the day – important for everything from brain function to keeping hunger at bay. We also love a cup of hot water and lemon first thing in the morning, refreshing, caffeine-free and a great kickstart to your metabolism.



Ionic Iron and Ionic Vitamin B12

Iron and B12 are notable vegan essentials as dietary sources may be low for those following a plant-based diet. They each play a role in important bodily functions like energy production and reduced tiredness and fatigue.

When opting for liquid ionic vitamins and minerals, you are assured of fast and effective absorption and a form that is gentle on the digestive system. Ionic Iron and Ionic Vitamin B12 come with metered droppers, providing flexible dosing to suit individual requirements. Vegan, Non-GMO, gluten-free, with no known allergens. Ionic Iron 56ml (approx. 46 servings). Ionic Vitamin B12 59ml (approx. 59 servings).

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Natural Lifestyle

Retailer of the Year 2022

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Your health store hero

Following our annual search, we are delighted to reveal the deserving winner of the coveted *Natural Lifestyle Retailer of the Year* accolade.

Independent health stores are a haven for our wellbeing needs, they are our first port of call when we have health concerns, and they are what we here at *Natural Lifestyle* champion.

If ever their importance was brought to the fore, it was during the pandemic, staying open and trading throughout and with many also delivering to customers' doorsteps. At a time of huge challenge and demand, health store retailers truly went above and beyond for us.

And we believe their dedication and commitment should be recognised, which is why we launched the *Natural Lifestyle Retailer of the Year* Awards in partnership with our friends at Terranova Nutrition. Shining a light on health stores across the UK, we asked you, our readers, to nominate your favourite store and you did so in your droves.

After a lengthy search and countless nominations, we whittled the entries down to a shortlist of eight deserving stores, and we congratulate each and every one of them. These were then judged by the *Natural Lifestyle* team, before we settled on a winner and runner-up.

John Brear, National Sales Director at Bio-Nature, which is the UK distributor of the Terranova brand and our sponsor of the awards, commented: "As a brand that focuses on supporting the independent health trade, this award allows stores that go that extra mile for their customers to receive the accolade they deserve. We are proud to sponsor the *Natural Lifestyle Retailer of the Year* Award and we congratulate all the stores – it was a pleasure to see such amazing feedback."

Our winner...

We are delighted to announce that Mark Hamilton, owner of The Little Supplement Company, in Paignton, Devon, was our winner.



Mark has worked in the natural health sector for many years, and what we loved about this store and about Mark was firstly, the passion he holds for helping people to better health. Advising customers of the right products, even if it means deterring them from buying certain products as he doesn't feel they are needed, is a key approach at this store, and it is this responsible, customer focused ethos that shone through.

But that's not all; Mark is one of the few retailers who has incorporated sports nutrition hugely effectively into the more traditional health store set-up, and we loved seeing the two work so well alongside each other.

Mark received a vast number of nominations, including comments such as: "They only sell genuine, high quality products that consumers actually need, not always a given in this industry. Very friendly and extremely knowledgeable and personable service by Mark Hamilton and his staff."

Another nomination read: "Mark is really helpful and caring. He listens to your problems, answers your questions and really cares about each individual customer. Over many years, his advice has been invaluable to me and has helped me in so many ways. Thank you Mark."

And another commented: "The staff are so helpful and welcoming, every time. They have never tried to sell me something just to earn themselves money – in fact, they've actually stopped me buying products if they've thought it not right for me and given me freebies of other products."

On hearing he is our winner, Mark commented: "I can't believe it, I genuinely can't believe it. It is such an amazing, humbling and fantastic feeling – thank you so very much for what you are doing for the industry and for independent retailers like me. With the way the world is today, economy in crisis, people paranoid about viruses and ill health more than ever, it is great to see some good news and positivity shine through. I have been in the natural products industry since the early '90s and even though things have changed significantly, it's still the amazing, close knit, positive industry it has always been."

"I am still as enthusiastic today as I was when I started out in the industry, just a little older, wiser and greyer and I appreciate what an incredibly high standard of health stores are out there. So I would like to thank Bio-Nature and Terranova for the incredible proactivity they put into the health stores, as well as *Natural Lifestyle* and *Health Food Business* for the fantastic work they do for our amazing industry. It is one of the highest accolades I can imagine receiving in an industry I have been part of all my working life, I feel very humbled and proud to know after all these years helping and guiding people with their health issues, we are still doing something right."

Our runner-up

Coming in second place as our runner-up is Therapy Organics, in Wilmslow, Cheshire, run by sisters Kylie and Jackie, and a store that prides itself on having qualified nutritional therapists on the shop floor.

Comments for Therapy Organics included: "Therapy have been my go-to retailer for anything naturopathic for years, they really know what they are doing. I went in recently to ask advice on behalf of my daughter who had been suffering from constant nausea. A few tweaks to her diet and a supplement or two and she's back to her usual happy teenage self. Thanks to Kylie, Jackie and the team!"

While another read: "They go above and beyond with their care, customer service and professional advice and guidance: ensuring that they research a customer's exact medication to ascertain if a supplement is appropriate according to the individual's symptoms and reasons for seeking vitamins, minerals and/or herbs to enable management of health issues in that person's life."

While another said: "I called from bed yesterday feeling horrible after a Covid infection, they talked me through what would help, popped the bag together and dropped it off at home on the same day."

The sisters commented: "We are thrilled to receive this award, especially as it's our 10th year of trading. Our mission is to improve the health and wellbeing of our customers in a natural, empowering and educated way, and for each customer to feel benefit from their Therapy experience, whether this is retail or complementary therapy. Our whole team is dedicated and passionate and we would like to thank our wonderful customers who voted for us."



Kylie and Jackie

Our shortlist

We also had six other stores shortlisted, all of which deserve high praise for their efforts – we were truly impressed with each and every store, for a variety of reasons.

They were:

- **Peak Health Food, Rugeley:** Comments included exemplary service, willing to go above and beyond, an abundance of knowledge and so very professional and helpful, being described as the best shop in Rugeley.
- **Wild Oats, Bristol:** Praised for being consistently authentic, focusing on good suppliers, with excellent customer service, product knowledge, range and advice.
- **Beanbag Natural Health, Witney:** Helpful, friendly, knowledgeable and willing to research everything they sell are just some of the comments for this much-loved store, which is well-stocked, clean, fresh and inviting.
- **Glossop Wholefoods, Glossop:** The store goes the extra mile, with fantastic customer service, extensive knowledge on supplements, with a passion that shines through. The shop is a pinnacle of the town and offers a personable shopping experience.
- **Good Health Boutique, Retford:** This mother and daughter business offers an invaluable service to the town, a wide range of products and comprehensive knowledge. It was praised for offering a warm, friendly, efficient and valuable service and described as the most beautiful store in the town.
- **Eat 4 Energy:** Amazing customer service, rich knowledge about the products, a truly energising place to shop were all words used to describe this store, with an incredibly personalised service and super valuable advice.

REPAIR

and

RENEW

January can bring feelings of fatigue and sluggishness as the festive excess takes its toll. Here, our natural health experts explain how you can choose a healthy and effective cleanse.

A new year offers a great time to start afresh, whether it's a new hobby, a goal or, for many people, a new health focus. The latter can be especially important after the overindulgence of the festive period and the resultant overload of our systems.

But before you start planning a strict juice or soup diet, remember that a cleanse or detox plan need not mean you restrict yourself so severely you're barely consuming anything. What we – and indeed, our panel of experts – suggest is balance, cutting out processed food and refined sugar, adding in naturally cleansing foods, as well as some beneficial supplements. Carried out over a period of time, rather than a quick fix programme is likely to bring many health benefits.

Alice Bradshaw, Head of Nutrition Education and Information at Terranova, advised: "After a period of indulgence (such as a holiday or just an extended period of poor food and health choices) is a common time that people may embark on a detox. Processed foods, excess carbohydrates, along with too much alcohol and recreational drugs will eventually bring about feeling of sluggishness and lack of mental clarity.

"Xenoestrogens are environmental oestrogens that can make their way into food and water supplies. They can be found in tap water, food and drink stored in plastic and pesticides and herbicides. These chemicals have been shown to disrupt endocrine and hormonal balance and an efficient detoxification is vital to remove these from the body."

Sara Gibbons, Nutritionist at Good Health Naturally, went

on: "In our modern living environment, it is impossible to avoid at least some toxins while going about our everyday life. For example, walking down the road, we are exposed to vehicle fumes. In the countryside, we can be exposed to farming chemicals, whilst chemicals in the home and indoor environments are common, from paint, carpets, cleaning products and even everyday objects.

"Whilst a healthy body can handle a certain amount of toxicity, there can be physical and mental health problems when it gets overloaded. Stress is also a common factor in modern-day living. It is responsible for many issues because it depletes the body of nutrients and makes it more vulnerable to toxicity. It's important to emphasise if you have not done a detox programme before, it is best to begin gradually and seek professional advice if you have any health concerns."

Phil Beard, Technical Educator at Viridian, also cautioned:

"There is currently no evidence proving that detoxing works, yet we still get led to believe it will be good for you. If anything, detoxing can slow down the body's natural restoration process. The body has an adaptable and powerful detox system that is constantly working to eliminate toxins. The main detoxification pathways are in the liver and kidneys, but you will also find our digestive tract, lymphatic system, skin and lungs playing a role in the detoxification pathway. Needing to detox is a way of saying you need to give the body what it needs, like sufficient sleep, recovery, quality food, hydration and outdoor exercise. Don't get drawn in by all the marketing adverts that claim to detoxify the body with a magic ingredient or regime that cleanses you."



THE HEALTH IMPACT

It is key to be aware of longer-term health issues that toxic overload can contribute to.

"Excessive poor quality foods/drinks and recreational drugs, coupled with stress, poor sleep and other detrimental lifestyle practices place a lot of stress on the body. Short-term, issues such as poor immunity and general lack of vitality are likely to be prevalent, however, in the long-term, this can lead to poor mental and emotional health, as well as serious health disorders that manifest as a result of ongoing suppressed immunity," Alice explained.

Sara went on: "Healthy cells mean healthy tissues, organs, blood and then, of course, a healthy body. Only two factors stop cells from working well: a lack of the nutritional resources needed to do their job and toxicity that interferes with their processes. If the cells aren't working correctly, if they can't function optimally, then health issues can and will arise. These can begin as mild issues and symptoms. However, if the situation continues long-term, chronic health problems can arise as the body struggles to fulfil all its functions, given that it can no longer operate optimally and has to choose priorities."

Phil added: "Long-term, an overloaded body can disrupt your nervous system and cellular health potentially leading to suppression of the immune system. As well as this, it could lead to chronic inflammation, mental health issues and long-term health conditions."

Let's remember the effects of being overweight too, with Alice adding: "Carrying extra weight can have multiple negative consequences if the weight is comprised of excessive body fat. Insulin resistance and chronic inflammation are typically seen in a person with extra body fat and are root causes for many health conditions, including diabetes, poor cardiovascular health, digestive disorder and numerous of the inflammatory health conditions that are so common today."

SIGNS YOU'RE IN NEED

There can be some obvious signals the body is overloaded.

Sara explained: "This can vary hugely, but common mild indications could be feeling sluggish, headaches, a tendency to infections, sleeping a lot, feelings of heaviness, dull skin etc., through to more severe symptoms of illness."

Michela Vagnini, Nutritional Therapist and Advisor at NaturesPlus, added: "The liver has many functions, such as breaking down nutrients to create energy, providing most of the proteins needed by the body, producing bile to absorb vitamins A, D, E and K, regulating blood clotting and helping to fight infection. Poor lifestyle choices, environmental toxins, processed food and a lack of exercise can all contribute to an under-functioning liver, making you feel sluggish, low in energy and interfering with sleep.

"Constant headaches and foggy mind, low energy, dull skin tone and breakouts, moodiness, sensitivity to moulds and chemicals/strong smells, excess sweating especially with malodour, water retention and recurrent waking up at night (especially between 2am-4am, which, in Chinese medicine, is the time when our liver regenerates) are all signs our liver and detoxing organs are under pressure."

LIFESTYLE CHECKLIST

Everyday lifestyle choices can affect our toxic load and so simple changes during a detox can make a big difference.

Alice suggested: "Gentle exercise, including walking and yoga, support circulation and detoxification. Robust exercise may be best avoided during a targeted cleansing period. Journaling, meditation and spending time outdoors (away from screens and social media) can enhance mental and emotional wellbeing during a cleanse."

And Sara advised: "Sometimes, people feel tired, headachy or emotional as the body clears old habits and patterns simultaneously as physical toxins. Others can feel benefits straightaway. To counter any side effects, drink plenty of water. Some gentle exercise stimulates the lymph system, helping move the toxins out faster."

Michela added: "The first few days you might need extra sleep and rest, so plan your week ahead and avoid any possible challenging situations, including meeting friends and family. Engage in an early bedtime routine to be deep asleep by 11 pm (this is the optimal time to regenerate your digestive system but also your brain). Keep meals light and within an eight-hour window as per intermittent fasting, and mostly during daytime."

Try this

- ★ Good Health Naturally Ionic Vitamin B12
- ★ Silicea Gastrointestinal Gel
- ★ NutraTea Nutra Liver
- ★ Terranova Life Drink
- ★ NaturesPlus BioAdvanced Liver Support

CLEANSE SUPPORT

Adding in supplements is useful to ensure you are getting the right nutrients to help the body effectively cleanse, but these must be hand in hand with dietary and lifestyle changes.

Sara suggested: "Magnesium chloride flake baths or footbaths help release and pull out more toxins, and many people find them to be a soothing and nurturing part of cleansing. Furthermore, absorbing plenty of magnesium into the cells has also been shown to protect them from toxicity."

"Bentonite clay baths or footbaths are an excellent way of pulling out harmful substances, such as heavy metals and other environmental pollutants. Supplementing with glutathione is also helpful as this master antioxidant is a significant resource for the liver in its functions as a critical detox organ. Psyllium husks are a good choice if the bowels become sluggish during the cleansing process."

Alice added: "A multivitamin and mineral provides all the micronutrients needed for general good health, as well as supporting the detoxification process. There are many botanicals (herbs, plants and spices) that contain compounds that specifically support detoxification in a powerful way. An easy way to incorporate these into the diet is to use a supplement providing fresh freeze-dried versions of these plants. The most common and favourite include dandelion leaves, watercress, kale, parsley, beetroot, burdock, stinging nettle, turmeric, artichoke leaves, wheatgrass and coriander."

"Another very popular addition to a cleansing regime is milk thistle, which is a source of a group of flavonoids collectively known as silymarin. These phytochemicals have been studied for their ability to repair liver cells that have been damaged by alcohol and other toxic substances."

Michela also suggested: "Use a good supplement containing choline, milk thistle, dandelion, turmeric and all key nutrients to support phase I and II liver detoxification pathways, including B vitamins, vitamin C, flavonoids, zinc, amino acids, selenium, manganese and more."

And Phil advised: "N-acetylcysteine has been shown to be a precursor for glutathione production, as well as milk thistle, which can stimulate the liver and improve detoxification. If your digestive system needs a bit of a kick think about digestive aids that contain digestive enzymes to improve absorption and improve transit time of nutrients in the stomach. Probiotics are vital, especially if you have digestive problems."

The detox basics

There are some simple steps to include in a healthy and effective detox plan.

Phil pointed out: "Don't think of it as a detox, think of it as nourishing your body to fuel and regulate itself. Fasting is a potential method of enhancing detoxification pathways, with research highlighting the associated benefits. Fasting can be done quite easily but I would suggest starting at a maximum of 12 hours and slowly build up to 16 hours for a short period of time. By following a fasting protocol, it may help with weight management through reduced feeding windows and sufficient time to regulate the meals you have consumed."

Alice added: "It was once popular to partake in harsh and extreme cleanses, such as drinking juices for many days or avoiding food in favour of concoctions made up of water, spices and maple syrup. Thankfully, most people recognise these methods are neither safe or effective. The best way to start a cleaner diet is to eliminate processed foods, while simultaneously adding nutrient-rich foods, such as vegetables, low sugar fruit and good quality protein."

"It is also helpful to see cleansing and detoxing as an ongoing project where you can incorporate cleanse-supportive strategies on an ongoing basis, rather than using harsher, short-term methods."

Michela added: "Start slowly, do not rush, and allow plenty of time to rest, sleep and breathe deeply. Gentle exercise that makes you sweat (hot Bikram

yoga is my favourite) is ideal. Saunas and infrared treatments are advised. Stay well hydrated with herbal teas, especially those including burdock, nettle, artichoke, and dandelion, and filtered water with added greens, including chlorella, spirulina and other algae will support toxins elimination."

As part of planning, be aware of nutrient needs. "Nutrient-rich foods such as vegetables, fruits, nuts and seeds provide antioxidants and phytonutrients that work well in a cleanse-focused diet. Green foods are rich in chlorophyll and cruciferous vegetables (such as broccoli, Brussels sprouts and watercress) also contain fibre and sulphur compounds that facilitate the removal of toxins from the body," Alice explained.

"Amino acids support the liver's role in detoxification, thus protein is crucial for detoxification. Organic eggs, meat and fish along with plant-based foods such as pulses and seeds are good sources of protein. Many cleanses avoid protein altogether, which may result in loss of lean muscle tissue, poor satiety and compromised immunity in the long-term."

Phil went on: "The foods most beneficial to enhance your detox system are colourful, antioxidant-rich vegetables and fruit like sweet potatoes and berries. Another food group to focus on are sulphur-rich foods like eggs, garlic, onions and broccoli that can help maintain glutathione, the body's master antioxidant, as well as enhancing the

excretion of heavy metals. Herbs and spices like turmeric, coriander and rosemary have high antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and phytochemical content to aid in detoxifying."

"The digestive system is a major gateway for potential threats. Feeding it properly can help maintain a healthy microbiota and optimise your detoxification pathway. Prebiotics such as artichokes, tomatoes, garlic and oats help to fuel the probiotics that need feeding to colonise. Probiotic-rich foods are fermented foods like yoghurt, sauerkraut, kimchi or fermented tofu."

Sara also recommended: "A powerful cleansing support many advocate is fresh celery juice on an empty stomach first thing in the morning, followed by a clean diet of vegetables and fruit. Whilst cleansing, it's essential to avoid white goods, such as white rice, flour, sugar or chemical table salt as these will affect and even halt the process. Dried fruits such as figs and dates can help to clean the colon."

"Some beneficial fruits and vegetables include apples for their antioxidant effects, asparagus for its high levels of glutathione, and beetroot for its high folate levels when raw and its high antioxidant levels. Carrots are also high in antioxidants and support the elimination organs of the lungs, colon, kidneys, bladder, liver and skin. Ginger is antibacterial, antiviral, antiparasitic and also an antioxidant. Warm lemon water helps flush toxins from the body and can also help dissolve uric acid."

Natural Lifestyle Top Picks



Goli Apple Cider Vinegar Gummies

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www.blukoo.com

NutraLiver - Liver Detox Tea

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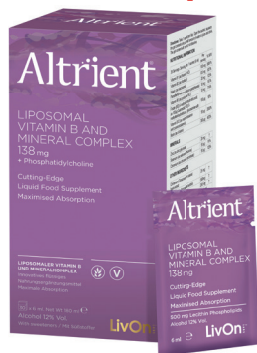
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Ask the experts

AMAZING ASTAXANTHIN...

by Lucy Parry

What is astaxanthin and where does it come from?

Belonging to the family of xanthophylls, astaxanthin is a red pigment that accumulates in marine organisms, including freshwater algae, salmon, trout, shrimp, and lobster. Xanthophylls, alongside carotenes, constitute a class of more than 600 molecules collectively known as carotenoids. Whilst the carotenoids are primarily responsible for pigmentation (producing many of the yellow and orange colours of fruit and vegetables), many studies have focused on their antioxidant capabilities. Astaxanthin is no exception to this and is often cited as one of nature's most potent antioxidants.

Why is it considered so beneficial for health, and what areas is it specifically good for?

There is research to suggest that the antioxidant activity of astaxanthin is unrivalled by that of any other carotenoid due to its unique molecular structure. By definition, an antioxidant is a compound that helps to neutralise free radicals within the body. Though free radicals are required to sustain life processes, excess quantities can be dangerous due to their high reactivity, causing damage to cellular compounds such as DNA and carbohydrates. This imbalance is frequently referred to as oxidative stress, a component of many diseases and other health conditions.

It is thought that antioxidants can interrupt the propagation of free radicals and, therefore, reduce oxidative stress. Interestingly, astaxanthin can

quench free radicals in both the inner and outer layers of the membrane, unlike most antioxidants, which function on one layer only. As such, astaxanthin is a nutrient with a growing research base, with some of the most frequently cited applications including the areas of eye health, skin health, heart health and cognitive function.

Can we obtain it from food, or would you recommend a supplement – and if so, how can we ensure a quality one?

As we have seen, astaxanthin is predominantly found within marine life, with salmon, trout and shrimp serving as dietary sources of the pigment. However, these may not always be relevant, particularly for those who consume a plant-based diet and/or those with fish/shellfish allergies.

As such, an astaxanthin supplement that uses a natural material derived from *Haematococcus pluvialis* offers an effective and convenient alternative. *Haematococcus pluvialis* is a unicellular green alga, which produces astaxanthin as a protective and potent antioxidant in response to light or environmental stressors. Here, astaxanthin largely exists in the natural 3S,3'S form, which is also the form that will be found within quality supplements that are derived from *Haematococcus pluvialis*.

Q How can I holistically ease stress, and what specific homeopathic remedies would you suggest?

Roz Crompton suggested: Addressing the root cause of long-term stress by seeing a homeopath or other complementary practitioner for a more personalised approach can be very beneficial.

For short-term self-help, I recommend the following:

- **Physical exercise**, yoga and meditation can reduce stress hormones and stimulate the production of endorphins, which help how we feel.
- Ensuring you eat a **healthy, balanced diet**, which can be supplemented with B vitamins, magnesium and vitamin D.

- **Flower essences** are also a great way to ease symptoms of stress and anxiety and can offer emotional support.

Homeopathy is a holistic system of medicine that can benefit both physical and emotional complaints. For symptoms of mild stress and anxiety, there are many homeopathic remedies available over the counter for self-help and, being natural, are without any known side effects.

- **Aconite/Arg-Nit/Arsenicum 30c** – this combination of remedies has a long history of traditional use to relieve symptoms associated with emotional shock, stress, anticipatory anxiety, fear of illness, panic attacks and more.
- **Gelsemium 30c** – indicated when there are feelings of weakness, trembling with mental dullness, or feelings of being paralysed by fear and fear of crowds.

- **Lycopodium 30c** – especially good for those that worry and battle with self-confidence. It is a remedy for fear of change, stage fright of being in the public eye.

- **Nux Vomica 30c** – helps to neutralise the effect of stress on the mind and excess intake of food, alcohol and drugs on the digestive system. A great remedy for over-indulgence.

- **Avena sativa/Coffea/Passiflora/Valerian 30c** – stress and anxiety can affect sleeping patterns. This combination can help with difficulty getting off to sleep and frequent waking during the night. It is especially good for those who are unable to switch off and go over things in their mind.

- **Kali-phos 6x** – one of the Schuessler Tissue salts with a specific affinity for nervous people who are highly strung.

About the experts



LUCY PARRY joined the team at Lamberts Healthcare as Senior Brand Specialist in 2020, having completed her Chemistry Integrated Master's at the University of York. Whilst her studies were primarily focused on medicinal chemistry, Lucy's interest in health and natural products led her into the exciting field of nutrition.



MICHELA VAGNINI studied at the College of Naturopathic Medicine, where she graduated as a Nutritional Therapist in 2012 and has been practising in her own London clinic, focusing mainly on family health, cooking classes and talks. She is a Nutritional Therapist and Advisor at NaturesPlus.



ROZ CROMPTON has worked for Helios Homeopathy for 27 years. She is a qualified Homeopath and its Trade and Operations Director.



JOANNA DZIEDZIC is a qualified Nutritional Therapist with a passion and interest in natural approaches to supporting complex health issues and improving vitality and wellbeing. Joanna is Business Development Manager for Pure Encapsulations UK, a leading nutritional health science company.

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Ask the experts

HOLISTIC ENERGY ACTION PLAN...

by Michela Vagnini

How common is low energy and what other health issues can this lead to?

Low energy is probably the most common symptom behind many conditions. One in three people in the UK suffer from sleep issues and insomnia, which is the main cause of tiredness and fatigue. When we look at low energy, as poor sleep, we have to consider that it is often a sign of another problem. Rather than treating the symptom with stimulants or sleeping pills, we have to look into the cause behind it.

Unless there are other degenerative conditions linked to fatigue, the common causes of fatigue are dysregulated blood sugar, unhealthy lifestyle with excess alcohol and not enough sleep, poor sleep quality, anxiety and chronic stress, respiratory problems and nutritional deficiencies.

Feeling tired all the time, or even worse, chronic fatigue can lead to depression, anxiety, obesity and cardiovascular diseases. If you have low energy, you might be more prone to eat junk and comfort food, exercise less and be more sedentary.

Can those with low energy be lacking in any key nutrients?

Iron is used to produce red blood cells, so when we lack iron, we struggle to transport oxygen around the body, making us feel lethargic, weak and find it hard to concentrate. Iron is also needed to make enzymes that digest our food, absorb nutrients and balance hormones.

If you're low in iron, it's also critical to get plenty of vitamin C in your diet since it increases iron absorption. So, if you feel tired and easily get sick, maybe you are lacking vitamin C too. It is also essential for the transport of long-chain fatty acids into the mitochondria for energy production and its deficiency can be responsible for weakness or muscle aching.

There is evidence that inadequate supplies of certain B vitamins, primarily vitamins B6, B9 and B12, can lead to anaemias and accumulation of homocysteine in the body. B12 and folate deficiency can lead to megaloblastic anaemia, a type of vitamin deficiency anaemia when you don't get enough of these two vitamins and your bone marrow produces stem cells that make abnormally large red blood cells.

Ubiquinol is the active and non-oxidised form of

coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10) readily usable by your body. Our liver produces CoQ10, but with age (meaning being over 40) and in many conditions connected with increased generation and the action of reactive oxygen species (ROS) free radicals, the concentration of CoQ10 in the human body decreases, making supplementation highly recommended.

Cofactors such as alpha lipoic acid, potassium, vitamin B6, selenium, magnesium and calcium complement the enzymatic activity and cellular energy production of CoQ10, so if you are thinking about getting a ubiquinol supplement, look out for one that also contains these nutrients.

Can you suggest a natural plan to boost energy?

A healthy, balanced diet rich in fresh wholefoods is essential to provide our body with key nutrients. Fibre-rich foods, including whole grains, leafy vegetables, nuts and seeds, are usually high in magnesium as well.

Avoid any highly refined sugars and ultra-processed food that can affect your glycaemic levels making your mood and energy go up and down like a rollercoaster. Always eat iron-rich foods, such as red meat, beetroot, spinach, quinoa, turkey, broccoli and dark chocolate, with citrus, berries or vegetables that are also rich in vitamin C to absorb the most out of it.

Work on your sleep quality and try magnesium glycinate and taurate, mixed with relaxing herbs such as lemon balm, ashwagandha, hops, chamomile and black cherries for a restful night and wake up refreshed and full of energy!

Stay well hydrated as dehydration can also be the cause of tiredness and fatigue. Overindulging in coffee, tea and alcohol could actually deplete your minerals and nutrient reserves, making you even more dehydrated and tired. Herbal teas and filtered water are the best options, maybe add a tasty magnesium powder to your water bottle to make your drink more motivating and combine the action of water and magnesium for your health.

Try to stay active; it doesn't need to be anything too extreme but go for walks, be in contact with nature and take a gentle exercise classes. Exercise also improves your sleep quality; the secret is to find something that makes you feel good and relaxes you at the same time.

What do you consider to be the most important nutrients for the brain and why?

Joanna Dzedzic advised: Over the last decade, research has provided exciting evidence around the influence of dietary factors on mechanisms that maintain healthy mental function.

Consumption of omega 3 fatty acids is one of the best studied interactions between food and brain health. The omega 3 fatty acid, docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), which humans mostly obtain from oily fish like salmon, herrings and mackerel, can affect synaptic function and cognitive abilities.

Plant sources of omega 3 fatty acids like flax, chia seeds and walnuts should be considered, particularly by individuals following a plant-based diet.

A diet rich in folate found in various foods, including spinach, kale and broccoli, vitamin B12, common in beef, clams, sardines and eggs, and vitamin B6 found in beef, seafood, unpeeled carrots, and tofu is essential for brain function. Studies show that vitamins B6, B12 and folate have a positive effect on memory performance and mood, while folate deficiency can lead to neurological disorders, such as depression and cognitive impairment.

For very good reason, choline is gathering more and more appreciation for supporting cognitive processes in humans. Surprisingly, it was only acknowledged as a required nutrient in 1998. Choline ensures the structural integrity and signalling functions of cell membranes. Choline is found in a wide variety of foods that contain membranes, such as eggs and organ meats, hence it might be hard to meet the daily requirements of choline if you follow a plant-based diet. Supplementation of choline can cover dietary demands; including shitake mushrooms, kidney beans and cruciferous vegetables would also increase the intake of this essential nutrient.

Although all the above nutrients are great for our brain and mental health, consumption of diets rich in omega 3 fatty acids, B vitamins and choline show endless benefit on the physiology of the mind and the entire human body.

“I turned my health around with nutrition”

Seberina D'Arcy explains the role her training at the College of Naturopathic Medicine (CNM) played in creating a new career path.



Seberina D'Arcy

Studying nutrition empowered me with knowledge so I could understand my thyroid condition and take control of my health.

Before studying Naturopathic Nutrition at the College of Naturopathic Medicine (CNM) Galway, I worked in accountancy after completing my finance degree at university. I've always had an interest in health and eating well, however, it wasn't until I heard a talk at my local health shop that my interest really piqued. I was so inspired by the naturopath's talk that I booked in with her for a consultation. I loved her holistic approach to health so much, I decided to study nutrition myself.

After giving birth to my third baby, I started getting strange symptoms; I had heart palpitations and flutters, and I was constantly sweating and overheating too. I soon discovered that my thyroid was overactive, and I was diagnosed with Graves' disease. I was quite embarrassed at the beginning as I had just started studying nutrition and I was trying to be as healthy as possible.

Under the guidance of doctors, my naturopath and through my own research, my thyroid antibodies eventually came down. I healed my gut, upped my antioxidant levels and ate a nutritious diet. Using a holistic approach that incorporated fresh air, good food, natural daylight and stress management techniques really helped to heal my body. A year later, I was able to come off my thyroid medication and I felt really good.

I loved my time studying at CNM. Everyone at the college was so supportive and like-minded. The course was so flexible, and the weekend study worked perfectly around my job and family commitments. All the modules were interesting, and I particularly enjoyed the science subjects

and the clinical practice. The flexible payment plans that CNM offer are fantastic and absolutely vital when you have other financial commitments – it made studying nutrition possible for me.

My repertoire of knowledge is so vast – without this, I probably would have had my thyroid taken out by now. Having nutrition knowledge empowered me and gave me the confidence to ask questions and get the answers I needed from medical professionals. I now have the tools at my disposal to improve my health should it ever deteriorate again.

I'm planning to open a nutrition practice which specialises in thyroid disorders and hormone issues. I want to be able to help and inspire others who are in the same position as I was.

My advice to anyone wanting to study natural therapies is invest in your health as you will never regret it – your health is your wealth. I now have the inner confidence and knowledge to help loved ones should they ever fall ill. Studying nutrition has been the best investment for my health, family and future.



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Beginning your plant-based journey

Shifting your usual diet to a plant-based one takes planning and prep, but the rewards to reap for you and the planet are many. So, will you take the Veganuary challenge?

There is clearly something in the plant-based movement that you've likely read lots about. All we need to do is look at the amount of people trying an animal-free diet to confirm its popularity. Keri Briggs, Senior Nutrition and Technical Advisor, commented: "Veganism is becoming an increasingly popular dietary choice for people in the UK, with numbers increasing year on year. According to the Vegan Society, the number of people opting for a vegan diet has quadrupled from 150,000 people in 2014, to 600,000 in 2019. A further 10m households are replacing meat and animal product-based meals at least once a week and over 600,000 signed up for Veganuary worldwide in 2022."

Carol Longbottom, Co-operative member at Suma, added: "By following a plant-based diet, people are not only helping animals and the planet, but also themselves as there are many health benefits. There is evidence that following a wholefood and plant-based diet can boost energy and help prevent chronic disease, such as diabetes, heart disease and some forms of cancer. A plant-based diet can also cut food expenditure, which is important on a cost-of-living crisis."

So, with the annual Veganuary campaign, how can you make the switch?

A vegan change

When moving to a plant-based diet, there are some simple tips to make the transition easier.

Maria Dawson, Director at Clearspring, advised: "The key to achieving a healthy vegan diet is to better understand food. This includes knowing what to eat and its nutritional value, as well as what constitutes a healthy, balanced diet. Ensuring you include a variety of wholegrains, beans, legumes, vegetables, leafy greens and fruit is a great starting point. With good planning and understanding key food groups and nutrients, a plant-based diet offers everything your body needs, making it not only a healthy option, but better for animals and the environment."

Carol went on: "Some people may wish to start slowly by introducing meat-free days, only eating meat at the weekends, or cutting dairy. Others may wish to take the Veganuary challenge switching for a month and seeing how they feel after 31 days. The key is to look for easy swaps; oat milk for dairy milk in tea or coffee, or coconut milk in curries or vegan puddings. It's not about denial and cutting things out but about introducing new and exciting things into your diet. If you consider it a voyage of discovery, you're more likely to succeed and enjoy the transition."

Maria reminded not all vegan food is good for you.

"There are more vegan food and drink products available today than ever. This doesn't necessarily mean everything vegan is healthy. There are many plant-based products available that are highly processed, contain a lot of additives, preservatives and are packed full of refined sugars," she explained.

So, what are the best steps to make the transition?

Maria suggested: "You'll be surprised at the many foods you already enjoy that are plant-based, so that is a good starting point. You can make dishes you cook regularly vegan by simply removing animal-based product and using a vegan alternative."

Carol added: "Coconut products are fantastic as they can be used in savoury dishes, such as curries, vegan puddings and smoothies and taste so creamy and lush. But the king of

wholefood and plant-based has to be pulses; beans and lentils. Although they may have a reputation for being a bit boring, they are, in fact, incredibly versatile, ideal to make anything from a chilli to a burger. They are packed with good things, such as fibre, protein, vitamins and minerals, and have fantastic environmental credentials, being easy to grow in many climates, requiring fewer inputs, such as water, fertilisers and insecticides, making them a great crop for small subsistence farmers."

Maria suggested organic Japanese silken tofu, a great source of protein and very versatile: "It can be used in everything from miso soup, creamy sauces and salads to vegan desserts including mousse," she explained, adding that soya mince, soya chunks, jackfruit, coconut milk and noodles are also among their top recommended products.

If you worry vegan will be more expensive, think again.

"Learning how to cook, even simple, uncomplicated dishes, can be a lot more cost effective than pre-packed food and ready meals. It also allows you to be more aware of what you are eating, and the ingredients involved," Maria explained.

"Food waste is also a big issue that can be avoided to save money. Research suggests a staggering £1.17bn worth of fruit, veg and bread is wasted every year by Brits and the average British household throws away nearly three items a week, or 75.6m as a nation. Monitoring food and ensuring it is used up before it has to be thrown away is a simple and effective way to manage spending whilst getting creative with ingredients."

Carol added: "Vegan can be done on a budget. In fact, with the price of meat, it can be cheaper to be vegan. Get a couple of good vegan cookbooks or look online for recipes. Follow favourites on Instagram or TikTok for inspiration. These will guide and inspire you. It's easy to make a big pot of a delicious vegan curry and then freeze half for later; perfect for these cold winter months. Slow cookers are ideal for batch cooking and can help create the most wonderful flavours."

Nutrition education

Another aspect of critical importance is ensuring you get the correct balance of nutrients when becoming vegan.

Keri explained: "A fully vegan diet needs to be well planned to ensure no nutrients are missed. Nutrients such as vitamin B12, iron, the omega 3 fatty acid, DHA, and vitamin D3 are more difficult to obtain from a fully plant-based diet. Vegan sources of iron, such as green leafy vegetables, are of the non-haem variety, which is well known to be poorly absorbed and is often found alongside other compounds, such as phytates and oxalates, which inhibit iron absorption.

"Good vegan sources include dried fruits, legumes, seeds and tofu and should be combined with foods rich in vitamin C and eaten away from tea and coffee to further aid iron absorption. Iron should be combined with the amino acid, L-Lysine, as this can raise iron levels more quickly. L-Lysine is found mainly in animal-based foods, but tofu, soya protein and spirulina will provide some of this nutrient."

Lindsay Powers, Nutritionist at Good Health Naturally, added: "There are many health benefits to a vegan diet. However, you cannot obtain certain nutrients from plant foods alone, and it is essential to be aware of these to plug any gaps. Vitamin B12 is an essential nutrient primarily found in animal-sourced foods such as dairy, fish, meat and eggs. Therefore, those following a vegan diet will be low in food sources and more at risk of B12 deficiency.

"There are plenty of nourishing foods to include, including legumes, nuts, seeds, tofu and tempeh, wholegrains, fruits and vegetables. Healthy fats include nuts and seeds, coconut oil, olive oil, hemp oil and avocados. Good plant sources of iron include chickpeas, lentils, beans, cashew nuts, chia seeds, flaxseeds, hemp seeds, pumpkin seeds, tofu, kale, dried figs and apricots, raisins, quinoa and fortified cereals. Nori seaweed can make a great snack as one of the few non-animal foods to contain B12. Fermented foods, such as sauerkraut and kimchi, help provide gut health benefits."

Essential fats should be considered, specifically docosahexaenoic acid (DHA).

"This fatty acid is commonly found in oily fish but is almost impossible to obtain at a level needed for brain health in a vegan diet, as most plant-based sources provide alpha linolenic acid (ALA), which is converted to DHA," Keri advised. "The minimum recommendation, proposed by EFSA for brain function, is 250mg of DHA per day. An individual would need to consume 12.5-50g of flax seeds, to allow for a sufficient level of DHA from conversion ALA. Some DHA can be obtained from algae and seaweed, but these rarely feature in most diets."

Alice Bradshaw, Head of Nutrition Education and Information at Terranova, added: "Choosing primarily natural, wholefoods most of the time will be a better nutritional choice than opting

for processed vegan foods (such as burgers, sausages etc). Many people may be concerned that eliminating dairy will mean they do not get enough calcium in their diets, however, there are some great sources of calcium from the plant world, which also provide other nutrients that support calcium metabolism and bone health. These include green, leafy vegetables, fortified plant milks, tofu, sesame seeds, nuts, dried fruit and pulses. These foods will also provide protein. Other valuable foods for a vegan diet include seeds, fruit, coconut and coconut products, avocados, and wholegrains if tolerated."

Ella Owen, Nutritionist at Kinetic, which has the Garden of Life range, also commented: "A vegan diet offers an array of whole foods, vegetables, pulses, beans, nuts, seeds and wholegrains, and if planned carefully can supply a host of phytonutrients, fibre, plant protein, healthy fats, vitamins and minerals. However, even the most nutritiously balanced vegan diet risks a shortfall in specific nutrients, because there are certain nutrients that can only be found at sufficient levels in animal products.

"Chlorella and spirulina can provide important nutrients in a vegan diet. These nutrient-dense microalgae are rich in vitamin B12, thiamine, riboflavin, vitamin B6, calcium, magnesium and iron, and are a source of vitamin E and zinc. Spirulina is an easily digestible vegan protein that offers all essential amino acids, along with an omega 6 fatty acid known as GLA or gamma linolenic acid. The vibrant green colours of spirulina and chlorella are due to the high concentration of chlorophyll.

"Chlorella is also a natural binder, meaning that it can help to bind with toxins and impurities within the digestive tract, enabling their removal from the body. This is great for anyone on a vegan diet looking to enhance their health and wellbeing through more efficient detoxification."

Aimee Benbow, Technical Director at Viridian Nutrition, added: "Calcium is found mainly in dairy products but can also be found in green leafy vegetable. Calcium from leafy greens is at risk of binding from oxalic acid, which prevent gastrointestinal absorption. However, there is the opportunity to use nuts and seeds, which too are at risk of calcium binding from phytic acid, but can be skipped through overnight soaking of nuts and seeds.

"Eating good amounts of green leafy vegetables can ensure essential minerals such as iron, calcium and magnesium, as iron and calcium are often nutrients of concern in vegan diets. Consumption of these may assist with bridging this gap. Aim to include seaweed or iodised salt in the diet to ensure sufficient intake of iodine, which often comes from fish or seafood sources. Iodine is another nutrient generally low in the UK population and more so in those following a plant-based diet."

Plant-based supplements

As well as being mindful of your diet, adding in certain supplements is important for vegans.

Alice suggested: "A good multivitamin and mineral formula taken daily would be a wise insurance policy to make sure that basic nutritional needs are met. This should also provide vitamin D3. While plants provide vitamin D2, the more bioavailable and bioactive form (vitamin D3) is derived from animal sources. Some manufactures now provide vegan sourced vitamin D3 supplements derived from lichen, an algae-like organism.

"Nutritional experts strongly advise strict vegans to supplement with vitamin B12 as this nutrient cannot be sourced from plant foods (unless they are fortified). It was once believed that foods such as spirulina, seaweed and barley grass could provide enough vitamin B12 for vegans, but studies have shown that the small amounts in these foods are inadequate."

Ella added: "Vitamin B12 is important for the nervous system and energy levels. Clinical deficiency of vitamin B12 can cause anaemia. Common symptoms include tiredness, low mood, numbness, tingling, poor memory and

concentration. Vitamin B12 also supports a healthy immune system, so frequent colds and infections can also be a sign.

"A vegan protein powder can be used to supplement the diet if needed. Choose an organic protein powder to avoid chemical pesticide residues. Go for a clean protein powder that supplies the complete range of amino acids from a variety of plant sources, such as organic pea protein, sprouted seeds and sprouted legumes."

Aimee went on: "Iodine is an essential nutrient for the function of the thyroid gland. Iodine content in food of plant origin is lower in comparison with that of animal origin due to a low iodine concentration in soil. Studies have therefore highlighted a higher prevalence of iodine deficiency in those following a vegetarian or vegan diet.

"Research supports a central role for DHA in normal brain and visual functioning, and both EPA and DHA have been linked to regular heart functioning. Supplementation with an algae source of these essential omega 3 fatty acids can be beneficial to ensure a sufficient intake of these healthy fats. A supplement containing iron and vitamin C together can ensure optimal absorption of this key mineral."

Try this

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- ★ Organico It's Soya Good Soya Kebabs
- ★ Good Health Naturally Nascent Iodine
- ★ Suma Vegan Mac 'N' Cheese

Natural Lifestyle Top Picks



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thegoodguru.com



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Panda Liquorice

As it celebrates its fortieth year of being on sale in the UK, the much-loved Panda Liquorice brand has undergone a design overhaul with every one of the products sporting a fresh new eye-catching design. The brand itself has been producing the award-winning liquorice in Finland for 94 years. The all-natural Panda liquorice range is free from artificial colours and

flavours and as well as being fat free it is also suitable for vegans and vegetarians. You can find Panda Liquorice in all good health food stores.

www.bravurafoods.com

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www.nutratea.co.uk



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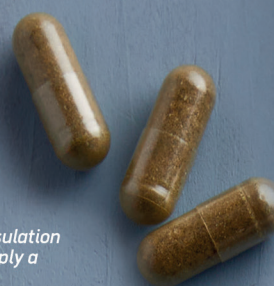


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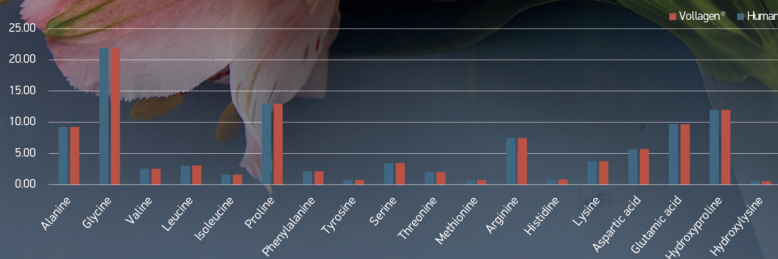
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FANTASTIC FUNGI

Discover the health benefits of medicinal mushrooms to support your winter wellness.

Supporting our immune health and wellness is foremost in our minds at this time of year. While we quite rightly reach for a nutrient-dense diet along with an extra dose of vitamin C, many of us might be surprised to learn that certain mushrooms may have a place in the winter wellness toolbox.

There are several mushrooms that are often described in literature as medicinal mushrooms due to their research-proven benefits to health. The most well-known include reishi, cordyceps, maitake and shiitake mushrooms.

Mushrooms can be consumed individually, however it's most common to find botanical supplements and formulas that combine several mushrooms to maximise the health benefits they offer.

HEALTH BENEFITS

Much of the research on their health attributes centres around the properties of compounds such as polysaccharides, triterpenes, lignins and phytosterols, which are found abundantly in all of these mushrooms. These compounds are associated with advantages such as supporting immune health, reducing microbes, supporting respiratory health, adaptogenic potential, supporting mental and cognitive health and much more.

One particular group of polysaccharide compounds found in mushrooms are known as beta glucans. These have been the subject of numerous studies highlighting remarkable immune supportive properties. Studies show that beta glucans enhance macrophages and natural killer cell function – actions which may help to ward off viruses and other infections that may otherwise result in poor health outcomes. Although this polysaccharide group is abundant in certain other species of fungi and plants, mushroom beta glucans are arguably backed by the most extensive research.

MIND MATTERS

Although viruses, infections and poor immunity are common winter concerns, some people also need support with low mood, anxiety and stress management at this time of year. Many are choosing to add mushrooms to their supplement regime after reading the research, highlighting the potential benefits of these remarkable fungi.

Reader offer

Terranova's Mushroom Synergy contains six species of medicinal fungi; reishi, cordyceps, maitake, shiitake, chaga and royal sun agaricus. Mushroom Synergy is a unique formulation in that it provides all fungi in a full-spectrum form, one of only a small number of brands in the world to use this unique grade of raw material. Also worth noting is the fact that these fungi are also fresh freeze dried and certified organic. This formulation also includes fresh freeze-dried ginger in order to facilitate bioavailability of the fungal compounds in the mushrooms. *Natural Lifestyle* is offering readers the chance of winning one of 10 of its 50-capsule packs. See opposite page to enter.



NATURAL LIFESTYLE Giveaways

Natural Lifestyle is about giving back to our readers, and each month, this page will showcase a selection of giveaways.



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A.VOGEL EYE DROPS EXTRA

Natural Lifestyle has teamed up with A.Vogel to offer readers the chance of winning one of five packs of its Eye Drops Extra. A medical device containing Euphrasia and hyaluronic acid from vegetable source to help maintain lubrication of the eye and to ease dry, irritated or tired eyes, A.Vogel Eye Drops Extra are suitable for contact lens users. Always read the leaflet.

BLUEIRON

Blueiron is the only iron supplement formulated with delicious Nordic blueberries. Providing iron which is highly bioavailable and fast working, this liquid supplement supports your daily diet and provides 100 per cent of your daily reference intake of iron, which contributes to the reduction of tiredness and fatigue. With the added benefit of a patented micro-encapsulated form of iron, it is easily absorbed and gentle on the stomach, plus, it's 100 per cent vegan. *Natural Lifestyle* has three three-month supplies to give away.



PLANET PALEO VEGAN COLLAGEN

If you're new to plant-based living, simple swaps can seem less than simple. Planet Paleo has created this innovative blend of collagen-building amino acids, cofactor nutrients such as silica, and herbs to support hair, skin and nails, joints and bones, and general tissue repair. With 5g of fermented amino acids per serving, this antioxidant-rich chocolate powder goes brilliantly with plant-based milk. This vegan formula contains absolutely no fillers or nasties and comes in home-compostable pouches for ethical disposal – and *Natural Lifestyle* is offering readers the chance of winning one of three.



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Give your skin the ultimate daily spa treatment with a powerful blend of pure botanical oils, antioxidant-rich vitamins and essential fatty acids. SkinWorks' award-winning Facial Oil is specially formulated to be luxurious yet light and easily absorbed. High purity rosehip, calendula and jojoba oils, plus vitamin E have been shown to help smooth fine lines, reduce blemishes and boost skin cell regeneration. Includes Chromabright, a patented active clinically proven to brighten skin and reduce the effects of photoaging – and *Natural Lifestyle* is offering readers the chance of winning one of three.



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Plant-based nourishment

With the month of Veganuary upon us, you could try out some of these delectable recipes from the new book, *Nourishing Vegan Every Day*.



Cashew cauliflower and spinach dahl Serves 4

Nothing beats a wholesome, cozy bowl of dahl on a chilly day. This one features warming spices and vibrant greens, topped with sticky-sweet, roasted cauliflower florets. I love to make this for family dinners and save some for the day after as it tastes even better as the flavours infuse. This recipe is packed with protein and fibre, and it's naturally gluten-free. It can easily be made nut-free, too.

Time: 10 minutes prep, plus 40 minutes cooking

Ingredients:

For the cauliflower:

- 1 medium-size cauliflower, chopped into florets (3 cups, or 400g)
- 2tbsp (32g) cashew butter
- 1tbsp (15ml) tamari or soy sauce
- 1tbsp (15ml) sesame oil

For the dahl:

- 2tbsp (30ml) olive oil
- 1 white onion, small dice
- 4 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1in (2.5cm) piece fresh ginger, peeled and grated
- 1tsp ground cumin
- ½ tsp smoked paprika
- ½ tsp ground turmeric
- 1tsp black mustard seeds
- 1 heaped cup (200g) red lentils
- 1½ cups (400g) strained tomatoes (tomato passata)

- 2 cups (480ml) vegetable stock
- 1tbsp (15ml) tamari
- 2tbsp (32g) cashew butter
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 2tbsp (28ml) lime juice
- 1½ packed cups (60g) baby spinach

To serve:

- 2 cups (350g) cooked rice
- Toasted cashew nuts
- Dairy-free yogurt
- Chopped fresh cilantro

Method:

- Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C, or gas mark 4). Line a baking tray with parchment paper.
- To make the cauliflower, pour the cashew butter, tamari, and sesame oil into a large mixing bowl, and stir together until smooth. Add the cauliflower florets and toss well to coat the cauliflower pieces. Season with salt and pepper.

Spread the cauliflower evenly on the baking tray. Bake for 30 minutes, flipping over halfway through.

- To make the dahl, heat the olive oil in a large pan over high heat. Add the onion, garlic, and ginger. Fry for five minutes over high heat, until turning translucent. Add the cumin, smoked paprika, turmeric, and black mustard seeds. Continue to fry for one minute, or until fragrant.
- Pour in the red lentils, strained tomatoes, stock, tamari, and cashew butter. Season with salt and pepper. Stir well and bring to a boil. Place a lid on the dahl and simmer over medium heat for 30 to 35 minutes, or until the lentils have softened. Stir the dahl every so often to prevent it from sticking to the bottom.
- Once the dahl is ready, add the lime juice to the pan along with the baby spinach. Stir well. Cook for five minutes, until the spinach leaves wilt.
- Serve the dahl warm topped with the cashew roasted cauliflower, alongside rice, cashews, yogurt, and cilantro. Leftover dahl will keep in a sealed container in the fridge for two to three days or for up to one month in the freezer.



Cookie-lover's smoothie bowl

Serves 1

This smoothie bowl will surprise you: it tastes just like a thick vanilla shake, but it's secretly loaded with fruits and vegetables. Maybe you don't notice because it is topped with the best (and easiest) edible cookie dough. I make this smoothie bowl all the time in the summer when I fancy cookie dough and milkshakes in the morning – it really will make you smile from the inside out.

Time: 15 minutes

Ingredients:

For the cookie dough:

- 2tbsp (30g) peanut butter
- 1tbsp (15ml) maple syrup
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- ¼ cup (25g) oat flour
- A pinch of salt
- 1oz (25g) dairy-free chocolate chips

For the smoothie bowl:

- 1 banana, chopped and frozen
- ½ avocado, chopped and frozen
- ½ zucchini, chopped and frozen (½ cup, or 80g)
- ¼ cup (30 g) frozen blueberries

- ½-1tsp blue spirulina powder
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- ¼ cup (30g) vegan vanilla protein powder (optional)
- ¾-1 cup (160-240ml) plant-based milk
- 1tbsp (15g) coconut yogurt
- 1tbsp (11g) cacao nibs
- 1tsp chia seeds

Method:

- To make the cookie dough, in a small bowl, stir together the peanut butter, maple syrup, and vanilla until smooth. Pour in the oat flour and salt, stir to a sticky dough, then fold in the chocolate chips. Roll the dough into small balls. Chill in the fridge for 10 minutes.
- To make the smoothie bowl, add the banana, avocado, zucchini, blueberries, blue spirulina, vanilla, protein powder (if using) and ¾ cup (160ml) of plant-based milk to a blender; a high-speed blender works best. Blend until really smooth, adding more milk as needed. I like to keep it thick like ice cream, but you can make it runnier with more milk.
- Pour the smoothie into a bowl. Top with the yogurt, cacao nibs, and chia seeds. Top with the cookie dough balls. Eat right away, and store any extra cookie dough in the fridge for up to one week.

Chocolate fruit and nut fudge cups

Serves 10

These little beauties were inspired by fruit-and-nut chocolate bars. I also love all things fudge so I combined the two in these decadent yet healthy, vegan, gluten-free fudge cups. Make these rich, double-layered fudge bites into whatever shapes you like. They are great for desserts, and you will be popping into the fridge for another one!

Time: 20 minutes plus chilling

Ingredients:

For the chocolate layer:

- 5oz (140g) dairy-free dark chocolate, broken up
- ¼ cup (60g) almond butter or another nut/seed butter
- 3tbsp (45g) coconut oil or coconut butter
- 1tsp maple syrup
- A pinch of salt

For the nut butter layer:

- ¾ cup (160g) almond butter or another nut/seed butter
- ¼ cup (50g) coconut oil or coconut butter
- 2tbsp (30ml) maple syrup
- 1tsp vanilla extract
- A pinch of salt

For topping:

- ¼ cup (30g) raisins and/or dried cranberries
- ¼ cup (25g) chopped pecans and/or pistachios

Method:

- Arrange 10 silicone cupcake moulds on a tray or plate, or place 10 regular cases into a cupcake tray.
- To make the chocolate layer, add all the ingredients to a small saucepan and gently heat the pan over low heat; allow the chocolate to melt and the mixture to become smooth. Stir regularly, until the chocolate is thick and glossy.
- Divide the chocolate mixture between the 10 cases and



place in the freezer for 20 minutes to set. They will be almost fully set; that's okay. This is important so the two layers do not mix.

- To make the nut butter layer: This layer requires less heat because the ingredients are naturally more liquid. I microwave them in a microwave-safe bowl in 10-second increments to melt the coconut oil, then whisk until smooth. Alternatively, place all the ingredients in a small saucepan as above and melt, whisking until smooth.
- Remove the cups from the freezer and pour over the nut butter layer. Sprinkle over the dried fruits and nuts.
- Chill again in the freezer for one hour, or until set. Store the fudge cups in a sealed container in the fridge for up to one week or in the freezer for up to one month.

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RECIPES

Fudgy raspberry brownies

Serves 16

I have a secret: these brownies are actually healthy! They are made with plant-based whole foods, but they taste just as indulgent, rich, and fudgy as regular brownies. The pop of the raspberries adds a fruity twist to these chocolatey squares that just get better and better. Plus, they are easily gluten-free and come together in one bowl, which you will be licking clean!

Time: 5 minutes prep, plus 30 minutes baking

Ingredients:

For the brownies:

- 1 cup (200g) apple sauce or apple purée
- ½ cup (120g) runny, cashew or almond butter
- ¾ cup (160ml) maple syrup
- 2tbsp (30ml) melted coconut oil
- 1tsp vanilla extract
- ¾ cup (105g) all-purpose or gluten-free flour
- ½ cup (40g) cacao or cocoa powder
- 1tsp ground coffee
- 1tsp baking powder
- A pinch of salt
- 16 raspberries
- 4oz (110g) dairy-free chocolate, chopped

Method:

- Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C, or gas mark 4). Line an 8in (20cm) baking dish with parchment paper.
- Add the apple sauce, nut butter, maple syrup, coconut oil, and vanilla to a large mixing bowl. Whisk until

smooth. Sift in the flour, cacao powder, coffee, baking powder, and salt. Whisk to a smooth batter with no lumps of flour.

- Fold in most of the chocolate.
- Pour into the lined dish and smooth over the top. Press in the raspberries and the remaining chocolate.
- Bake for 28 to 32 minutes, or until an inserted skewer comes out mostly clean. The brownies will be firmer around the edges, but still slightly fudgy in the middle.
- Cool for 20 minutes in the dish, then carefully lift out and cool on a wire rack.
- Once cool, use a sharp hot knife to slice into 16 brownies. Store the brownies in a sealed container in the fridge for three to five days or one to two days at room temperature. Freeze the brownies for up to one month.



Cheesy pesto and sun-dried tomato rolls

Serves 12

When I make these fluffy, savoury buns, I just cannot stop eating them. They have a light and pillowy soft dough spread with a delicious, nut-free, homemade basil-spinach pesto, rich sun-dried tomatoes, and melting dairy-free cheese. These rolls are a great afternoon snack or a welcome addition to picnic, potlucks, and barbecues – any occasion where you can tear and share.

Time: 1 hour 30 minutes, plus 1 hour 30 minutes proofing

Ingredients:

For the pesto:

- ½ cup (80g) pumpkin seeds
- 2tbsp (10g) nutritional yeast or homemade vegan Parmesan
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1 cup loosely packed (20g) basil (small stems and leaves)
- ½ cup packed (20g) baby spinach
- 2tbsp (28ml) lemon juice
- 2tbsp (30ml) olive oil
- Salt and pepper, to taste

For the dough:

- 1 cup (240ml) unsweetened plant-based milk
- ¼ cup (56g) vegan butter
- 2tbsp (18g) ground chia or flaxseed, plus 5tbsp (74ml) water
- 3¼ cups (455g) all-purpose flour, divided
- 2tbsp (24g) caster sugar
- 1 package (2¼ tsp, or 7g) fast-acting yeast
- 1tsp salt

For the filling:

- ⅔ cup (150g) pesto (as above)
- ½ cup (90g) chopped sun-dried tomatoes
- ⅔ cup (80g) grated dairy-free cheese
- 1-2tbsp (15-30ml) olive oil, for brushing
- Fresh basil leaves, to serve

Method:

- If using store-bought pesto, skip ahead to step three. To make the pesto, preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C, or gas mark 4) and pour the pumpkin seeds onto a baking tray. Bake for 10 minutes, turning halfway through, until smelling toasty. Allow to cool fully.
- Add the pumpkin seeds to a food processor with the nutritional yeast and garlic and blitz to a fine crumb. Add the basil, spinach, lemon, salt, and pepper. Blitz until chunky. Gradually pour in the olive oil while the machine is running, to reach a creamy consistency. Store in a sealed container in the fridge for up to one week.
- To make the dough, warm together the milk

and butter in a small saucepan over low heat until just melted. Allow to cool slightly to lukewarm.

- Stir together the chia seeds and water and leave for five minutes to form a gloopy mix. Whisk into the milk.
- Into a large mixing bowl or freestanding mixer with a dough hook attached, mix three cups (420g) of flour, the sugar, yeast, and salt. Gradually pour in the milky mixture and bring to a rough dough. If using a machine, knead the dough on a low setting for five to seven minutes, adding tablespoons of the extra ¼ cup (35g) of flour as needed. The dough will be smooth, shiny, and pulling away from the sides when it is ready. By hand, place the dough on a lightly floured surface and knead for seven to 10 minutes, adding flour as needed.
- Lightly grease a large bowl and place the dough inside. Cover loosely and leave somewhere warm for one hour, or until doubled in size.
- When risen, punch down the dough and place it on a floured surface. Use a floured rolling pin to roll the dough to a rectangle 18 x 12 in (46 x 30cm). Spread with ⅔ cup (150g) of the pesto, leaving a small border around the edge.
- Sprinkle over the sun-dried tomatoes and cheese. Use the long edge to tightly and carefully roll up the dough into a log shape, sealing in the edge. Trim off the edges and use a sharp knife or piece of cotton/floss to slice into twelve rolls (1½ in, or 4cm each).
- Grease a 9in x 13in (23cm x 33cm) dish and place in the rolls, side by side so they lightly touch. Cover again and leave somewhere warm to proof for a second time for 30 minutes. They will rise to fill most of the dish.
- Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C, or gas mark 4). Brush the rolls with olive oil. Bake the rolls for 20 to 25 minutes, until golden on top and fluffy inside.
- Enjoy warm or allow to cool and top with fresh basil. Store leftover rolls in a sealed container at room temperature for two to three days or in the fridge for three to four days. Freeze the rolls for up to one month; defrost at room temperature.





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