

THE STATE OF NUTRITION

Report 2021



Eating local

is better for your health, the environment and the economy

What the pandemic taught us

Fruit and vegetables:

fresh

versus

canned

versus

frozen



Child- and family-friendly

Eat Well Live Well recipes

How South Africans eat

DO OUR CHILDREN know what's good for them?



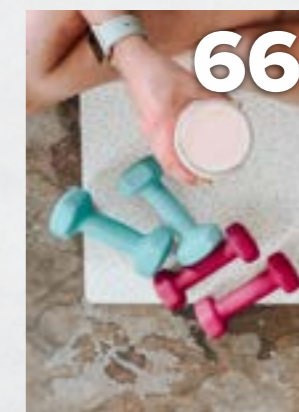
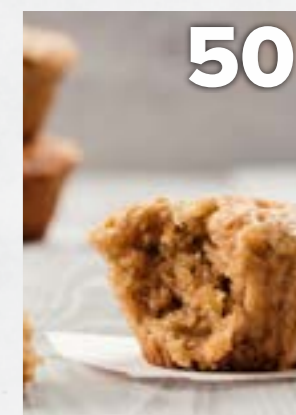
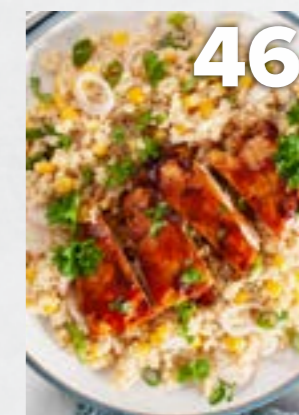
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Eat Well Live Well's Purpose

Tiger Brands launched Eat Well Live Well (EWLW) in 2009 to help South Africans make better food choices for a better life on any budget. The brand is committed to providing consumers with easy-to-understand nutrition information and [wholesome recipes](#) using [EWLW-endorsed products](#) to support government's efforts of reducing the prevalence of non-communicable diseases.

Making healthy, or healthier, choices is often difficult, expensive and time consuming. Eat Well Live Well seeks to solve this tension by making consumers' journey less confusing and more empowering, so that a healthy lifestyle becomes an internalised part of their lives.

When you see the Eat Well Live Well stamp of approval on selected Tiger Brands products, know that you're making healthier choices for you and your family. Eat Well Live Well is guided by a defined Nutrient Criteria that is verified by an independent panel of experts. It tells consumers, at a glance, that the product is either high in a nutrient they should try to increase in their diets (such as fibre, vitamins and minerals) or low in a nutrient they should try to cut down on (such as salt, added sugars and saturated fat). While the Guideline Daily Amounts (GDA) table found on the pack is designed to be easy to understand and to guide people's nutrition journey.

Eat Well Live Well resonates with consumers who want to live a full life. This includes having good knowledge on health, wellness, being active, and eating well.

Introduction



Understanding what constitutes balanced nutrition and a healthy lifestyle is vitally important during a time when food security is front and centre in the face of rising malnourishment, writes Becky Opdyke, Tiger Brands' Chief Marketing Officer.

The second iteration of The State of Nutrition in South Africa report is perhaps even more crucial than the first, as we are well into the second year of the global pandemic – the effects of which have been further exacerbated by the country's increasing unemployment rate and the July riots. Covid-19 continues to widen the inequality gap, the impacts of which will be felt for years to come as food security remains top of mind for many.

While our food choices and eating behaviours largely become force of habit, these are often predominantly shaped by our socioeconomic predictors, such as our culture and upbringing, Living Standards Measure (LSM) or Socioeconomic Measure (SEM), employment status, where we live, as well as the affordability and accessibility of various kinds of foods. Indeed, last year's report highlighted the fact that South Africans are overweight or obese, with an average Body Mass Index (BMI) of 35.1.

As South Africa's – and the continent's – largest food manufacturer, Tiger Brands is invested in helping to nourish and nurture more lives every day – on any budget through Eat Well Live Well. We are motivated to help South Africans eat balanced and nutritious foods and meals that prioritise their overall wellbeing during a time when health and wellness have taken centre stage as our utmost priority.

We are acutely aware that adequate nutritional nourishment from a young age coupled with an active lifestyle has the potential to positively impact our society and its future economic outcomes; and yet around [13 million South African children](#) still go to bed hungry.

[The State of the World's Children report](#) by UNICEF highlights the triple burden of malnutrition – namely undernutrition, hidden hunger, overweight and obesity – all of which coexist and threaten the survival, growth and development of children, youth, economies and societies, as well as the attainment of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Many children eat too little of the kinds of foods and nutrients that their growing bodies need, while an increasing number of children eat far too much highly processed calorie-dense foods with large amounts of salt and sugar that are not needed for growth and development.

Globally, at least half of all children under five suffer from hidden hunger: a lack of essential nutrients that often goes unnoticed until it's too late."

In South Africa, [27% of children](#) under the age of five are stunted and 13% are overweight. Malnourishment among our children may become increasingly common, with the ongoing economic fallout of the last 18 months. As a parent, this deeply saddens me.

However, it is encouraging that government, various CSI initiatives and The Tiger Brands Foundation (TBF) are prioritising food security among our youth. The TBF provides a fortified, hot, cooked in-school breakfast to 83 692 learners, and educators, from 105 no-fee schools across all provinces, every school day. To date it has served over 95 million meals via its in-school nutrition programme, which forms part of the Department of Basic Education's National Schools Nutrition Programme (NSNP).

The TBF also includes a holistic nutrition education programme as part of its initiative by using educational placemats and posters with the aim of improving learners' wellbeing by teaching them good hygiene and how to make healthier food choices. Educators at the recipient schools have reported a decrease in absenteeism, improved cognition and educational outcomes, as well as happier and healthier students overall since the start of the breakfast programme in 2011. Having access to a nutritious breakfast each school day has the potential to facilitate social and economic transformation across the country.

We strive to have a positive impact on all South Africans' health and wellbeing by teaching healthy eating choices and behaviours from a young age. That is why this year's report includes an extensive section on children. Our independent research study interviewed parents and guardians of children to gain better insights into the current nutrition landscape of our youth. Seventy-five per cent of our study respondents are parents or guardians of children between the ages of 3–17 years. Our aim was to outline children's understanding of: health, nutrition and wellness, the differences between healthy and unhealthy foods, and the various factors that influence these views. While older children, between the ages of 13–17 years, appear to have a better understanding of nutrition, there is a large knowledge gap when it comes to eating healthily and maintaining a balanced lifestyle. In this year's report, The Association for Dietetics in South Africa (ADSA) and various registered dietitians make recommendations about how to help children eat more healthily and how to prepare healthy snacks that they will love.

Virgin Active South Africa has also provided professional insights into the positive lifelong impacts of exercise for children. Active lifestyles that include regular movement and exercise help

children concentrate better, excel academically, improve their memory, be more creative and also aid their problem-solving skills.

With many children undertaking online learning due to the pandemic and no longer able to participate in physical education classes and school sports, Virgin Active has compiled a list of age-appropriate fun exercises that parents and guardians can do with their babies and children between the ages of 18 months and 13 years to keep them active and stimulated during this time.

We're cognisant that our youth are the foundations of the future we would like to see for South Africa. It is of utmost importance that we focus on their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing – and as our report shows, all of these are deeply dependent on what and how they eat. We hope that this year's report and our [Eat Well Live Well website](#) can be used as an education tool and a starting point to encourage healthy eating behaviours, the preparation of nutritious meals and active lifestyles for all South Africans.



Research rationale

At Tiger Brands, our aim is to nourish and nurture more lives every day on any budget. To do this effectively, we need to better understand and adequately inform South Africa's nutrition landscape, while encouraging healthy eating behaviours and balanced diets for the overall health and wellbeing of the nation. We conducted independent research among a nationally representative sample of South African consumers, as well as dietitians and nutritionists in partnership with [Insight Survey](#), a South African B2B market and industry research company. This research aimed to help develop a quantified nutrition profile that will inform and help to expand Eat Well Live Well, a Tiger Brands nutrition initiative.

The first phase of the research delved into better understanding the attitudes, awareness and behaviours of South African consumers with regard to dietary intake, nutrition and eating behaviours. It assessed eating patterns and food choices, and how these were guided by food nutrition labels, nutrition knowledge gaps and food security, among numerous other factors.

Changes that may have occurred across these variables during the second year of the national lockdown and global pandemic were also reported on, alongside year-on-year changes between August 2020 and May 2021.

The research also benchmarked consumer understanding of how nutrition, exercise and lifestyle choices impact long-term wellness, as well as insights into the eating behaviours of children.

Phase two of the research involved interviewing practising and registered dietitians and nutritionists to gain insights into their professional perceptions of the average South African consumer's dietary intake, nutrition and eating behaviours, so as to make informed recommendations about how to improve nutrition in South Africa.

Research methodology

The research methodology included conducting online surveys among a robust sample of South African consumers to obtain their feedback, as well as telephone interviews with nutrition professionals in South Africa, namely registered dietitians and nutritionists, to obtain their feedback and recommendations.

The online consumer survey was conducted among 401 South African consumers who are nationally representative in terms of gender, race and geography. The survey sample ensured a total sample margin of error of 4.9% with a 95% level of confidence. These respondents were required to fall within the LSM 4–10 range and be over the age of 18 years. Seventy-five per cent of respondents are parents or guardians of a child or children between the ages of 3–17 years.

In terms of the telephone interviews with nutrition professionals, 50 interviews were conducted with currently practising and registered dietitians and nutritionists working in the South African public and/or private sector, in order to obtain their in-depth feedback and recommendations.

Executive summary

2021 saw fellow South Africans holding hands and helping each other move forward amid the social and economic repercussions of the global pandemic and July's riots. Despite these challenges, South Africans from around the country have united to help rebuild South Africa.

It is not lost on us that 2020 and 2021 have been some of the most challenging years in our young democracy, especially when it comes to food security, which is vital to maintain a strong and healthy nation. At the same time, South Africans have been trying to stay safe and healthy from the impacts of the pandemic in the best way they can – while some have been lucky enough to work from home, many others have had to rely on public transport to get to and back from work each day.

One of the best defences against infection is a strong immune system, which is determined by eating a balanced diet. Our research shows that over half (52%) of South Africans indicated that they ate more foods that are perceived to be immune-boosting, such as garlic, lemon and ginger, since the start of the pandemic, when compared to May 2021. In reality, we need to eat a healthy balanced diet that includes fresh fruit and vegetables daily to ensure the optimum functioning of our immune system – a topic we explore further in this year's report (chapters 12 and 13).

More than three quarters (81%) of the population claimed that their food preferences and choices are driven by health benefits, followed by cost (47%) and availability (33%). We found that close to half (46%) of South Africans reported eating more fresh fruit and vegetables, since before the start of the Covid-19 lockdowns (April 2020), when compared to May 2021. Certainly, 17% of consumers claim to make food choices based on sustainability concerns, with an additional 14% taking animal cruelty into consideration. More and more people are turning to plant-based diets or decreasing their meat consumption in an effort to lead healthier lives, curb the effects of climate change and make their money go further (chapter 16).



And while certain behaviour changes may be as a result of strict lockdown restrictions and the impact on people's incomes, it seems that South Africans are slowly settling back into a pre-pandemic routine with regard to their eating behaviours. Indeed, 37% of South Africans claimed to overeat and engage in emotional eating less frequently in 2021 when compared to the start of the pandemic. Regardless, the psychology of eating remains a vital topic that needs to be addressed in our society, particularly with our fast-paced lifestyles where we often do not prioritise home-cooked meals because we are time-poor (chapter 11).



In a very positive turn of events from what we have seen in recent years, close to a third (32%) of South Africans claim to try to avoid sugar (chapter 8). What was surprising is that a significantly higher proportion of respondents within LSM 4–6 (43%) avoid sugar when compared to the average consumer. It appears that many South Africans have become more aware of the crippling impacts of eating too much sugar and the potential health implications.

Yet, at this point in time, salt also needs to take centre stage as 57.5% of consumers eat too much salt – more than the World Health Organisation's recommendation of 5g (one teaspoon daily). Much like sugar, the over-consumption of salt may also lead to debilitating lifestyle diseases (chapter 9).

What was also rather surprising in our findings was that 41% of South Africans don't drink the recommended eight glasses of water a day – with 28% of those claiming that they don't have time to do so, 19% not liking the taste, and 9% not having access to clean and safe drinking water – something that needs to be addressed urgently. There are several health benefits associated with drinking enough water (chapter 10) and those who do so lead much healthier and more balanced lifestyles overall – they are 8% more likely to avoid eating sugar and 10% more likely to read food nutrition labels.

The domino effect of healthy living can be seen across the board, particularly among those consumers who make small conscious steps to be healthier, such as drinking sufficient amounts of water and prioritising the inclusion of movement into their daily or weekly routine.

Despite the devastating impacts of the pandemic on how we live, work, play and eat, it has also given many of us the time and motivation to strive for more balanced lifestyles that prioritise our health and wellbeing. And it's alright if we don't get it right every single time, the most important consideration is that we are willing to try.



The pandemic is also teaching us how to be easier on ourselves and more supportive of each other in the face of multiple challenges.

Overall, when pre- and post-lockdown behaviours (May 2021) were compared, there has been an improvement in consumer nutrition, health behaviour and key health metrics among the average South African. A third (33%) of respondents indicated that they made generally healthier choices, with the same amount claiming to spend more time sleeping, relative to before the lockdown. These positive lifestyle behaviours and changes often coexist, which shows us that the key to change is to make one small decision to be healthier that is easy to follow through – and often the rest will follow.

This leads us to the most important realisation and a key focus of the second iteration of the State of Nutrition in South Africa report – the focus on our children's food choices, eating behaviours and lifestyles (chapters 2–5), particularly as many of them experience malnutrition in some form, whether it's undernutrition, hidden hunger or overweight and obesity. As outlined in the introduction, to help nourish and nurture more lives every day, we need to teach our children from a young age – at home and at school – how to choose balanced and nutritious foods. By laying this crucial foundation, we are able to have a positive impact on the socioeconomic development of the country into the next century and beyond.

HOW South Africans eat

These are the key findings from the State of Nutrition in South Africa report 2021

South Africans rated **taste, cost, promotion** respectively, as the most important factors when eating food



Since the Covid-19 pandemic, **30%** strongly agree that cost drives the purchase of food, despite the health benefits

Nutrition professionals believe that South Africa's **high BMI** is due to a proliferation of cheap and convenient fast food, while healthy foods are largely unaffordable

17% of South Africans' food preferences are guided by **sustainability** concerns



8% are **vegan or vegetarian**



Close to a third (32%) **avoid eating sugar**



At least **57.5%** **add more salt** to their food and drinks than the WHO recommendation of 5g daily



Close to a fifth (18.5%) **add more than double** the 5g salt recommendation in their food preparation

38% of parents believe their children **don't understand the difference** between healthy and unhealthy foods



Those with a **postgraduate qualification** make **healthier nutrition choices** and lead more balanced lifestyles that include sufficient exercise



Childless and upper middle income (LSM 7-8) adults **exercise less** than their counterparts



66% of South Africans do not exercise enough (150 minutes/weekly)

26% drank **3 or fewer** glasses of water per day

There is a **positive correlation** between those who **drink sufficient water** daily and those who live a healthier more balanced lifestyle





What the pandemic taught us

While many South Africans resorted to emotional eating during the pandemic, coupled with frequent snacking while working from home, with time we seem to have fallen back into our usual eating habits and have improved our overall health – bar for the fact that many more South Africans are being driven by the cost implications of what they eat.

It's been a challenging 18 months, what with the global Covid-19 pandemic fundamentally impacting how we live, work and play. Countless people lost their jobs and loved ones. Many of our lives changed forever. Others had to swap their offices for their dining room tables and their gym routines for online classes in their living rooms. We had to forgo socialising and eating out and reacquaint ourselves with homemade cooking and trying TikTok cooking trends alongside our family favourites, while many of us tried baking banana and sourdough bread for the first time.



Despite the unprecedented impact the pandemic has had on various aspects of our daily lives, it has also motivated many of us to lead more balanced lifestyles in search of better physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing. At the same time, it has also given us the opportunity to take a step back, to deliberately change certain aspects of our lives, and to learn how to be gentler with ourselves in the face of uncertainty.

A year and a half in, South Africans are slowly getting back into the rhythm of things and sticking to some of the positive changes they decided to make during this time.

The below findings speak to the changes in consumer nutrition and lifestyle behaviour since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic (in April 2020), when compared to August 2020 and May 2021.



Weight appears to be top of mind in a time when being overweight poses a serious comorbidity to Covid-19. Twenty-five per cent of consumers lost weight compared to 18%. We also found that fewer consumers put on weight (32%) compared to 49%. And 30% of consumers have become more aware of reading food nutrition labels when choosing food.

Another positive trend is that as consumers have been increasingly returning to the workplace – without the distraction of the fridge and the pantry close by – there has been a significant decrease in snacking. Fifty-one per cent of South Africans were eating more snacks in August 2020, compared to 29% in May 2021. This suggests that South Africans have possibly become more cognisant of portion control and more mindful eating behaviours; or that their eating behaviours have also been impacted by the financial implications of numerous economic lockdowns.

However, due to the relaxation of certain lockdown restrictions, the number of consumers eating more fast food in May 2021 since the start of the pandemic increased by 5%, when compared to August 2020. And the number of consumers preparing their own food at home more frequently, since the start of the pandemic has decreased. This indicates that more South Africans are taking advantage of eating outside of the home.

When it comes to the factors that drive food choices among the average consumer – whether at the market, supermarket aisles or at restaurants and takeaways – there were very minor changes year-on-year. Most South Africans continue to prioritise taste, cost, nutrition labels and health conditions, respectively as their motivation for choosing what food to eat. However, almost a third (30%) claim to choose the food they eat based on cost, without consideration of the potential positive or negative health implications. As the economic implications of the pandemic and July 2021 riots continue to impact food security and the possibility of rising food prices in the coming months, the cost of food might take pole position in terms of becoming the driving factor of food choices nationally.

At this very pertinent time, our national priority remains how to feed our families healthy foods and cook wholesome meals that are simultaneously filling and nutritious, in an affordable manner.

Key findings

Overall, the research from our State of Nutrition reports shows that relative to August 2020, there has been an improvement in consumer nutrition, health behaviour and key health metrics among the average South African in May 2021.



The percentage of consumers who, by May 2021, had lost weight since the pandemic began. This is compared to 18% in August 2020.



The percentage of consumers who have become more aware of food nutrition labels since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

DO OUR CHILDREN KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR THEM?



Good nutrition is essential for children to reach their full physical, intellectual and emotional potential. In South Africa, widespread inadequate child nutrition is driven by a number of factors from socioeconomic inequalities and food insecurity to a lack of education around healthy foods and time-poor parents, writes Tracey Rowles, Marketing Strategy Manager at Tiger Brands.



South African children live in one of the most unequal countries in the world, with a stark divide between rich and poor – both of which may have negative impacts on overall health. Indeed, [The Children's Institute at the University of Cape Town](#) found that more than a quarter (27%) of South African children under the age of five are stunted because of malnutrition. On the other hand, one in eight (13%) children are overweight.

Our findings show that 38% of South African parents believe their children do not have a good understanding of the difference between healthy and unhealthy foods. These children might not be able to pick out the healthier option between processed and sugar-laden cereals or oats with nuts, for example.

Yet at the same time, parents believed that they – followed closely by family, friends, and school teachers – have the most influence on children's views on food. One of many possible reasons why parents aren't able to impart this knowledge to their children is because they are often too busy, lack the understanding themselves, or are unable to lead by example due to finances. Spending quality time with their children is a luxury that many parents do not have, making it difficult to involve children in the growing, buying, and preparing of food – all of which contribute an understanding of nutrition. Some parents may be forced to resort to buying less healthy, but more filling foods to satiate their family's hunger.

Almost two out of five (38%) South African parents believe their children do not have a good understanding of the difference between healthy and unhealthy foods.

However, parents alone are not solely responsible. Popular culture often entices children with alluring adverts and social media influencers, while shop aisles and school tuck shops are lined with calorie-dense snacks, and fast food outlets promise toys with kids meals. The key is being aware of all of these factors and working towards finding balance in our lives amid the noise. A larger focus should also be placed on primary school curricula to offer an age-appropriate in-depth understanding of healthy eating behaviours and balanced lifestyles.





There already appears to be a more positive trend in older children (13–17 years). Two out of five (40%) parents with teenagers said their children can differentiate between healthy and unhealthy food, in comparison to younger age groups which score less than 25%. Perhaps this is because older children have had more exposure to nutrition in biology class and might also become more aware of what they eat and how it affects their bodies.

Often, a healthy diet goes hand-in-hand with an active lifestyle. Encouragingly, those who eat more healthy foods also tend to be more physically active. In high middle-income groups (LSM 7–8), adults with children are more likely to exercise than childless adults. Similarly, almost a third (32%) of parents indicated that their children significantly influence the purchase of healthy food. This is double the number of respondents who indicated that their child has a significant influence on purchasing unhealthy food (16%). This positive buying behaviour may be guided by parental instinct to do what's best for their children, or may be informed by older children, who are more health conscious.

Education and knowledge appear to play an important role in informing wise food choices. Nearly half (47%) of consumers with postgraduate degrees say having children strongly influences the purchase of healthy food. They also said their children were influenced by a wider variety of information and media sources, probably as a result of a higher household income. A significantly higher proportion of postgraduate consumers rated health organisation websites, online sources, food labelling, and newspapers, respectively a 9 or 10 out of 10 in terms of significantly influencing their children's food views. It is reassuring that having children both positively impacts the lifestyle of the child and their parents in this group of consumers.



However, nutrition professionals agree that more needs to be done to improve the impact of consumer education programmes. Sixteen per cent felt that more food and nutrition education at schools was necessary. A concerted effort by parents, schools, government, food brands and public figures needs to be made to encourage good nutrition among our children, so that they can thrive and become the best possible version of themselves. And it all begins at home, by taking small daily steps where we can afford to, talking to our children about the real impact of what and how we eat, and allowing them that treat once in a while.

Key findings

Almost two out of five (38%) parents believe their children do not have a good understanding between healthy and unhealthy foods. Also, twice as many parents said that having children has a significant influence on them buying healthy food, rather than unhealthy food.

5

easy ways

to help children choose healthier foods

Stock up on nutrients

Children will eat from the options available in the house. By keeping fresh, wholegrain, high-fibre and minimally processed and natural foods on hand, children will be able to choose from these healthier foods. Have an easy-to-reach fruit bowl on your kitchen counter or dining room table. Also rearrange your fridge so that prepared and ready-to-eat raw, chopped vegetables – such as baby carrots, cherry tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, courgettes and celery sticks – are conveniently stored in containers at your child’s eye level, alongside some homemade sauces and dips.

Try:

replacing sugar-sweetened drinks, sweets, confectionery and other treats with chopped fruit, yoghurt, raw nuts, bite-size vegetables, lean protein and wholegrains.



1

2

The foods children eat affect their health and wellbeing throughout every life stage, which is why it is essential for them to learn how to choose foods that promote optimal growth, development and functioning. While our fast-paced, convenience-reliant societies do not make this task easy, here are five easy ideas to help you along the way, writes Tirsia Bezuidenhout, a Registered Dietitian and spokesperson of The Association for Dietetics in South Africa (ADSA).

Information station

Just because it’s healthy, does not convince children to eat it. Share information about the origin of the food, the nutrients found in it, how it will positively impact their bodies and help them grow big and strong. Also make exciting and delicious kid-friendly recipes with them. This could stimulate your child’s interest, educate them on the value of the food and create topics for discussion at the dinner table or in shopping aisles.

Try:

researching the nutritional value and interesting facts about at least one food offered per meal and share the information while preparing meals or during mealtimes.



3

Roll up their sleeves

Physical interaction with food, through age-appropriate tasks during meal preparation, allows children to develop an interest in foods and taste them in different versions: raw, cooked, steamed, sautéed, grilled and so on. This increases the likelihood that they’ll try a “new” food or retry one they previously did not enjoy. It will require preparing more meals from scratch, which may be timeous and labour-intensive, but these meals typically have more nutritional value and are lower in energy, sugar, fat and salt than refined or processed options.

Try:

involving children in rinsing, mixing, kneading, stirring, tearing, peeling or chopping (when appropriate) food during preparation at meal times.

5

The power of attraction

Visually appealing foods are always a hit and can be achieved by: combining different colours (carrot, cucumber and baby potatoes) using different shapes (squares, strips, circles, triangles and shapes from cookie cutters)

combining favourite flavours with healthy foods (tuna mayo cucumber crackers or homemade crumbed chicken fingers with broccoli and cauliflower)

preparing healthier versions of kids’ favourite foods: homemade chicken burger sliders, crunchy grilled fish and coleslaw pita, oriental beef and vegetable strips on noodles, uncooked ‘pizza’ wraps with fresh vegetables and ingredients

Try:

finding out which foods and flavours your child enjoys and use this as the starting point to create the rest of the meal

Children learn from the example they see: if meals are treated as a chore that needs to be done as quickly as possible, they will continue reaching for convenient, processed and refined foods as they rush through the day. Healthy meals require time, planning and commitment, but rest assured that the principles and habits kids learn through these steps will benefit the whole family well into the future.

Build a meal

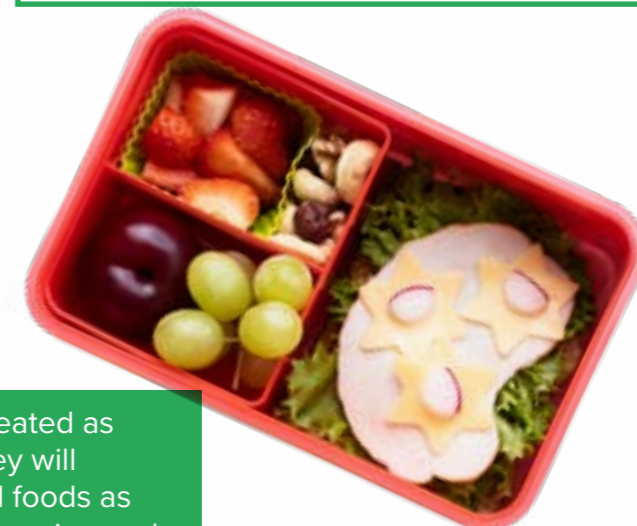
Single-food meals (chips, nuts, yoghurt, fruit, meat or pasta dishes) are not as nutritious as meals that consist of a variety of foods from different food groups and often lead to larger portions being eaten.

Try:

encourage children to create a meal for the family by choosing one food from each food group type below to build a wholesome recipe – you can use a recipe generator to help. Write this recipe in a notebook to create a family recipe book based on healthy recipes your children love. *Tip – leftovers are a great way to achieve this.

- Starchy foods, preferably wholegrain, high-fibre, unrefined starches (wholegrain-porridge, -cereals, -crackers, -bread, grains, brown rice or whole potatoes)
- Beans, split peas, lentils, chickpeas and soya
- Fresh or cooked vegetables or fruit
- Chicken, fish, seafood, lean meat or egg
- Unsaturated fats (olive or avocado oil, or raw seeds and nuts)
- Milk, maas, yoghurt or cheese

4



Influencers won't

fix your

child's diet



When it comes to teaching our children about nutrition, it comes down to a healthy dose of common sense, convenient access to a variety of food options (snacks and treats too), and cooking as a family in the kitchen, writes Claire Julsing-Strydom, a Registered Dietitian.



Children from as young as four can learn to differentiate the food groups (carbohydrates, proteins and fats). We can start teaching our children about nutrition, health and balanced eating behaviours from preschool to lay the foundation for their formal schooling. Ideally, schools should have a subject where learners are educated about good nutrition just as they are educated in physical education, biology or maths.

From a young age, children need to be exposed to different foods – particularly fruit and vegetables – that are prepared in various ways to help expand the repertoire of the foods they eat. Don't despair if your child doesn't eat a certain food the first or second time they encounter it. Sometimes they might only start to eat it after they come across it the tenth time. It's about trying different approaches and recipes at different times and not overreacting when they do not eat it. Simply put it on their plate, don't draw any attention to it and let them try it. Children are also more willing to try food that they helped to prepare in the kitchen.

To help children understand the importance of a balanced diet, don't forbid snacks and treats, as this might cause your children to binge eat them. Instead, allow them to eat these foods in small portions from time to time. When you empower children – or anyone for that matter – with knowledge about nutrition, they have a much greater willingness to make and stick to healthy food choices and eating behaviours, as these are driven by understanding, and not simply because they have been told to do so. More often than not a knowledge shift and a better understanding of the role that nutrition plays in our health and wellbeing results in a behaviour shift.



5 balanced snacking ideas for kids

Homemade pantry treat switch up

Create a homemade trail mix that contains a number of different snacks and treats packaged into small resealable bags or containers. These should include a variety of foods from different food groups, such as: lean biltong, popcorn, dried fruit, assorted nuts, dried apple rings, a high-fibre cracker or two, and perhaps a sweet treat like a single portion of jelly tots, gums and jellies or mini chocolate bars. Store these in your pantry or cupboard and offer your child a variety of options when they ask for a treat, so that sweets and treats don't become forbidden foods.



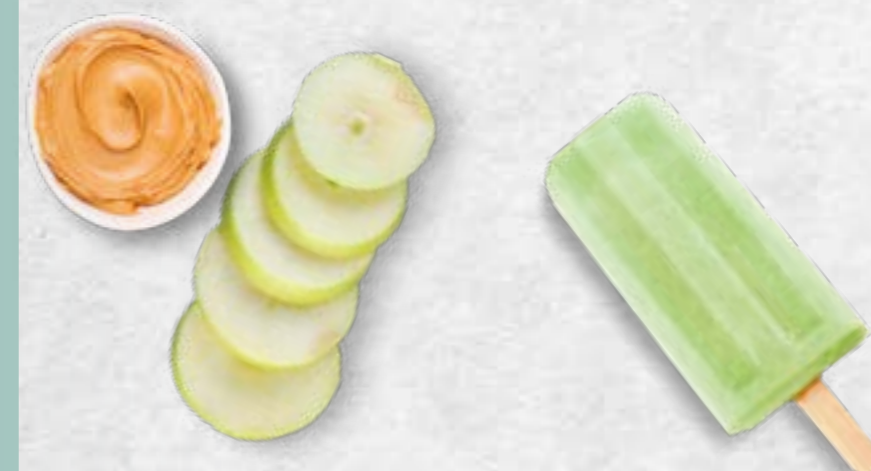
Rainbow fun plate

Use a plate or a cheese board to make a rainbow-coloured, kid-friendly snack board. Cut a selection of colourful fruit and vegetables into bite-sizes, alongside a few other foods from various food groups. These may include: mini meatballs, sliced grilled chicken breast, fish fingers, tuna tartlets, cheese cubes, boiled baby potatoes, high-fibre crackers, nuts and dried fruit.



Apples dipped in homemade peanut butter sauce

Cut an apple into slices or quarters, depending on your child's age or preference, and serve it with a homemade peanut butter sauce. Add a tablespoon or two of hot water to 2 teaspoons of no-salt, no-sugar peanut butter to make the texture creamier and more sauce-like. Dip the sliced apple into the peanut butter sauce. Another alternative is to spread a little no-salt, no-sugar peanut butter onto sliced apple disks and sprinkle them with a little raw oats and a single block of grated dark chocolate.



Crunchy homemade pasta chips with homemade sauces and dips

Cook high-fibre pasta al dente – it should contain at least 6g of fibre for every 100g serving to be considered high-fibre. Drain it, drizzle it with 2 teaspoons of olive oil and toss it so that it is evenly coated. Sprinkle it with some of your child's favourite dried herbs, such as: oregano, basil, thyme, rosemary, garlic salt, a herb mix, or cayenne pepper/chili flakes for a bit of a kick. Bake them in the oven or air fryer until crispy, tossing them to ensure they are evenly cooked.

Serve these high-fibre pasta chips with a homemade sauce or dip. Try some of these: low-fat smooth cottage cheese mixed in equal parts with mayonnaise; homemade guacamole; homemade hummus made from blended or mashed up canned chickpeas with a teaspoon of no-salt, no-sugar peanut butter (instead of tahini); cooked tinned tomatoes that have reduced and been sprinkled with dried herbs (you can add a teaspoon of sugar if they are too acidic).

Hot or cold: apples or pears

For the perfect winter dessert use fruit canned in their own juice or low-sugar syrup. Drain canned apple or pear halves and heat them in the microwave until hot. Top the warm fruit with a tablespoon of plain full-fat yoghurt and sprinkle with cinnamon.

In the summertime, blend apple and pear halves and freeze them in popsicle form overnight to make a delicious homemade, low-sugar sorbet alternative.



COMMON NUTRITION MISCONCEPTION: FRUIT JUICE IS HEALTHY

Fruit juice is often equivalent to drinking a soft drink, if not worse, because the juice contains no fibre matrix when the pulp that's naturally found in the fruit has been removed. At the same time it contains fructose (a fruit sugar) which floods the liver and increases triglycerides (a type of fat) production.



TIP:

A single serving of fruit juice is 125ml. Dilute juice 50-50 with water or use low-calorie, low-sugar squashes in moderation. It is best to teach children to drink water when they are thirsty by modelling this behaviour as a parent.

Spicy Baked Beans Shakshuka

Serves: 4 | Preparation Time: 10 minutes | Cooking Time: 20-25 minutes | Breakfast, Vegetarian, Budget Friendly
1530KJ/per single portion

Ingredients

1 Tbsp vegetable oil
 ½ onion, finely diced
 1 clove of garlic, finely diced
 ½ red pepper, de-seeded and chopped
 1 tin (410g) All Gold Tomato & Onion Mix
 1 tsp dried origanum
 ¼ tsp chilli flakes (optional)
 1 tin (410g) Koo Baked Beans in Tomato Sauce Lite
 1 tin (410g) Koo Whole Kernel Corn, drained and rinsed
 4 eggs
 Feta, crumbled, to garnish
 Fresh Italian parsley, chopped, to garnish
 2 slices Albany Toaster Thick Slice Brown Bread, toasted, to serve
 Salt and pepper, to season

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C. You will need an oven-proof pan, if you don't have one, use a casserole dish.
2. Heat vegetable oil in an oven-proof pan, then add onion and cook for 4-5 minutes until onion has softened.
3. Add garlic and red pepper, while stirring continuously for 1 minute, do not allow garlic to burn.
4. Add the tin of All Gold Tomato & Onion mix, dried origanum and chill flakes (if you choose to add some) and season lightly with salt and pepper.
5. Stir to combine and cook for 5-8 minutes.
6. Add the Koo Baked Beans in Tomato Sauce Lite and the drained and rinsed Koo Whole Kernel Corn and stir to combine. **Use a casserole dish here, if not using an oven-proof pan.*
7. Make 4 wells in the pan and break an egg into each well.
8. Transfer your pan to the oven and bake for 10-12 minutes or until eggs are cooked to your liking.
9. Remove the pan from the oven and sprinkle over the crumbled feta and chopped parsley before serving.
10. Serve with a slice of toasted Albany Toaster Thick Slice Brown Bread.

Peas and Pesto High Fibre Pasta

Serves: 4
 Preparation Time: 5 minutes
 Cooking Time: 15 minutes
 Vegan, Vegetarian, Budget Friendly, Kid Friendly, Lunch, Dinner
 2 079 KJ/per single portion

Ingredients

400g Fatti's & Moni's High Fibre Screws
 1 Tbsp vegetable oil
 1 jar (140g) homemade or store-bought basil pesto
 1 tin (410g) Koo Fresh Garden Peas in brine, drained and rinsed
 Salt and black pepper, to taste

Method

1. Cook pasta according to package instructions.
2. Drain pasta, keep aside some of the pasta water.
3. Heat the vegetable oil in a pan and add the pasta, basil pesto and peas.
4. Toss everything together to coat pasta well and heat through.
5. Add some of the remaining pasta water, if you need to thin out the sauce.
6. Taste and season lightly with salt and black pepper, if needed.
7. Serve while warm.

Makes: 12
 Preparation Time: 25 minutes
 and 3-4 hours setting time

Cooking Time: None
 Dessert, Budget Friendly,
 Kid Friendly, Baking

1 056 KJ/per single portion

Fruit Cocktail No-Bake Mini Cheesecakes

Ingredients

Base

½ cup unsalted almonds (or pecan nuts)
 ½ cup Jungle Instant Oats Original
 4 dates, pitted
 ½ tsp vanilla essence
 ⅓ cup of boiling water
 Spray n' Cook
 Pinch of salt

Cheesecake

460g low-fat smooth cream cheese
 1 tin (385g) of condensed milk
 2 Tbsps. fruit juice from 1 tin (410g)
 Koo Fruit Cocktail in Fruit Juice Lite
 (you'll be using the fruit to garnish)

To garnish

1 tin (410g) Koo Fruit Cocktail
 in Fruit Juice Lite, just the fruit

Method

Base

1. Grease a muffin tray with Spray n' Cook.
2. Place dates in a bowl and cover with boiling water for 5 minutes, until just covered.
3. Add the nuts, oats, dates and water from the dates, vanilla essence and salt into a blender and blend until sticky and crumbly.
4. Divide the mixture equally between the 12 cups in the muffin tray (approximately 1 tablespoon each).
5. Press the mixture down using the back of a spoon or a small glass, to make a firm base.
6. Chill in the fridge for 10 minutes.

Cheesecake

1. Place all the ingredients into a blender and blend until smooth.
2. Spoon about 2 tablespoons of the cheesecake mixture over the chilled bases.
3. Cover and refrigerate for at least 3-4 hours before serving.
4. Serve chilled and garnished with the drained fruit pieces.

Did you know:

KOO Fruit Cocktail in Fruit Juice Lite is a delectable blend of cubed peaches, pears, pineapples, grapes and cherries, in naturally sweet fruit juice. It has 56% less sugar than the regular range of KOO Fruit Cocktail, and is low GI, making it a great choice for people following low-sugar diets.



ACTIVE CHILDREN are smarter, more creative and more confident

Science shows that active children are not only healthier and happier but also smarter, more creative and more confident, write Dr Eileen Africa, senior lecturer at Stellenbosch University and co-ordinator of Kinderkinetics; and Catherine Coupar, National Junior Member Manager at Virgin Active South Africa.

Active children also perform much better at school. Physical activity during break times or PE classes resulted in improved marks, increased brain function, higher levels of concentration on school-related tasks (which enables learning and memory), as well as improved mathematics, reading, writing and spelling skills. Physical activity also leaves children feeling less stressed, improves their problem-solving abilities and helps them see challenging homework assignments with fresh eyes. And the best academic results were recorded when PE classes were scheduled before lunchtime, rather than later in the day.

Exercise also releases endorphins and serotonin – those ‘feel-good’ hormones that leave us feeling happier and rejuvenated. And when activities are done outdoors, in the sunshine and fresh air, our bodies also absorb much-needed Vitamin D, which reduces feelings of sadness. Another added benefit is that children sleep better and feel more rested after exercising during the day.

As children become fitter and stronger through play, active games and physical activity, they learn new skills which helps to build self-confidence around their abilities and leaves them feeling proud of their accomplishments.

All of this is the reason for teachers, parents and caregivers to thoughtfully integrate age-appropriate physical activity across the school curriculum and throughout the day to help aid learning.

By developing healthy exercise habits from an early age, parents can help their children form lifelong healthy habits and active lifestyles. Encouraging children to join a team sport at school or a club will not only give them a sense of community and belonging, but it will teach them the importance of teamwork and enhance their social skills.

“An increase in physical activity and longer weekly exercise routines are associated with improved overall health and wellness during childhood.”

Another way to encourage a healthy lifestyle is to lead by example. Parenting practices are also associated with how children prefer to play. While it’s often challenging to pry them away from tablet devices, computers, TVs and smartphones, you can do this by organising a fun family activity that involves movement, such as skipping over the sprinkler, gardening, a treasure hunt or obstacle course in the garden, walking the dogs in the park, tree climbing, hiking, playing tennis, riding a bicycle, roller skating or dancing. Turn household chores and children’s responsibilities into a game or a fun activity, while praising them for successfully completing tasks. This is also an ideal way to spend quality time with your children.

Key findings

An active lifestyle is essential for a child’s physical growth, disease prevention, emotional development and psychological wellbeing. Physical activity positively impacts brain function, reflexes and reaction times, as well as creative skills. Active children perform much better at school, show higher levels of concentration and problem-solving abilities, as well as improved mathematics, reading, writing and spelling skills.



If you’re looking for more fun-filled activities, Virgin Active, in collaboration with Stellenbosch Kinderkinetics, has compiled a [video series](#) of family-friendly activities on its YouTube channel and the Virgin Active [kids blog page](#).

As children spend so much time at school, it’s an ideal and safe environment for them to get active throughout the school day, whether they partake in team sports, extracurricular activities, physical education (PE) classes or active playtime. Sadly, the pandemic has brought with it the cancellation of PE classes and sports. Online classes and home schooling have also seen a drastic decline in physical activity, as teachers, parents and students adjust to this new lifestyle.

During this time, many children have become more sedentary and are no longer being active for at least 60 minutes throughout the day, as recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Parents

largely underestimated the hugely positive benefits of regular movement, exercise and active play, until they started spending more time with their children and saw the results for themselves.

An active lifestyle is not only essential for a child’s physical growth and disease prevention, it also positively impacts their health and wellbeing later in life. Numerous studies have shown positive correlations between moderate physical activity and children’s mood, emotional and psychological wellbeing. The same goes for children’s cognitive and social development. This is because physical activity positively impacts brain function and reaction times, as well as creative skills.

4 ways to keep your toddler active

Growing toddlers love to explore their environment and actively engage in the world around them through movement. Virgin Active has compiled a list of rudimentary motor skills and activities to keep toddlers active at home.

A toddler is naturally active and inquisitive but oftentimes when parents need to catch up on work or household responsibilities, it's tempting to keep them entertained in front of the TV or with a mobile device.

Children between 18 months and three years should participate in a variety of age-appropriate, play-based and structured physical activities. The latest World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines on physical activity indicate that children between the ages of 18 months and two years should engage in at least 180 minutes of physical activity, while three- to five-year-olds need at least 180 minutes of physical activity, of which at least 60 minutes should be dedicated to moderate to vigorous activity spread throughout the day.

Here are fun activities for parents, teachers and caregivers to do with toddlers. These activities use items that should be found in most homes and focus on developing rudimentary movement skills in young children. They can be done in bite-sized chunks of 10-15 minutes in between mom and dad's busy schedules, nursery school, crafts, learning activities and play time.



Animal jumps



Use the animal jumps game to get your child jumping. Role play that you're visiting an animal sanctuary or game reserve and ask your child to show you how a frog, springbok or kangaroo jumps. Encourage them to make animal noises while they jump. You can also paint their face as their chosen animal or even put on a sprinkler, so that they can jump back and forth over it, if they are older.

Catching is a skill that takes time and patience to develop. Show your child how to stand with their hands and arms stretched out in front of their stomach. Then take a large, soft, foam ball (you can also use socks that are stuffed into one another) and throw it towards your child's hands from about 50cm away. As your child gets better at catching, you can start to increase the distance between you and them. Make sure you use lots of praise so that your child is encouraged to continue trying even after they've missed.



Catch!

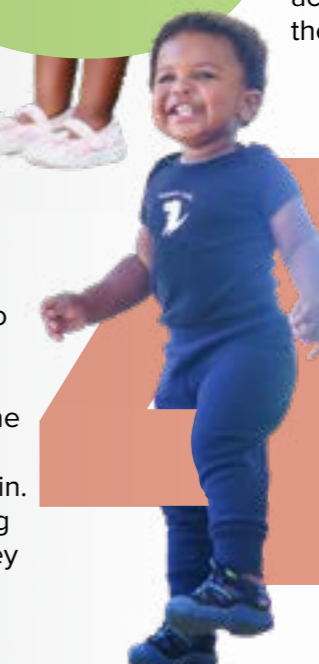


Hopscotch



Hopscotch is great for developing your children's hopping skills. Use chalk to draw different shapes in a straight line, one after the other, or cut out A4 pages that are securely taped to your floor with masking tape. Make sure the size of the shapes correspond with your child's age and size so that they can easily walk or hop from one shape to the next. Put your hands above your head like bunny ears while hopping to make this game even more fun! You can use this activity to teach your child about shapes as they hop from one to the next.

To work on your child's balance, hold a mini dance party. Play music and encourage them to dance to it. Each time you switch the music off your child needs to freeze in the exact position they were in when the music stopped. Leave the music off for a few seconds so that your child has to balance for a while before playing it again. You can teach them dance moves like marching or hopping from one foot to another so that they are forced to freeze on one foot – making the balancing more challenging.



Freeze dance party



Fun activities to get pre-schoolers moving

Pre-schoolers are at the stage of their physical development where they are getting stronger and better at gross motor skills. This is a great age to introduce various physical activities that encourage them to master these skills and gain better control of their bodies. Virgin Active has compiled a list of fundamental movement skills and activities to keep four- to seven-year-olds active.

Children need to spend at least three hours per day on physical activity of which one hour must be moderate to vigorous play that raises their heart rates and increases blood flow.

These fun, home-based exercises can be done in 10- to 15-minute chunks between other activities. Many of these activities combine physical exercise with other skills or learning.



Number jumping

To practise your child's jumping skills, write out two sets of the numbers one to 10 on paper plates or sheets of paper. Stick the plates or papers randomly to the floor, using prestik or doubled-sided tape. Give your child a high number, like eight. Your child must jump from the paper plate with the number one on it, to two, to three, all the way to eight. This exercise helps with a child's spatial awareness, number recognition and visual tracking skills. You can play this game with more than one child at a time and can use numbers higher than 10 depending on their age.

Galloping musical chairs

Use this twist on musical chairs to hone your child's galloping skills (moving quickly from one point to another with the same foot leading each step). Place as many chairs back-to-back in a circle as there are participants. Play music and ask your children to gallop around the chairs. When you stop the music, everyone must sit on a chair. During each round, remove one chair. The child who didn't sit on a chair in time during each round falls out. The last child left galloping is the winner. If you only have a single participant, modify the game to gallop around one chair and to sit on it each time the music is paused.



Running with expressions

For this running game, draw three to five facial expressions, each on a different piece of paper. Stick them on a wall or other surface at your child's shoulder height. Ask your child to stand a certain distance away from the papers (increase or decrease the distance based on their age). Face your child and make one of the facial expressions. Once your child recognises the expression, they must run and high five the matching face. This game also helps children to learn about emotions and can boost their emotional intelligence, especially when they are told the importance of sharing how they feel.



DIY Twister

To practise balance, play a DIY game of Twister. Take 20 paper plates or pieces of paper that have been cut into circles. Using four different colours, paint five plates in each colour. Use Prestik or double-sided tape to securely stick a row of each colour next to the other on the ground. Then, call out one of the following: right hand or left hand, right foot, or left foot and one of the colours. For example, "left hand red". Your child must put the corresponding hand or foot on the correct colour. Do this until all four are placed on a colour.



As many children are still spending much time at home due to the pandemic, this provides many opportunities to mix learning with exercise. Try these fun activities with your eight- to 13-year-olds.

Engaging ways to keep primary schoolers physically and mentally active

The following exercises can be broken up into 'bite-size' intervals that can be done in between school lessons or other activities.

Lunging letters

Get your child to recite the alphabet, doing a deep lunge for each letter. Make sure that the back leg stays straight and stationary as the child steps forward with the other leg. You will need to do this exercise in a long passage, driveway or garden. Don't worry if the child has to turn around a few times – it's all part of the fun! Older children can spell out the words they are learning at school.



Swimming

Swimming is an ideal low-impact sport for children as it provides a full-body workout and offers numerous health benefits. Swimming fires up more of the body's major muscle groups than many other cardio activities, helping to tone muscles and build strength, while the water provides gentle resistance. Fitness centres with indoor, heated pools and a swimming coach offer a safe and comfortable space to build fitness for optimal health and a balanced lifestyle.

Energetic equations

Write down a list of maths equations suitable for your child's age, whether it involves addition, subtraction, multiplication or division – or a combination of these. The answer to the equation is the number of repetitions of an exercise your child will have to do, for example, $27 - 19 = 8$ repetitions. After each set, ask them to work out the next equation and do the corresponding number of repetitions.

This game is really effective with burpees which help children develop power. To do one, stand in a squat position with feet shoulder-width apart and hands on the floor between your feet. Kick your feet back so that you're in the push-up position with your weight on your hands. Do one push up, then jump your feet back to their starting position. Jump into the air and clap your hands above your head, landing back in the squat position. To make this activity more diverse, swap out burpees with squats, push-ups, lunges, jumping jacks or other fun activities.



Jumping and dodging

Use this jumping and dodging exercise to practise quickness. You'll need two people for this activity. Gather a basket of different sized balls. Use scrunched up paper if you don't have enough balls. One person must take the basket and stand a few metres away from the other. Then roll/throw the balls along the ground as quickly as possible towards the feet of the other person. The second person must dodge the balls so that they don't touch their feet. The children can take turns to throw and dodge, as this exercise promotes foot-eye coordination for the dodger, hand-eye coordination for the thrower, and motor planning and reaction time for both.

Fruit and vegetables: fresh versus canned versus frozen

In the context of food insecurity, the possibility of rising food prices and a lack of readily available access to fresh fruit and vegetables, many South Africans are incorporating canned and frozen alternatives into their dietary mix and realising the benefits these have to help them eat sufficient amounts of fruit and vegetables daily, writes Arthur Ramoroka, Tiger Brands' Company Nutritionist.



A balanced diet includes eating at least two fruits and three vegetables daily to ensure you get an adequate amount of fibre, nutrients, vitamins and minerals. These can be enjoyed in various forms from fresh to canned and frozen, and may be prepared in numerous ways from being steamed, cooked and sautéed to being roasted or grilled. Certain fruits and vegetables may become easier to digest when they are cooked. This may also make it easier for the body to absorb their nutrients, while others may be more nutritious when eaten fresh, canned or frozen. The key to living healthily is variety. Here are a few useful guidelines to help you make the healthiest food choices for your family, while eating from a wide selection of food groups.

Last year's State of Nutrition in South Africa report found that the average South African does not eat sufficient amounts of fruit and vegetables each day. Not everyone has access to a vegetable garden or the chance to buy fresh produce daily. This is why we often need to make do with what is available and within our means when we do our shopping. This may include buying fresh, canned and frozen fruit and vegetables to see us through until the next shop. It's about recognising that there is a time and place for every kind of food in our diets, while trying to find balance and eat mindfully. There's nothing stopping you from mixing fresh ingredients with canned and frozen ones to create your favourite family recipes – especially if it encourages you to cook at home more often.

Fresh fruit and vegetables

While fresh produce is ideal in terms of its nutritional value, it often takes a long time for it to reach the supermarket shelves and even longer before it is eaten. Once a fruit or vegetable has been harvested or disconnected from its root system, it begins to lose moisture and the degradation of its inherent vitamins and minerals sets in. Hence, its overall nutritional value decreases with time.

The shelf life, flavour and nutrients of produce can be maintained with correct storage. Some require refrigeration to help slow down the loss of moisture and nutrients. However, sometimes weeks may pass before produce is eaten. While it may still appear firm and brightly coloured, it may no longer be as nutritious as canned or frozen alternatives, which are often prepared and packaged shortly after being harvested to lock-in their nutritional value. It's good practice to consume your fresh fruit and vegetables soon after buying them or picking them fresh from your garden.

TIP:
Consume fresh produce as soon as it is picked, and store it correctly to help lengthen its shelf life and maintain its nutrition value.



Canned

fruit and vegetables

Quality canned fruit and vegetables are prepared and canned within a short period of time from being harvested. This locks in nutritional goodness and adds an element of convenience to our food preparation, as there is no worry that the food will spoil quickly, as is the case with fresh produce. Canned products have the longest shelf-life of all three options and may be stored in our pantries and cupboards for long periods of time. They do not require refrigeration or further cooking – which is exceptionally useful when you have to prepare dinner during load shedding or do not have access to fresh fruit and vegetables.

Canned foods are prepared and cooked within the sealed can. In this way, canned foods guarantee food safety because they are packaged in an oxygen-free manner that prevents the presence of any microorganisms that cause foodborne illnesses.

While certain canned foods may include added sugar and/or salt as preservatives – it's best practice to drain and rinse canned food of their natural brine or the syrup that it is packaged with, before you use it to prepare your meal. This is not the case with ready-to-eat foods that are prepared in sauces, such as baked beans, chakalaka and beetroots. The benefit of using these canned foods in your food preparation is that if you're adding them to your recipe, there may be no need to add more sugar or salt.

If possible, choose canned foods in water or low-sodium brine, instead of oil. It is also healthier to choose 'lite' canned foods, which contain little to no added sugar and salt.

Canned foods are equally nutritious, must-have pantry fillers that offer a convenient, affordable and more sustainable way to help consumers meet their daily five fruit and vegetables quota, while reducing possible food waste. This is particularly true as a [recent study](#) found that as much as 76% of South Africans run out of money before month-end, while 57% run out of money halfway through the month. Canned produce helps South Africans make healthier food choices when they don't have money to buy fresh produce.

TIP:

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), opened canned foods should be stored in the fridge. High-acid canned goods – such as tomato products, juice, fruit, pickles, sauerkraut and foods in vinegar-based sauces – can be stored between five and seven days. While low-acid canned goods – such as meat, poultry, fish, gravy, stews, soups, beans, carrots, corn, pasta, peas, potatoes and spinach – can be stored for between three and four days. Although it's safe to store the opened canned food in the fridge in a can, it will retain better flavour if it is transferred into a glass or plastic storage container that is sealed and airtight.

Frozen

fruit and vegetables

Frozen produce is generally frozen quite soon after being harvested, locking in flavour and nutritional goodness. Choose quick frozen fruit and vegetables as these will retain much of their fibre. Keep in mind that much like cooking, freezing may also cause the loss of certain nutrients, however frozen fruit and vegetables may be kept in the freezer for between 8-12 months – this gives them a shelf-life longer than fresh produce, but shorter than canned fruit and vegetables. Overall, this also makes frozen produce a convenient option when preparing homemade meals.

Frozen fruit and vegetables can be prepared directly from the freezer without having to be thawed. However, once they are defrosted they can be stored in the fridge for up to 24 hours before they need to be cooked or thrown away. It's best to keep the packaging in which they are found sealed or to reseal it using a food clip.

While frozen fruit and vegetables are a tasty accompaniment to any meal, it's always useful to read food nutrition labels for additives. Potato chips may be dipped in oils and fats before they are frozen. Similarly, vegetables that are battered in flour, spices and fats, are also more calorie-dense than fresh or canned vegetables.

TIP:

Read food nutrition labels to ensure that large amounts of sugar, salt and fat have not been added to frozen fruit and vegetables, which may negate some of their health benefits.



Toasted Chickpea and Chicken Bowl

Serves: 4 *Budget Friendly, Lunch, Dinner,*
Preparation Time: 15 minutes
Cooking Time: 30 minutes *1 510 KJ/per single portion*

Ingredients

Chicken

2 skinless, boneless chicken breasts

1 cup chicken stock

Salt and pepper, to season

Chickpeas

1 Tbsp vegetable oil

1 tin (410g) Koo Chickpeas in Brine, drained and rinsed

1 tsp paprika

Salt and pepper, to season

Lentils

½ cup Lion Red Split Lentils

1 bay leaf

1 whole garlic clove, peeled

2 cups vegetable stock

To serve

1 avocado, sliced

60g feta, cut into cubes

100g baby tomatoes, halved

Few leaves of romaine lettuce, shredded

Black olives (optional)

Lemon wedges, for serving

Method

1. Heat chicken stock in a pot and add chicken breasts.
2. Cover with a lid and gently simmer for 15-20 minutes until chicken is tender and cooked through.
3. Remove chicken breasts from the pot, set aside and allow to cool.
4. While chicken is cooking, heat vegetable oil in a frying pan, add drained and rinsed chickpeas and lightly season with salt, pepper and paprika.
5. Toast chickpeas until golden and crunchy, remove from heat and set aside.
6. Rinse lentils well, then place in a pot with the bay leaf, garlic, and the vegetable stock. Add a pinch of salt and pepper, if required.
7. Allow the lentils to simmer for about 20-25 minutes on low heat, until cooked through and tender.
8. Once cooked, drain the lentils and remove the bay leaf and garlic clove, place the lentils back into the pot and cover to keep warm.
9. Slice the chicken breasts.
10. Divide and arrange the lettuce, chicken breast slices, chickpeas and lentils in 2 bowls.
11. Top with avocado slices, feta and black olives (if using).
12. Serve with lemon wedges.

Smashed Tomato Toast with Curried Baked Beans

Serves: 2
Preparation Time: 10 minutes
Cooking Time: 20 minutes
Breakfast, Lunch, Budget-Friendly, Vegan, Vegetarian
 1629 KJ/per single portion

Ingredients

200g baby tomatoes, whole

1 small onion, finely diced

1 Tbsp curry powder (heat to your taste)

1 tin (410g) Koo Baked Beans in Tomato Sauce Lite

2 slices of Albany Ultima Rooibos and Rye Brown Bread

2 Tbsps. vegetable oil, divided

Fresh coriander, chopped, to garnish

Salt and pepper, to season

½ tsp chilli flakes (optional)



Method

1. Heat 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil in a frying pan.
2. Add the tomatoes and lightly season with salt, pepper and chilli flakes (if using).
3. Cook tomatoes until skins are blistered, for about 5-6 minutes.
4. Remove tomatoes from the pan and place in a bowl.
5. Using a fork, smash up tomatoes roughly, set aside.
6. Using the same pan, add the other tablespoon of vegetable oil and heat it up.
7. Add the onion and cook until softened and golden, then add the curry powder and cook for 1-2 minutes, stirring continuously.
8. Add the tin of Koo Baked Beans in Tomato Sauce Lite to the pan and stir to combine.
9. Allow to cook for 6-8 minutes, stirring occasionally, until beans are warmed through, then remove pan from heat.
10. Toast your bread.
11. Top each slice with the curried baked beans and a generous layer of smashed tomatoes, sprinkle with chopped coriander and serve.

Vegetarian Mexican Chilli with Potato Wedges

Serves: 4 *Vegan, Vegetarian, Dinner*
Preparation Time: 20 minutes
Cooking Time: 40- 45 minutes
 1 795 KJ/per single portion

Ingredients

For the potato wedges

4 large potatoes, cut into wedges, keep skin on

Salt and pepper, to taste

1 Tbsp. vegetable oil

For the chilli

2 Tbsps. vegetable oil

1 large onion, diced

2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped

½ tsp chilli flakes

1 tsp dried thyme

1 tsp cumin powder/seeds

1 tsp paprika

1 tsp dried oregano

½ tsp cinnamon powder

1 bay leaf

1 tin (410g) All Gold Tomato & Onion Mix

1 sachet (50g) All Gold Tomato Paste

1 cup of vegetable stock

2 tins (410g each) Koo Four-Bean Mix in brine, drained and rinsed

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C and line a baking tray with baking paper.
2. Rub a small amount of vegetable oil on the potatoes, place the wedges on the baking tray, skin side down and season lightly with salt and pepper.
3. Place potatoes in the oven and cook for 40-45 minutes until soft and golden brown.
4. Heat vegetable oil in a large pot, add onions, mix for 3-4 minutes until softened and golden.
5. Add garlic, and stir continuously for another minute, making sure the garlic does not burn.
6. Add chilli flakes, thyme, cumin powder or seeds, paprika, oregano, cinnamon powder, bay leaf, All Gold Tomato & Onion Mix and All Gold tomato paste.
7. Stirring continuously, cook for 3-4 minutes until ingredients are well combined.
8. Add vegetable stock, season lightly with salt and pepper and cover with a lid.
9. Turn down heat and allow mixture to cook for 20-25 minutes until fragrant.
10. Combine all salsa ingredients together in a bowl, mix and set aside.
11. Combine mashed avocado, lemon juice and salt and pepper together in a bowl, mix and set aside.
12. Add drained and rinsed Koo Four-Bean Mix to your cooked chilli mixture and cook for a further 5-8 minutes or until beans have warmed through.
13. Serve chilli mixture with potato wedges, salsa, guacamole and a dollop of low-fat cream or low-fat plain yoghurt.

Salt and pepper, to season

For the salsa

2 tomatoes, diced

1 onion, diced

Handful of fresh coriander, chopped

2 tsps. Brookes Tru-Lem Lemon Juice

Salt and pepper, to season

For the guacamole

1 avocado, mashed

1 tsp Brookes Tru-Lem Lemon Juice

Salt and pepper, to season

Optional: Serve with low-fat cream cheese or low-fat plain yoghurt



Nutrition myths busted

1 All calories are equal: FALSE

A balanced and portion-controlled meal should include foods from each food group. Calorie intake is not simply calculated by the number of calories found in a particular food, but also by the number of calories the body uses to metabolise the food before its nutrients are absorbed. Wholegrain and high-fibre carbohydrates – such as oats, brown bread, brown rice, brown pasta, buckwheat, millet, barley and bulgur wheat – are so-called complex carbohydrates. The fibre in complex carbohydrates makes you feel satiated for longer, while helping to reduce cholesterol. Complex carbohydrates require more time and energy to metabolise than calories found in refined carbohydrates – namely white bread, white pasta, many snacks (chips, crackers and pretzels) – which have had their fibre (in the form of germ and bran) removed and may contain added calories, sugar and salt. This is why we should focus on the quality of the food or food group we consume, rather than simply the food's calorie intake.

Whether we hear them from friends or read them on social media, most nutrition myths are not based on facts. Arthur Ramoroka, Tiger Brands' Company Nutritionist, demystifies common nutrition myths.

2 Low-fat is always healthier: FALSE

Leading a healthy and balanced lifestyle is all about mindful eating combined with regular exercise that is also considerate of our lifestyle goals. Healthy individuals may eat a diverse diet that includes both low- and high-fat foods. However, some individuals, on the advice of their doctors, may need to eat as a form of disease management. Diabetics and those with heart disease need to maintain low cholesterol levels as part of their disease management. This is why they may be advised to reduce the amount of saturated fat in their diets. It's important to remember that while low-fat foods may contain less fat because of their reduced fat content, their flavour is often enhanced by adding salt or sugar, which may increase their overall calorie intake. Reading food labels may help you distinguish the fat, sugar and salt content of various low- and high-fat foods to help you make the best choice for your lifestyle.

5 Everyone needs supplements: FALSE

If you are healthy and eating a well-balanced diet that includes balanced portions of diverse foods from a variety of food groups combined with sufficient exercise, your body should be receiving a suitable amount of macronutrients and micronutrients. While there will be some nutritional losses through digestive processes, absorption and excretion, supplements in the form of synthetic vitamins and minerals should not be necessary for the average individual. However, if you have a certain deficiency, medical diagnosis or if you are pregnant or looking to conceive, your healthcare professional will be able to advise which supplements may assist you during this time.

6 It's okay to skip breakfast: FALSE

We've heard it all before – breakfast is the most important meal of the day because it energises your body for the day ahead. People looking to lose weight often skip breakfast but tend to portion distort later in the day and often end up eating the same number of calories during a day just across two, instead of three, meals. If you are looking to lose weight, rather eat dinner earlier in the day, around 5-6pm, and give your body a rest until you eat breakfast the following morning. You'll wake up more rested and refreshed.

3 Certain foods burn fat: FALSE

There are no foods that have special fat-burning properties. The important thing to remember is that overall energy intake is determined by calories in versus calories out – that is the amount of calories you consume, versus the amount of calories you burn via movement and exercise.

4 Certain foods are 'super foods': FALSE

No single food group or specific foods can provide all the nutrients your body needs. This is why we should eat nutritionally-diverse meals that provide a variety of macronutrients (carbohydrates, fats and proteins) and micronutrients (vitamins and minerals). The label 'super foods' is not scientifically proven. There is no single food that contains the adequate amount of every macronutrient and every micronutrient that we need in a single serving. It's simply a case of some foods containing more of a certain kind of macronutrient or micronutrient than others. We still need to eat a variety of foods from various food groups. If you are undergoing disease management, recovering from a sports injury or health procedure, your doctor may advise you to eat more of a certain type of food to help the healing process.

7 Don't drink with your meal: FALSE

Drinking a glass of water 15-30 minutes before you eat may help you manage portion control and to feel more satiated. Drinking with your meal doesn't have any adverse effects, unless you have gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) in which case it might cause acid reflux. Drinking water may help to move the food through the digestive tract and aid with digestion. Fibre-rich foods require good water intake. The trick is to drink water or unsweetened, low-calorie drinks with your meals, rather than calorie-dense drinks, such as cold drinks, juices and energy drinks.

8 easy ways to make healthier food choices every day

Sometimes eating the right kinds of foods and following balanced eating behaviours can seem quite daunting, with many of us not knowing where to start. The key is to take the first step in the right direction with the intention of leading a healthier, more balanced lifestyle. And the rest will follow.

1 Every meal is a new opportunity

When you choose to be healthier, each meal and every day presents you with new opportunities to eat mindfully, try a new recipe, or choose a healthier takeout option. Treating yourself from time to time with the food you love is an essential part of life. And if you overindulged, that's okay sometimes too because every meal is a fresh start and gives you the chance to try something different or a new approach.

2 Make healthy living a habit and lifestyle

By making small and consistent steps towards healthier food and eating choices each day, we can create life-long habits that eventually become our lifestyle. Remember that like with everything in life, this is a journey. It's a gradual process that takes time and commitment as you learn. And don't be too hard on yourself, it's also really important to treat yourself once in a while. As a first step, why not try upgrading your favourite fast-food or takeout restaurant to one that serves healthier options.

3 Detach your emotions from food

We often label certain foods as being either good or bad for us. The reality is that we need to eat a variety of foods from different food groups for a balanced, nutritious diet – and it's okay to have a snack or treat once in a while. However, when we attach emotions to certain foods, such as believing that chocolate is bad for us, instead of enjoying the occasional treat, we are often filled with guilt and perhaps even self-loathing, when we overindulge. The key is to detach our emotions from our food – this will help us to see food as essential to our survival and wellbeing, rather than something that has control over us.

4 Planning meals is a quick win

Plan your meals for the week ahead and do your shopping with a shopping list and a full tummy. When you know what you plan to cook and what you need to buy, you're less likely to impulse buy. And when you're satiated while shopping, you're less likely to be tempted by your hunger pangs to buy snacks and treats. Buy your weekly treat in a single serving size or portion, rather than a large packet, so that you're not tempted to finish it in one sitting.

7 Portion control

A healthy lifestyle is a combination of what and how much you eat. It's essential to eat foods from all the food groups for balanced nutrition. Aim to fill half your dinner plate with vegetables, one quarter with starchy high-fibre foods (such as brown rice, buckwheat, wholewheat pasta) and the remaining quarter with protein (such as chicken, meat, fish, eggs, beans or legumes). Eat your fruit instead of drinking them. We're likely to eat more fruit (and hence fructose which spikes blood sugar) when we blend multiple fruit into smoothies or juices. If we were to eat the fruit fresh, we're unlikely to eat more than two or three whole fruit in a single serving because the fibre makes us full.

5 Slow down

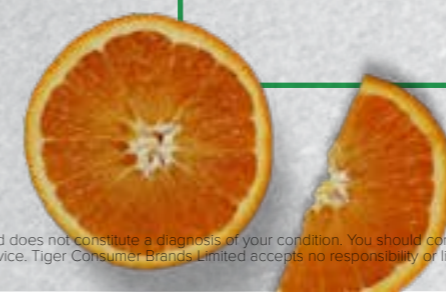
Getting enough sleep will curb your appetite and sugar cravings throughout the day. Make eating an occasion that is shared with family, friends or colleagues. When we eat slower, we eat less and are less likely to overeat. Chewing slowly and socialising during meals gives the brain enough time (about 20 minutes) to receive messages from the stomach that it is full. That is why it is also important to wait for at least 15 minutes before taking seconds.

6 Eat regular meals

Skipping meals makes us more likely to overeat during the next meal. And when we experience a drop in blood sugar, we might be tempted to reach for a quick energy fix, like a snack or treat that is high in discretionary nutrients, such as sugar, fat or salt. Rather find balance by eating regular, portion-controlled meals that are not too calorie-dense. If you're trying to lose weight or doing intermittent fasting, rather eat dinner earlier in the day between 5-6pm.

8 Calories in, calories out

We gain weight when we eat more calories than our bodies require to maintain our weight. Keeping a food journal or using a smartphone app can help us calorie count and get into the habit of correct portion sizes to the point where we won't eventually need them. Getting enough exercise can help us burn off excess calories. The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends doing at least 150-300 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise and at least 75-150 minutes of vigorous-intensity exercise each week to stay healthy.



Spinach and Feta Chicken Breasts with Pap and Sweetcorn

Serves: 4

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 30-35 minutes

Lunch, Dinner

1961 KJ/per single portion

Ingredients

4 skinless and boneless chicken breasts
1 packet (400g) baby spinach, divided
2 tsps. Brookes Tru-Lem Lemon Juice, divided
2 ½ Tbsps. vegetable oil, divided
100g feta cheese, crumbled
1 cup ACE Plus Fibre Maize Meal
1 onion, finely diced
1 tin (410g) All Gold Tomato & Onion Mix
1 tin (410g) Koo Whole Kernel Corn in brine, drained and rinsed
Salt and black pepper, to taste

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 160°C and place a shallow dish in the oven (to keep chicken warm).
2. Slice chicken breasts lengthwise to create a pocket, be careful not to slice all the way through.
3. Season chicken breasts lightly with salt and pepper, on the outside.
4. In a small bowl, combine a cup of spinach, 1 teaspoon of lemon juice, 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil and the feta and mix together.
5. Divide the spinach mixture equally between the 4 chicken breasts, placing the filling into the pocket.
6. Fold the chicken breast to cover the filling and secure with a toothpick. Set aside.
7. Cook the Ace Plus Fibre Maize Meal according to package instructions, to make soft pap.
8. Once the pap is cooked, remove it from the heat and allow it to cool to room temperature before serving.
9. While pap is cooking, rub chicken breasts in a small amount of oil and place in the heated pan.
10. Brown each chicken breast for 4-5 minutes on each side until golden, then transfer chicken breasts to the dish in the oven.
11. While the chicken breasts are resting in the oven, add the remaining tablespoon of vegetable oil to the same pan you used for the chicken breasts.
12. Add the diced onion and cook for 4-5 minutes until softened, then add the All Gold Tomato & Onion Mix.
13. Cook on low heat until cooked through (about 8-10 minutes).
14. Add the remaining spinach and cook until spinach has wilted but is still bright green in colour.
15. Add the drained and rinsed tin of Koo Whole Kernel Corn and season lightly with salt and pepper.
16. Stir to combine, making sure spinach, onion, All Gold Tomato & Onion Mix and corn are well mixed.
17. Once corn kernels are warmed through, remove from the heat.
18. Serve chicken breasts with a side of the pap, topped with a spoon of the tomato, onion, spinach and corn mixture on top and drizzle the pan juices from the shallow dish over the chicken.

Did you know:

Serving pap at room temperature reduces its glycaemic index and helps with satiety so that you feel fuller for longer.



Pear Bread Pudding with Frozen Yoghurt

Serves: 6

Preparation Time: 25 minutes + 3 hours freezing time

1 026 KJ/per single portion

Cooking Time: 50-55 minutes

Dessert, Budget Friendly, Kid Friendly

Ingredients

Pear and bread pudding

4 slices of Albany Brown Bread
1 tin (410g) Koo Pear Halves in Fruit Juice Lite, roughly chopped (reserve fruit juice)

2 cups low-fat milk

3 eggs

¼ cup brown sugar

1 tsp vanilla essence

Spray n' Cook

Frozen yoghurt

2 cups of medium-fat plain yoghurt

¼ cup reserved fruit juice from 1 tin (410g) Koo Pear Halves in Fruit Juice Lite

2 tsps. vanilla essence

Method

Frozen yoghurt

1. Place the yoghurt, fruit juice and vanilla essence into a blender.
2. Blend until combined, scrape down the edges and blend again until light and fluffy.
3. Transfer the mixture to a square 22cm glass baking dish.
4. Cover with cling film and freeze for 45 minutes.
5. Remove the dish from the freezer and using a spatula, stir the already-frozen edges into the soft centre, then spread out evenly again, cover and place in the freezer for another 2 hours.
6. Repeat the process of stirring the edges into the middle every 30 minutes (Do this while you are preparing and baking the bread pudding).
7. When the entire mixture is frozen, serve immediately as a softly frozen yoghurt.

Pear and bread pudding

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C and grease a 20cm casserole dish with Spray n' Cook.
2. Coarsely tear the bread and place a single layer in the casserole dish.
3. Top with the chopped pears and the rest of the bread.
4. Whisk milk, eggs, brown sugar and vanilla essence together in a bowl until combined.
5. Pour the milk mixture over the bread and set aside for 10 minutes to allow the milk mixture to absorb slightly.
6. Place the casserole dish into a larger roasting pan.
7. Pour enough hot water into the roasting pan to come halfway up the side of the casserole dish.
8. Place in the oven and bake for 50-55 minutes or until the pudding is just set.
9. Once baked, remove from the oven and serve warm with the frozen yoghurt.



Sugar 101

Sugar is found in different forms and is used to sweeten various foods and drinks, but is also naturally found in fruit, grains, dairy products and some vegetables. Can sugar be part of a healthy balanced diet? Retha Harmse and Faaizah Laher, registered dietitians and spokespersons for The Association for Dietetics in South Africa (ADSA), tackle these sweet questions one at a time.



Are natural sugars found in fruit and vegetables healthier than those added to foods?

Sugars occur naturally in food such as fruit, vegetables and milk, or may be added during food production or cooking to alter taste, texture and colour or for preservation. The body does not differentiate between naturally occurring sugars and those that are added to foods, as these are all metabolised in the same way. However, foods with natural sugar content provide other essential nutrients, while processed foods that are high in added sugars tend to be energy-dense and lower in essential nutrients.



Whole fruit and vegetables provide vitamins, minerals and fibre alongside their natural sugars (fructose) and help to contribute to satiety – the feeling of fullness. Consuming added sugars, particularly in the form of sugar-sweetened beverages, increases our energy intake and may reduce our intake of more nutritious foods, leading to an unbalanced diet, increased risk of dental caries, weight gain and chronic diseases, such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease.

How does sugar impact our gut microbiome and overall health?

Our diets impact the health of our digestive systems, which rely heavily on our gut microbiota that live within it. These microbes prefer fibre-rich foods, such as fruit and vegetables, to grow, multiply and live healthily. A healthy gut functions better, absorbs nutrients, produces enzymes and short chain fatty acids which are needed for a healthy body and immune system. A diet high in added sugars and low in fibre-rich foods deprives the gut microbiome of the fibre and minerals it needs to flourish, especially when these foods or drinks are consumed often. This causes many microbes to die, reducing their diversity and balance, and lowering their ability to maintain immunity and the health of the gastrointestinal tract. A high sugar intake can also disrupt the gut microbiome balance, which in turn promotes low-grade inflammation with potential adverse health effects.



Are all sugars equal?

Sugar can be extracted from various plant sources such as sugar cane plants; while honey is made by bees from the nectar of flowering plants; maple syrup is made from the sap produced by maple trees; and agave is made from the sap of agave plants. Regardless of their source or how they are refined, all sugars and syrups are very similar in terms of energy density (kilojoule content) and nutritional value. While sugar provides our bodies with energy, it contains no other essential nutrients. It can be enjoyed as part of a healthy eating plan but should not displace nutrient-dense foods and should be eaten and used sparingly and not between meals.



What to do if you have high blood sugar?

Healthy eating plays an important role in the prevention and management of chronic diseases such as diabetes.

- Choose minimally processed foods and home-cooked meals, which are likely to be more nutritious and have lower salt, fat and sugar content.
- Eat plenty of whole vegetables and fruit, instead of fruit juices and smoothies.
- Eat legumes regularly, as these nutrient-rich foods can decrease the risk of chronic diseases.
- Fish, chicken, lean meat and eggs can be eaten daily to provide nutrients such as iron, zinc, vitamin B3 and vitamin B12.
- Use low-fat or skim milk and milk products, with little or no added sugar.
- Use fats sparingly: choose vegetable oils rather than hard fats.
- Drink lots of clean, safe water instead of sugary drinks.
- Read food labels to choose foods that are low or lower in added sugars. If sugars are listed as one of the first few ingredients, the food is likely high in added sugars.
- Get active to burn any excess energy intake.



Vanilla

Guava

Smoothie Bowl

Serves: 2

Preparation Time:
5 minutes

764 KJ/per single portion

Cooking Time: none

Breakfast, Budget Friendly, Kid
Friendly, Quick Fix

Ingredients

½ tin (410g) KOO Guava Halves in Fruit Juice Lite, drained, juice reserved

400ml low-fat milk (use oat milk or almond milk for a vegan alternative)

2 Tbsps. of the reserved fruit juice

4 Tbsps. Morvite Instant Porridge Vanilla (also try this recipe with the Original flavour)

4 Tbsps. Jungle Instant Oats Original

½ cup mixed berries of your choice, keep a few for garnishing

1 Tbsp pumpkin seeds, raw

Toasted coconut shavings

Method

1. Add the guava halves and 2 tablespoons of reserved fruit juice, milk, Morvite Instant Porridge, Jungle Instant Oats and berries to a blender and blend until smooth.
2. Divide between bowls and top with a sprinkling of pumpkin seeds, coconut shavings and a few fresh berries, and serve.

Did you know:

To avoid food waste, opened canned foods may be stored in the fridge for at least three days, depending on the type of food. Although it's safe to store the opened can in the fridge, it will retain better flavour if the food is transferred into a glass or plastic storage container that is sealed and airtight.

Sunshine Oats Smoothie



Did you know:

Choosing 'lite' canned fruit and vegetables that contain less sugar are much healthier for you.

Serves: 2

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Cooking Time: none

Breakfast, Budget Friendly, Kid Friendly, Quick Fix

656 KJ/per single portion

Ingredients

½ tin (410g) Koo Peach Slices in Fruit Juice Lite, drained and juice reserved

4 Tbsps. Jungle Instant Oats Banana (Also try this recipe with the Original flavour)

500ml low-fat milk (use oat milk or almond milk for a vegan alternative)

1 small paw-paw, peeled and cut into chunks

¼ tsp turmeric

2 Tbsps. of the reserved juice from the peaches

6 ice blocks

Method

1. Add all ingredients to a blender and blend until smooth.
2. Divide between 2 glasses and serve.

Spiced Peach and Carrot Muffins

Makes: 12

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

794 KJ/per single portion

Cooking Time: 25 minutes

Breakfast, Lunchbox, Kid Friendly

Ingredients

1 tin (410g) Koo Peach Slices in Fruit Juice Lite, drained and chopped into small pieces (reserve the juice)

2½ cups Golden Cloud Brown Wheat Flour

½ cup of the fruit juice from the Koo Peach Slices in Fruit Juice Lite

½ cup slivered almonds

1 tsp cinnamon powder

¾ tsp bicarbonate of soda

½ tsp baking powder

½ tsp salt

¼ tsp ground nutmeg

¾ cup carrots, thoroughly washed and grated

2 Tbsps. vegetable oil

½ cup low-fat milk

2 large eggs, lightly beaten

Spray n' Cook

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C and grease a muffin tray with Spray n' Cook.
2. Add slivered almonds, flour, fruit juice, cinnamon, bicarbonate of soda, baking powder, salt and nutmeg to a large mixing bowl and combine.
3. Add the chopped peaches, carrots, vegetable oil and milk and mix.
4. Add eggs and mix well until smooth.
5. Spoon batter into muffin tray holes, distributing evenly between all 12 cups.
6. Bake for 25 minutes or until a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean.
7. Remove from oven and allow to cool, before transferring muffins to a cooling rack to cool completely



A pinch of Salt?

More like a handful

Salt is found in most South African kitchens, especially in restaurant foods, ready-made meals, and highly processed foods. Yet unlike sugar, most South Africans don't realise that too much salt may be harmful to their health.

South Africans already get a lot of salt (or sodium – a key component of salt) in their diets from fresh foods, home-cooked meals and processed foods (where salt adds to flavour and enhances shelf life). And yet the salt shaker is also passed liberally around the table at meal times, along with high-salt sauces and dressings. At these quantities, we're inviting needless health complications into our lives.

In our most recent research, 29% of respondents revealed in May 2021 that they have been eating more snacks and treats since the start of the pandemic, when compared to 51% in August 2020, which means their salt intake could be much higher than they think, without even realising it.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends that adults eat no more than 5g (one level teaspoon) of salt daily. And yet around 57.5% of respondents add one or more teaspoons of salt to their food each day, with a fifth adding more than double the salt recommendation when preparing food at home. This means that they probably eat much more salt than the recommended guideline, especially since salt is also one of the most popular seasonings added to most prepared and processed foods. Alarming, 8.5% reported to adding 3 or more teaspoons of salt to their food each day.

And while South Africa is slowly managing to control high blood sugar and diabetes – thanks to ongoing widespread consumer education programmes – we need to ask whether it is time to turn our attention to the equally debilitating effects of excessive salt on our health, which seem to have fallen by the wayside.

Regularly eating too much salt increases the likelihood of developing hypertension (high blood pressure), which increases the risk of heart attacks and heart failure, strokes, pulmonary hypertension and kidney disease.

Salt and its negative impact on our health does not receive the same kind of attention as sugar. Many respondents claimed to have implemented positive lifestyle changes between August 2020 and May 2021.

Almost half (45%) of respondents said that they prepared food at home more frequently, since the start of the pandemic in May 2021, compared to 66% in August 2020. While 43% said they ate takeaways and ready-to-eat-meals less since the start of the pandemic. Respondents also reported making healthier food choices in general and reading food nutrition labels, which is a step in the right direction.

Did you know?

Sea salt and pink Himalayan salt contain the same amount of sodium by weight as table salt, which means they don't offer any health benefits over table salt.

Understanding food nutrition labels

Sodium is found naturally in many foods, even those that don't taste salty.

Sodium and monosodium glutamate (MSG) on product ingredient lists also indicate salt content.

The daily recommended amount of salt is 5g, which is equivalent to 2g (2 000mg) of sodium.

If sodium is on the ingredients list, use this simple calculation to work out the proportion the product contains towards your daily allowance of salt (5g). Take the sodium value per serving, e.g. 130mg and multiply it by 2.5, then divide it by 1 000 = 0.325g.

Use the 'per 100g/ml' sodium measurements in the nutrition information table, to compare the sodium content of similar products when shopping.

The nutrition information table will also contain a 'per serving' measurement for sodium, which is based on the average portion size consumers are advised to eat in a single portion.

Choose low-salt or low-sodium foods.

Key findings

South Africans are largely unaware of how much salt is healthy to consume as well as the negative impacts of eating too much salt, with around 57.5% of respondents eating more salt than the daily recommended amount of 5g.



THE RIPPLE EFFECT OF WATER

Aside from water's immeasurable potential to lift people out of poverty, drive economic growth and provide a more sustainable approach to food security, it's equally good for our health and wellbeing, yet 41% don't drink enough.

Around 66% of the human body is made up of water. Regularly drinking sufficient amounts of water helps with the optimum functioning of the body, from flushing out toxins and helping digest food to carrying nutrients to our cells.

It is recommended that adults drink at least eight glasses of water per day, or more specifically one glass of water for every 10kg of their body weight, and yet 41% of South Africans don't do so.

While there are several health benefits associated with drinking enough water, our research shows that those who do also appear to lead much healthier and more balanced lifestyles when compared to the average consumer – they are 8% more likely to avoid eating sugar; 10% more likely to read food nutrition labels; and 9% more likely to buy locally-produced food and ingredients, instead of imported ones (which in terms of fresh produce might be fresher and hence more nutritious).

In the same vein, just as drinking sufficient water seems to have positive effects on South Africans' lifestyles, so 69% of respondents who don't exercise at all, also don't drink the recommended amount of water daily. Of the 41% of respondents who don't drink sufficient water, some claimed to have insufficient time to do so (28%), others don't like the taste of water (19%), and 9% of respondents claim not to have access to clean and safe drinking water, while a small percentage (2%) don't drink water at all.

Within a 24-hour window, almost half (49%) of the respondents claimed to have drunk one or two cups of coffee, almost a third (32%) drank one or two glasses of fizzy soft drinks, while 31% drank one to two glasses of juice, and one out of five (21%) drank flavoured water.

The caffeine and sugar found in many of these drinks can have a dehydrating effect, while the latter may be detrimental to one's health in large amounts. Though it is often believed to be a healthier alternative to soft drinks, juice typically contains large amounts of hidden sugars.

Simple things like adding fruit and herbs to water can improve its taste, while substituting water with herbal teas with no added sugar or milk can also help consumers meet their water intake goals.

The health implications of not drinking enough water include dehydration, fatigue, headaches, weakened immunity, constipation, and poor skin. These findings suggest that those who drink enough water also have healthier lifestyles overall, so drinking enough water is a stepping stone towards improved health and wellness.

Key findings South Africans who drink the recommended eight glasses of water daily are more likely to avoid sugar and read food nutrition labels.

Tips to make water tasty



There are several fruit and herbs that you can add to water to make it taste better. Try slices of cucumber, berries, thyme, lavender, mint, basil, lemon or lime.

Make or buy citrus wheels to add to your water to enhance its flavour: Cut oranges, lemons, or grapefruits into 1-2cm thick slices. Place them on baking paper on a baking tray and put them in the oven at 160°C. You will need to turn them every hour or so. Remove them from the oven when they feel dry and brittle.



Make your own plain sparkling water at home with a home carbonation system.



Add a small amount of low-calorie, low-sugar cordials to your water.



To make homemade iced tea, place a jug of black or herbal tea in the fridge overnight. In the morning, add some ice with some of the above-mentioned fruit and herbs for extra flavour. Avoid powdered pre-mixed teas, such as chai tea and tea lattes, that contain added sugar and other additives.

Put a large jug or water bottle on your work desk, you're more likely to drink water if it's right in front of you.



Water-o-metre

When to increase your water intake



Drink one glass of water for every 10kg of your body weight.



You can also drink herbal tea instead of water.



When exercising or doing an activity that makes you perspire, drink more water to replace lost fluids.



Pregnant and breast-feeding women often need to drink more water to remain hydrated.



Consume more water in hot or humid weather that makes you sweat or at very high altitudes.



Your doctor might recommend that you drink more water when you are ill, especially with vomiting, diarrhoea and fever.



If your urine is dark yellow or you feel thirsty, it's a sign to increase your water intake.

Of the **41%** of respondents who don't drink sufficient water, **28%** claim to have insufficient time to drink water.



The psychology of eating



By listening to our bodies, eating intuitively rather than emotionally and practising common sense, we can relearn how to find balance in what and how we eat, writes Kim Hofmann, a Registered Dietitian with an Honours in Psychology and Virgin Active's expert advisor on all things nutrition.

Our eating behaviours have been greatly impacted by diet culture and our busy lifestyles, and have further deteriorated during the global pandemic. The answer to balanced eating behaviours lies in listening to what our body wants through intuitive eating that focuses on 'stomach hunger' rather than 'head hunger' (or emotional eating). This kind of intuitive eating also allows us to eat all kinds of foods, even indulging in a moderate amount of snacks and treats from time to time, without feeling guilty. Intuitive eating is also about being easier on ourselves and our relationship with food, while using our learnings as points of reflection to see us along our lifelong journey to health, wellness and happiness. Here are a few useful techniques to help you to listen to your body as you get into the habit of eating intuitively.



1

Distinguish between 'stomach hunger' and 'head hunger'

Firstly, we need to relearn how to distinguish 'stomach hunger' from 'head hunger'. The latter is driven by our mouth and emotions which crave eating for the sake of pleasure, to self-soothe uncomfortable emotions or situations we may want to avoid, due to boredom or as a form of procrastination.

When you find yourself in any of these situations, ask yourself, "Which part of my body wants the food? Is it 'stomach hunger' driven by the need for energy because I am hungry, or is it 'head hunger' that is driven by the mind and my emotions?" Sometimes it may even be thirst.

Be gentle with yourself, many of us may overindulge when we try to self-soothe by eating. By learning to identify and process these difficult emotions, we can learn how to disengage from emotional eating. It may also be helpful to explore these emotions and their triggers through journalling or in therapy. Try to find other ways to feed these emotional cravings by doing something else or something you love, whether it's stepping away from your desk for a few minutes, doing a breathing exercise, calling a family member or friend, reading a book, taking a walk, or partaking in a hobby. Keep a list of the activities that you could do instead to distract yourself from eating.

2

Practise intuitive eating by listening to your body

We need to learn how to listen to what our bodies tell us, as our bodies are always right. Eating correctly and regularly, every 3-5 hours, encourages a rhythm that will teach you how to distinguish real hunger – it is an emptiness in the stomach that is driven by low blood sugar levels. Extreme hunger may also include a headache, shaking, dizziness and irritable mood. You should always eat when you feel 'stomach hunger' and wait for at least 10-15 minutes after finishing your meal before taking seconds. This will give the signal of fullness (satiety) time to reach your brain from your stomach, in which time you may no longer be hungry.



3

Take a balanced approach

Diets often rely on cutting out certain foods or food groups and require immense willpower, which is why they are very seldom effective. More often than not, diet culture and punitive eating plans make us feel deprived and are likely to only last a few days or weeks, ultimately leaving us feeling dejected and demotivated as the weight creeps back to where it was when we first started. Diets that are too low in calories will damage our physiology and may cause us to bounce between one diet and the next, as we try to find the silver bullet to achieving our specific goals.

The truth is that we need to embrace a more wholesome approach to eating, by allowing ourselves to eat every single kind of food, as long as it makes up part of a balanced, portion-appropriate meal that includes all the macronutrients (carbohydrates, proteins and fat) from various food groups. When snacks and treats are eaten mindfully and occasionally, they also serve a purpose by giving us pleasure and satiating ‘head hunger’.



4

Treat yourself occasionally

If you’re craving a treat, ask yourself, “Do I want it or do I need it?” and then decide if you’re going to eat it. We need to learn how to say both yes and no to snacks and treats an equal number of times. The key is to realise that we can’t use food to self-soothe all the time, as this can become addictive, and so we need to find other nurtures to take the place of food nurture.

When you indulge, do so once in a while and in moderation by practising portion control, and do so wholeheartedly. Take the time to savour it slowly by using all of your senses to experience what it looks like, how it smells and tastes, as well as what the texture feels like in your mouth. It’s best to do so on your own and without any distractions, so that you can focus all of your attention on the experience. By doing this, you may also feel satiated much sooner than you expected – if that’s the case, try to save the rest for later or another time. You will also find that the less sugar or salt you eat, the less sugar or salt you will crave, as your taste buds adjust with time.

And when you indulge, do not allow yourself to feel any guilt. We also need to learn how to untangle our thinking and vocabulary around the perceptions that certain foods are bad for us or naughty, and that we have cheated if we ate something delicious for the sake of taste rather than nutrition. Every kind of food can play a part in our life when we eat mindfully.



5

It’s a lifelong journey

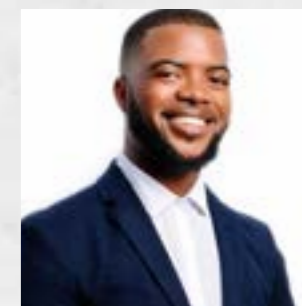
Changing habits is a challenging and time-consuming process because they are so ingrained in our lifestyles. It’s an ongoing commitment that we need to make daily. If you do happen to overindulge, see it as a learning experience for the future. It doesn’t negate all of the hard work you’ve done until that point – it doesn’t take you back to square one. Remember that the road towards health and wellness is not linear and that there is no such thing as perfection – this is merely a construct of popular culture. Instead, focus on the positive changes and progress you have made so far. Once you manage to get your eating pattern right by listening to your body, your physiology will also improve which will allow you the space to work on the emotional aspects of understanding why you eat to self-soothe. This is a lifelong journey to health, wellness and better self-care.

Trust your gut

How balanced nutrition supports optimal immune function



When Covid-19 hit, many started looking for a silver bullet – a superfood or supplement that could ‘boost’ immune system function and give us a better chance of fighting off infection. In reality, the answer lies in our gut microbiome and a sustained nutritious diet, writes Arthur Ramoroka, Tiger Brands’ Company Nutritionist.



The pandemic highlighted how our immunity and immune function becomes very topical at certain times of the year. As winter approaches, we tend to eat certain foods (such as garlic, ginger and lemon), drink tinctures and take multivitamin supplements in the hope that these will strengthen our immune system as the body’s first line of defence against infections from micro-organisms such as bacteria, germs and viruses.

In reality, there is no quick fix to boost the immune system in a short amount of time. Instead, we should nurture our immune system throughout the year, by looking to our gut microbiome. This is because around 70% of our immune system function is housed in our gut.

Our gut microbiome is made of microbioata which consist of trillions of bacteria, viruses and fungi that live in our gastrointestinal tract and regulate our health, immune function, metabolism, digestion, nutrient absorption, moods and emotions. An imbalance in our gut caused by too many ‘bad’ microbes may cause weight gain, and certain diseases, which is why a healthy microbiome is also important for improving our long-term health.

Getting sufficient sleep and exercise helps to maintain the gut’s normal functioning.

Following a balanced diet that prioritises high-fibre prebiotic foods from all food groups, particularly fruit and vegetables, creates a healthy environment for the gut bacteria to thrive. Fermented foods – such as sourdough bread, pickles, kombucha, kimchi, sauerkraut, as well as foods with live and active cultures (yoghurt, maas or amasi) – are also an important part of a healthy gut microbiome as they contain much needed probiotics. While probiotic and prebiotic supplements can help to balance our gut microbiome, a healthy diet and balanced lifestyle should take priority.

On the other hand, a poor diet and eating behaviours can often be detrimental to our gut ecosystem. For a healthy gut year-round, it’s best to minimise eating excessive amounts of: sugar, laxatives, antibiotics, highly processed foods – all of which can destroy the diverse strains of microbioata in our gut microbiome that are needed for optimum functioning of our body and mind.

“Our gut microbiome is made up microbioata which consist of trillions of bacteria, viruses and fungi that live in our gastrointestinal tract and regulate our health, immune function, metabolism, digestion, nutrient absorption, moods and emotions.”



A healthy gut can positively impact your mental health



Research shows that what we eat greatly affects how our brain functions, as well as our mental wellbeing. The gut microbiome plays an integral role in maintaining the overall health and wellness of children and adults, writes Kim Hofmann, a Registered Dietitian with an Honours in Psychology and Virgin Active's expert advisor on all things nutrition.

An imbalanced and unhealthy diet may cause dysbiosis of the gut microbiome, meaning that there are a greater number of harmful rather than useful bacteria, which may result in inflammation of the gut. This inflammation may cause stomach pain, bloating and indigestion, as well as diarrhoea or constipation. At the same time, the physical effects of gut inflammation may also negatively impact mood, as you may become more irritable when you feel physically uncomfortable.

New research suggests that prolonged unhealthy eating behaviours may also contribute to the exacerbation of mental issues, such as anxiety, depression and other brain disorders such as Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease and autism spectrum disorder. A diverse gut microbiome is often one way to help improve mental issues.

The trillions of microbiota (bacteria, viruses and fungi) in our gut play a pivotal role in regulating the body and ensuring it functions at its optimum. The gut influences everything from metabolic and endocrine function to the immune system, as well as brain behaviour and function.

Our gut bacteria are dependent on what we eat. The more diverse our diets, the more diverse our gut microbiota. By regularly eating a gut-friendly diet that includes a large variety of fibre-rich foods; such as legumes, fruit and vegetables with their skins, wholegrains, as well as naturally fermented and pickled foods, we can improve the functioning of our gut microbiome. This is something we should teach our children from a young age.

Fibre and resistant starch cannot be digested or absorbed into the body. However, they serve as a food source for our gut's bacteria, which allows the microbiota to produce short chain fatty acids that act as messengers between the gut and the brain along the gut-brain connection. The more short chain fatty acids we have, the better our gut-brain communication and the better our brain can function, which can help to regulate cognition and emotion. With dysbiosis, the gut bacteria cannot produce enough short chain fatty acids.

Acetate, propionate and butyrate are the main short chain fatty acids. Butyrate (butyric acid), which is the most abundant of the short chain fatty acids, supports brain function and rejuvenation, and helps to [protect the brain](#) against various neurological disorders. Short chain fatty acids also help in the [synthesis of serotonin](#), as well as some other hormones, which may improve mood, as well as symptoms of anxiety and depression.

These short chain fatty acids also enter the bloodstream to control inflammation and the production of proteins that promote brain growth and development, which is particularly essential as children grow.

The indigestible fibre and starch in our gut also enables the microbiota to create a thick protective lining within the intestines to prevent food particles, bacteria, and waste from entering the bloodstream and causing a so-called leaky gut, which includes symptoms such as bloating, gas, cramps and sensitivities to certain foods.

While highly-processed sugary foods contain energy and are a delicious treat that we can enjoy from time to time, they may lack fibre, vitamins and minerals. Eating large quantities of these kinds of foods often displace the nutritious food we should be eating instead. And without the proper fuel to promote their growth, some of our gut microbiota may die.

When we embrace a healthier, more [fibre-rich diet](#) that also includes fermented foods and drinks – such as kimchi, sauerkraut, yoghurt with live cultures, kombucha, kefir, maas or amasi – this promotes the growth of the much-needed health-promoting bacteria in our gut. An increase in fibre in our diets, significantly changes the gut microbiome, which means that health benefits may be seen within weeks of changing the diet. Probiotic and prebiotic supplements may help to regulate our gut microbiome in the short term, but a healthy gut is determined by our diet in the long term.

Who knew that so much of our brain function, physical and mental wellbeing can be found on our plates?

¹ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0197018616301747>

² https://www.nature.com/articles/s41575-019-0157-3?fbclid=IwAR1mELhoAdvVBqAldgcXmURJvRnL6vbu7HuJodd5QFZ0V5qbbqmc4Z_E

The domino effect of healthy living



Key to leading a healthy, balanced lifestyle is finding your purpose – the ‘what’ and ‘why’ – for doing so, committing to it in the long term and not giving into short-term gratifications too often, writes Sarvesh Seetaram, Corporate and Group Marketing Strategy Director at Tiger Brands.

Deep-seated personal motivations are often the drivers for staying healthy, whether it's seeing our children graduate, becoming grandparents, travelling or enjoying a peaceful retirement with our loved ones. We are motivated by the desire to live long enough to do all the things we set out to do – and to do so in good physical condition.

It's never too late to kickstart our journey to longevity. The secret lies in starting with small, gradual steps. Making regular decisions, no matter how incremental, is where it all begins. And the key is to be intuitive, to listen to your body and how it feels, to know what works best for you, while being guided by best practice. There is no ‘right’ way, as different approaches work for different individuals. As everyone is on their own wellness journey, we should never assume someone else's yardstick as our own. Rather focus on understanding your strengths, what challenges you most, as well as when and how you see positive results.

If you struggle to find the time, embrace the Japanese philosophy of Kaizen, also known as the one-minute principle for self-improvement. Do this by practising something for one minute, every day at the same time to forge a lifelong habit. It's proof that you don't have to undertake Herculean efforts that are often exhausting or overwhelming to see results. Start with something as simple as walking or doing any exercise for a minute, drinking an extra glass of water daily, doing a breathing exercise before bed or making food choices and practising portion control by reading food labels. With time, it'll become easier and you'll be motivated to keep it up, while incorporating other healthy behaviours into your day-to-day routine. Soon enough, the domino effect will become apparent to you.

The next domino that needs to be tipped is the way in which we influence the people around us – whether it's our extended family, friends or colleagues. Make wellness a habit that is ingrained in your family life, whether it's cooking as a family, making healthier homemade snacks, walking the dogs, having a dance off in the lounge, or turning house chores into a rewarding team challenge. Instil this one-minute technique in your children and have the courage to help them find balance by making the right choices fun and engaging. You may be met with some resistance at first, but it'll benefit them in the long term, and they'll thank you for it as adults. This domino is also the ideal opportunity to spend quality time with your family.

Focus on slowing down at meal times. Place your cutlery down when you're eating, take the time to taste the food, savour its flavour and all the ingredients and spices that were used to make it. Enjoy dinner table conversations – eating should not be a race to the finish line.

In terms of nutrition and lifestyle behaviour changes since the start of the pandemic when compared to May 2021, our research shows that the domino effect of health and wellness often becomes cumulative, with a few findings appearing to correlate. Overall, we found that respondents who tried to introduce some kind of healthy habit or routine into their daily lives, were more likely to also partake in other behaviours that also promote wellness. The opposite was equally true. As an example, those who drink the recommended eight glasses of water daily were more likely to avoid sugar, more aware of food nutrition labels, and less likely not to exercise, when compared to the average respondent.

Despite appearing to be somewhat insignificant at first, positive lifestyle changes may have a lasting knock-on effect. People begin to see positive results and start feeling better and healthier. They become aware of the cumulative value that lies in prioritising that which is most important – their overall health and wellbeing.

My ‘why’ for being healthy is to enjoy a long and active life that includes seeing my children grow into well-developed adults, enjoying retirement with my wife, and having the physical and mental capability to enjoy it fully. This is enough motivation to help me make better choices every day, no matter how small.

My question for you is, what is your ‘why’?



7-Colour

Serves: 6
Preparation Time: 25 minutes
Cooking Time: 1½ - 2 hours
Lunch, Entertaining
2 530 KJ/per single portion

Ingredients

Beef Stew

2 tsps. Golden Cloud Cake Wheat Flour
500g stewing beef, cubed
1 Tbsp vegetable oil
1 onion, diced
2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
2 sticks celery, sliced
2 carrots, wash thoroughly and chopped
1 tsp dried thyme
1 tin (410g) All Gold Diced Peeled Tomatoes
2 cups of water
Salt and pepper, to season
1 cup Tastic Long Grain Brown Rice, uncooked

Beans salad

200g fresh green beans, blanched and sliced
1 tin (410g) Koo Four-Bean Mix in Brine, drained and rinsed
½ red onion, sliced
2 Tbsps. fresh parsley, finely chopped
4 Tbsps. vegetable oil
2 tsps. Brookes Tru-Lem Lemon Juice
1 tsp Colman's Wholegrain Mustard
1 Tbsp white vinegar
Salt and pepper, to season

Sautéed Spinach

400g spinach, roughly chopped
1 Tbsp vegetable oil
1 onion, finely diced
1 clove of garlic, minced
Salt and pepper, to season
Homemade tomato salsa
2 tomatoes, chopped
1 onion, finely diced
3 sticks of celery, sliced
2 carrots, thoroughly washed and grated

To serve

1 bottle (405g) Koo Sliced Beetroot

Method

Beef Stew

- Mix flour and a little bit of salt and pepper together in a bowl.
- Add beef stewing meat and toss to coat the meat well.
- Heat vegetable oil in a pot and dust off any excess flour before placing the beef in the pot to brown it on all sides. Once browned, remove meat from the pot and set aside.
- Add onion and cook until softened and golden, add garlic and mix for a further minute, mixing it so it does not burn.
- Add celery and carrots and stir, cook for another 3-4 minutes until vegetables have softened.
- Add the meat back to the pot.
- Add the thyme, All Gold Diced Peeled Tomatoes and water and stir to combine.
- Check seasoning first and add a little more salt and pepper, if required.
- Cover with a lid and allow to simmer for 1-1 1/2 hours or until meat is tender.
- Cook rice according to package instructions.

Beans salad

- Bring a pot of lightly salted water to a boil, add green beans for 1-2 minutes to blanch.
- Remove beans and drain, slice in half and set aside.
- Drain and rinse the Koo Four-Bean Mix and set aside.

- Add Koo Four-Bean Mix, green beans, onion, and parsley to a bowl and toss to combine.
- Add garlic, vegetable oil, Brookes Tru-Lem Lemon Juice and Colman's Wholegrain Mustard to a small bowl and mix to make a dressing.
- Toss the salad in the dressing and refrigerate until ready to eat.

Sautéed Spinach

- Heat vegetable oil in a pan and add the onion.
- Cook onions until they have softened, then add the garlic and mix for another minute, ensuring the garlic does not burn.
- Add the spinach, salt and pepper and sauté until the spinach is wilted, stirring occasionally.
- Remove from heat and cover to keep warm.

Homemade tomato salsa

- Combine all ingredients in a bowl and toss.
- Cover and refrigerate until ready to eat.

To serve

- Spoon beef stew onto a plate, alongside the brown rice and add a serving of bean salad, sliced beetroot, sautéed spinach and tomato salsa.

Chicken Chilli Lettuce Wraps

Serves: 4
Preparation Time: 25 minutes
Cooking Time: None
Lunch, Budget Friendly, Quick Fix
850 KJ/per single portion

Ingredients

Chicken

2 cups of shredded chicken, from a rotisserie chicken or leftover chicken
4 Tbsps. unsalted peanuts, roughly chopped
2 Tbsps. fresh mint, chopped
1 Tbsp Brookes Tru-Lem Lemon Juice

Vegetables

2 carrots, thoroughly washed and sliced into thin strips
4 spring onions, sliced
8 large lettuce leaves
1 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped

1 Tbsp white vinegar
Pinch of salt
Pinch of sugar
Peanut sauce
A thumbnail piece of fresh ginger, peeled and finely minced
2 Tbsps. Black Cat Peanut Butter Regular, Smooth
2 Tbsps. Brookes Tru-Lem Lemon Juice
Pinch of chilli powder
Pinch of salt
1 tsp honey
1/3 cup of water (to thin)



Method

Chicken

- Place shredded chicken, peanuts, mint and lemon juice into a bowl and toss to combine, set aside.

Vegetables

- Add carrots, spring onion, chilli, vinegar, salt and sugar to a bowl and toss, set aside to marinate.

Peanut sauce

- Add peanut butter, lemon juice, chilli powder, salt, honey and water to a pot and let it simmer for 4-5 minutes.
- Mix well to combine, remove from heat and transfer to a small bowl.

To assemble

- Place the chicken mixture and vegetable mixture into the lettuce leaves and drizzle with the peanut sauce.
- Serve with more peanut sauce for dipping, if required.

Malay-Style Fish Curry



Serves: 4 | Preparation Time: 15 minutes | Cooking Time: 35 minutes | Dinner
2 324 KJ/per single portion

Ingredients

500g skinless hake fish fillets, cut into 5cm pieces
2 Tbsps. vegetable oil
2 potatoes, cut into 2cm cubes (keep skin on)
1 tin (420g) Koo Mixed Vegetables in Curry Sauce
1 cup of Tastic Nature's Brown Rice
1 onion, finely diced
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
1 tin (410g) All Gold Tomato & Onion Mix
1 sachet (50g) Koo Tomato Paste Curry Flavour
1 tsp ginger powder
1 tsp ground cumin powder/seeds
1 tsp ground coriander
½ tsp turmeric powder
½ tsp cinnamon powder
2 cardamom pods, crushed
2 whole cloves
½ tsp chilli flakes
1 cup of water
Salt and black pepper, to season
Coriander yoghurt, to serve
¼ cup fresh coriander, chopped
1 cup low-fat plain yoghurt

Method

- Heat vegetable oil in a large pot, then add onions and fry until softened, add garlic and fry, stirring continuously so that garlic does not burn.
- Add the All Gold Tomato & Onion Mix, Koo Tomato Paste Curry Flavour, ginger powder, ground cumin, ground coriander, turmeric powder, cinnamon powder, cardamom pods, cloves and chilli flakes and stir to combine.
- Cook for 2-3 minutes until fragrant, stirring so that spices don't stick to the bottom.
- Add the water and potatoes and season with salt and pepper, stir.
- Cover with a lid and turn down the heat, allow to simmer for 25 minutes or until potatoes have softened. Add more water, if needed, to ensure the mixture doesn't cook dry.
- While the curry is cooking, cook the rice according to package instructions.
- Once the potatoes are soft, add the fish pieces and Koo Mixed Vegetables in Curry Sauce, stir, gently coating the fish.
- Cover with a lid and simmer for another 8-10 minutes over medium heat. Do not bring it to a boil.
- While the fish is cooking, mix the chopped coriander and yoghurt together in a small bowl and season lightly with salt and pepper.
- Check on your fish, it should be soft and flaky to the touch and opaque in colour.
- Remove pot from heat and serve fish curry with the rice and a dollop of homemade coriander yoghurt.

Eating local foods is better for your health, the environment and the economy

Here are a number of reasons why local is lekker, especially now, writes Mary-Jane Morifi, Chief Corporate Affairs and Sustainability Officer at Tiger Brands.



It's a story we've heard before or encountered daily. Millions of South Africans, particularly children, go to bed hungry each night, despite South Africa having a food surplus. Food insecurity burdens our society with numerous socioeconomic ills, while threatening future economic development. This has been more evident since the start of the global pandemic and strict lockdowns, which have choked our economy.

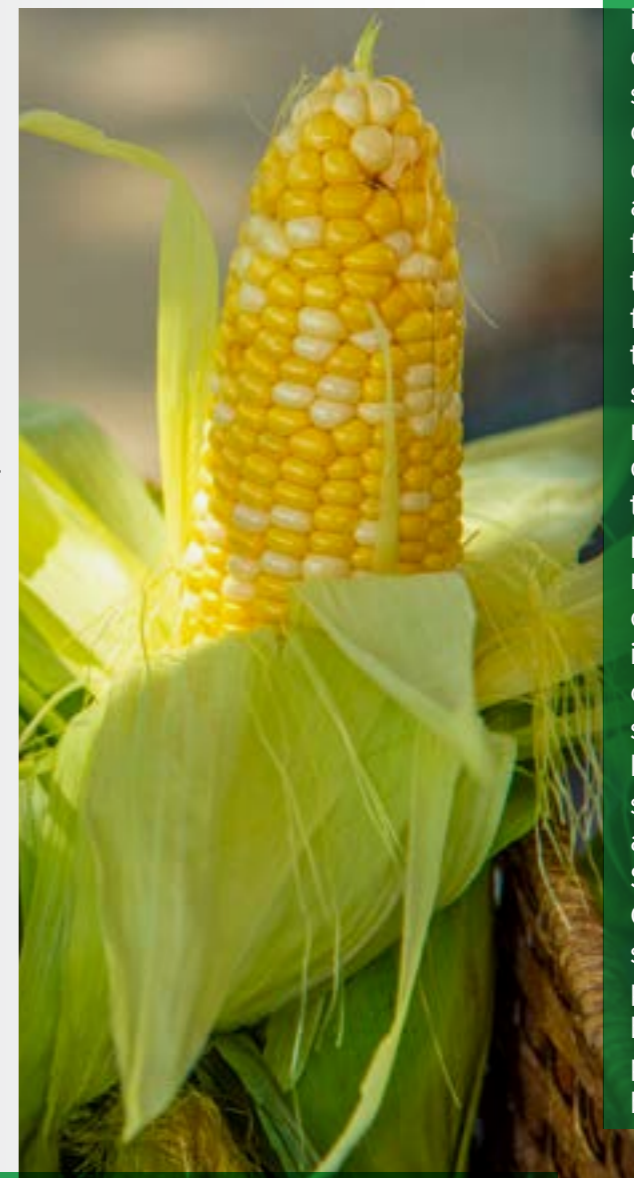
Balancing this equation will drive future economic development, as balanced diets ensure a healthy body and mind, optimum immune function and fight the onset of chronic diseases, leading to improved academic results, decreased absenteeism and school dropouts, while increasing future employment opportunities.

While sourcing food from around the world encourages a diverse plate, choosing local produce and products more frequently, not only supports Brand South Africa, but also contributes towards our national prosperity. Eating locally-produced foods is also less carbon-intensive and more environmentally friendly, as the world races towards cutting Carbon Dioxide emissions to net zero by 2050. And one of the ways consumers can do so is to choose local products where they can and when it makes sense.

Another aspect to consider, in terms of nutrition, is that local fresh produce has a shorter farm-to-fork lifecycle than imported produce, meaning there is less time for respiration (the loss of moisture and nutrients once a plant has been picked) to occur.

Establishing a secondary 'ugly produce' market for produce that is misshapen or has small cosmetic defects needs to be seriously considered to help reduce food waste, while meeting food security priorities.

Globally, there's a transition towards sourcing local foods to help support businesses across the food and beverage value chain and reignite local economies, so that more lives can be nourished every day.



Driving diversity and inclusivity through Enterprise and Supplier Development (ESD)

As South Africa's largest food manufacturer, Tiger Brands is leading the transformation of the country's agricultural sector. Inclusive growth is the cornerstone of the company's developmental mandate, with a focus on including black-, female-owned SMMEs across the company's entire value chain from farmers and aggregators to product suppliers and service providers. Encouraging more females and previously disadvantaged individuals to enter the sector has the potential to offer much-needed mentorship, skills development, capital funding and most importantly market access coupled with commercialisation strategies. All of which will have long-lasting impacts on food security, our local economy, and to achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. This ongoing business support enables start-ups to play alongside more entrenched businesses, so as to level the playing field by eliminating barriers to entry.

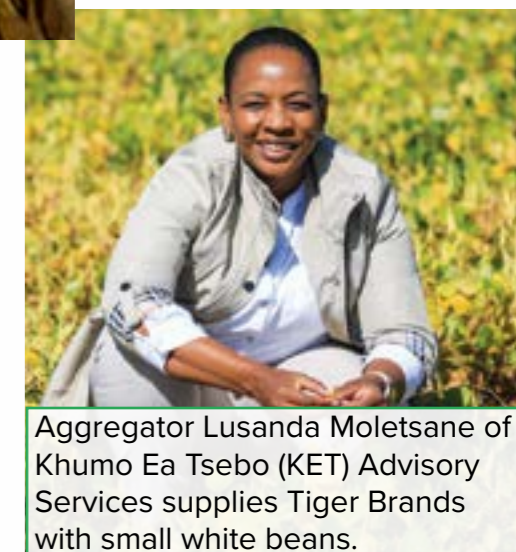
Our South African spirit of generosity has shone through during this challenging time. Many have had to rely on the kindness of others through food parcels, donations and the support of NGOs, school nutrition programmes and government grants. Others have resorted to shopping at thrift and salvage stores for short-dated or damaged goods just to make ends meet. The dire situation was only further exacerbated by July's riots. Among the opportunists, it's clear that countless South Africans are desperate to put food on the table and will take great risks to do so.

We need to champion a holistic approach going forward, with ongoing partnerships between the public and private sectors, if we are to secure daily access to nutritious food for all South Africans. One of the ways Tiger Brands is doing this is by partnering with food banks Food Forward SA and SA Harvest, alongside our in-house Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, such as the Plates4Days nutrition programme.



Tiger Brands' venture capital fund future-proofs the food and beverage value chain

Tiger Brands established a multi-million rand venture capital fund in June 2021 to help food and beverage start-ups and SMEs grow. It aims to create more employment and upskilling opportunities in the agriculture and food manufacturing sector in the aftermath of the global pandemic. The fund will focus on further developing consumer trends in health, plant-based diets, convenience and snacking. It will also fast-track the implementation of technology opportunities across Tiger Brands' value chain to help future-proof it and make it more sustainable.



Aggregator Lusanda Moletsane of Khumo Ea Tsebo (KET) Advisory Services supplies Tiger Brands with small white beans.

4 reasons why the future of food will be plant-based

Adopting a more plant-based diet can unlock many benefits. It can promote food security and create a more resilient food system, while decreasing health risks, writes Arthur Ramoroka, Tiger Brands' Company Nutritionist.



If we are to feed 10 billion people within the next three decades – and a growing South African population that will soon exceed 60 million – we need to do so within the planet's boundaries. One easy way to do this is to eat fewer carbon-heavy foods, such as meat and dairy products – whether it's cutting down on our overall consumption of animal products or going meat-free for a day or two each week. By eating more fruit, vegetables, legumes, grains and nuts, we can boost our overall health and wellbeing, while focussing on sustainable food systems and food security.

“ A balanced healthy diet consists of half a plate of fruit and vegetables, while the other half consists of whole grains, legumes (such as: beans, lentils, pulses and nuts, as well as unsaturated plant oils, and modest amounts of meat, dairy, added sugars and starchy vegetables. ”

Plants are better for your health

Countless studies in recent years have shown that the overconsumption of red meat, highly processed foods, saturated fats and sugar leads to higher incidents of poor health and increased greenhouse gas emissions.

Not only are fruit and vegetables low in cholesterol, but high-fibre plants are also good for our gut microbiome, which regulates our metabolism and digestion, immune system, moods and emotions as well as various other body functions. Plants, seeds, nuts and unsaturated plant oils (made from avocados, olives, peanuts, sunflowers and canola) are a healthy source of good fats, which are essential for the body's optimum functioning.

Eating fewer animal products overall or avoiding animal products for a day or two each week, is not only better for overall health, but also has positive benefits for heart health, while lowering the risk of cancer, hypertension and diabetes.

Sustainability first

Our global eating behaviours will help to determine whether we are able to meet the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement to tackle climate change. Especially as it stands at the moment, feeding the current global population (7.7 billion) accounts for around a quarter (24%) of annual greenhouse gas emissions, according to [The EAT-Lancet Commission on Food, Planet, Health report](#). If the world were to adopt the current food eating patterns of the G20 countries, it would require seven Earths to support by 2050. On this basis, food-related per-capita emissions would need to be halved by that time.

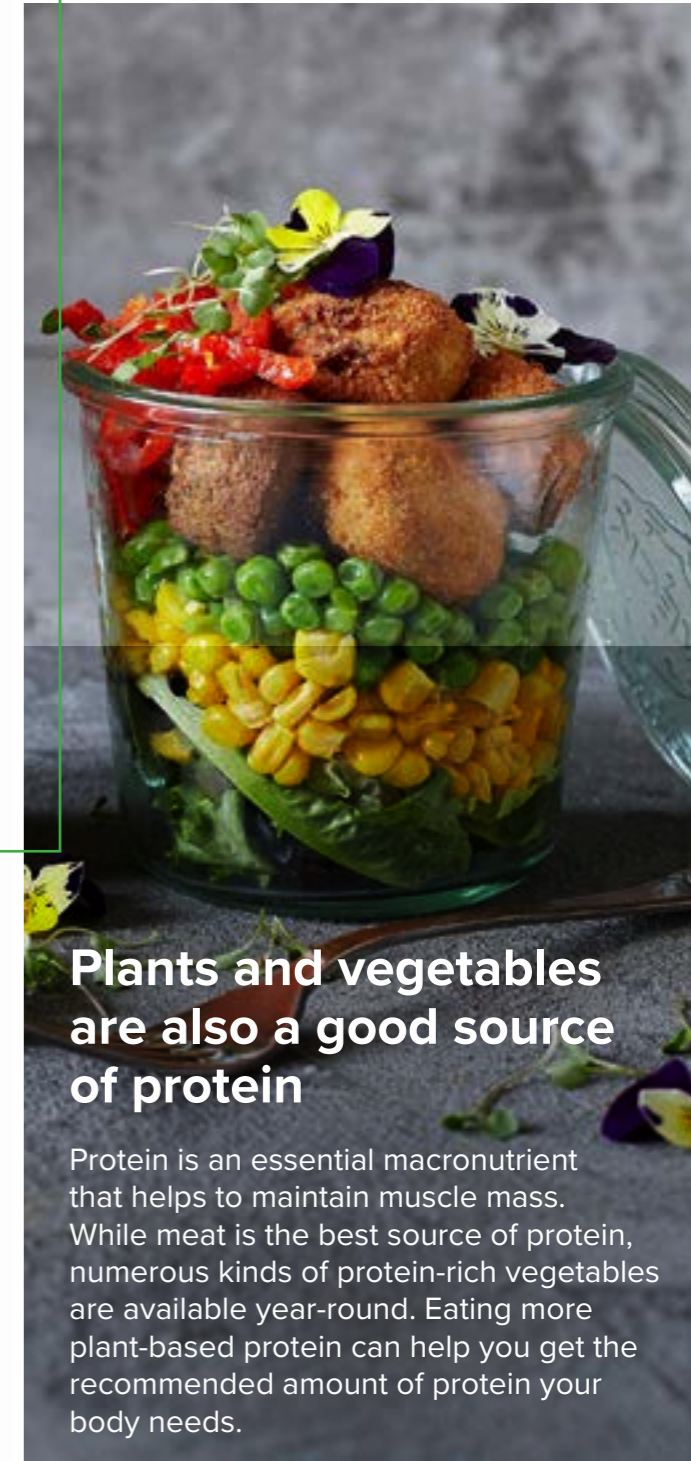
Adopting a more plant-based diet can help ensure that we can feed 10 billion people healthy diets within planetary boundaries, and enable a more equitable global distribution of food-related greenhouse gas emissions.

Plants and vegetables are also a good source of protein

Protein is an essential macronutrient that helps to maintain muscle mass. While meat is the best source of protein, numerous kinds of protein-rich vegetables are available year-round. Eating more plant-based protein can help you get the recommended amount of protein your body needs.

A plant-based diet is more affordable

In light of food insecurity, food affordability should be prioritised alongside health and environmental sustainability. A plant-rich diet is more affordable than a diet that prioritises animal products. Where possible, growing herb and vegetable gardens can help to supplement vegetables that are bought.



Plant-based protein and fibre sources



Foodprint: CO₂ calculator

A carbon calculator calculates how many greenhouse gases your food or meal uses to help you make more sustainable and planet-friendly food choices.

CO₂e¹ (carbon dioxide equivalent score) represents the amount of greenhouse gases used to produce food from when it is planted to when it ends up on your plate. It also calculates the carbon dioxide that is used to process, transport and prepare the food.

Calculate your food carbon footprint here

Foods according to their average carbon dioxide equivalent score (CO₂e¹) and energy (KJ).

Meat-heavy meals



Breakfast:
Eggs, bacon and toast
844 CO₂e¹ / 1 629 KJ

Lunch:
Cheese burger
2 826 CO₂e¹ / 2 353 KJ



Dinner:
Beef curry
2 584 CO₂e¹ / 1 986 KJ

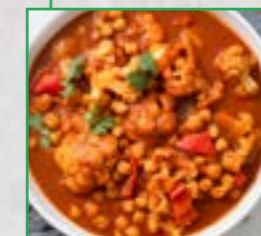
Total: 6 254 CO₂e¹ / 5 968 KJ

Plant-based meals



Breakfast:
Oats with seasonal fruit
228 CO₂e¹ / 1 017 KJ

Lunch:
Black bean taco
453 CO₂e¹ / 836 KJ



Dinner:
Vegetable curry
260 CO₂e¹ / 1 052 KJ

Total: 941 CO₂e¹ / 2 905 KJ

Not only are meat-based foods and meals more carbon-intensive, but they are also generally more energy-dense. Sustainability is all about finding a balance somewhere between the two, while maintaining optimum health and wellbeing.

Veggie and Falafel Wholewheat Pitas

Serves: 4
 Preparation Time: 10 minutes and 1 hour refrigerated
 Cooking Time: 25-30 minutes
 Vegan, Vegetarian, Budget-Friendly, Dinner
 1381 KJ/per single serving



Ingredients

Falafel

1 tin (410g) Koo Chickpeas in Brine, drained and rinsed
 ½ onion, cut into pieces
 1 cup fresh coriander, roughly chopped
 1 cup fresh parsley, roughly chopped
 1 fresh jalapeno
 2 garlic cloves
 1 tsp cumin powder/seeds
 2 Tbsps. Golden Cloud Brown Wheat Flour
 ½ tsp baking powder
 Spray n' Cook, for baking
 1 tsp salt

½ tsp black pepper

Hummus

1 tin (410g) Koo Chickpeas in brine, drained and rinsed (keep the brine)
 ½ cup tahini
 2 cloves of garlic
 2 Tbsps. Brookes Tru-Lem Lemon Juice
 ½ tsp salt
 ½ tsp paprika

Salsa

2 tomatoes, diced
 1 onion, finely diced

2 carrots, wash thoroughly and finely diced
 2 Tbsps. fresh coriander, chopped
 1 stick of celery, finely sliced
 1 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
 Salt and pepper, to season

4 Wholewheat Pitas, warmed and sliced open (you can substitute with tortillas or homemade flatbreads).

Method

1. Drain and rinse chickpeas and shake until excess water is removed.
2. Add chickpeas, onion, coriander, parsley, jalapeno, garlic, cumin, salt and pepper into a blender.
3. Pulse-blend until you have a coarse mixture.
4. Transfer the mixture to a mixing bowl and add the flour and baking powder, mix well to combine.
5. Cover your mixture and place in the fridge for 30 minutes to 1 hour to allow the mixture to set and rest.
6. While the mixture is in the fridge, make the hummus.
7. Place all the hummus ingredients into a blender and blend until smooth.
8. Taste for seasoning and add a pinch of salt, if required. If you feel your hummus is too thick, you can add one teaspoon of water or the chickpea brine at a time, while blending to thin it out.
9. Transfer to a small bowl and set aside.

Salsa

1. Place all the salsa ingredients into a bowl, season lightly with salt and pepper, mix well and set aside.

Make Falafel

1. Remove the falafel mixture from the fridge, and using your hands or a tablespoon, scoop even amounts of the mixture and form into balls or patties. If you feel your mixture is too wet – add another tablespoon of flour and mix through. If it feels too dry, add another tablespoon of water and mix through.
2. Once all the mixture has been formed into falafel balls or patties, bake or air fry them.

To bake

1. Preheat the oven to 220°C and line a baking tray with baking paper.
2. Place falafel on the baking sheet and spray each one with a light coating of Spray n' Cook.
3. Bake for 25-30 minutes, turning midway.
4. Remove once golden and crispy.

To air fry

1. Spray the air fryer base and also the falafel balls with a little Spray n' Cook, and then cook them at 190°C for 15 minutes, flipping over midway through cooking.

To assemble pitas

1. Heat through and slice open your pitas to form a pocket.
2. Fill the pita pocket with some hummus, falafel and salsa. If using tortillas or flatbread, spread the hummus out onto each one first, top with falafel and salsa.
3. Serve.

Cheesy Herb

Pap Balls

Makes: 12-16
 Preparation Time: 15 minutes
 Cooking Time: 25-30 minutes
 Entertaining, Snack, Budget-friendly, Kid-Friendly
 601 KJ/per single serving



Ingredients

Pap

1 cup of Ace Plus Fibre Maize Meal
 ½ tsp chilli flakes
 ½ tsp dried thyme
 4 Tbsps. breadcrumbs or breading mix
 2 eggs, beaten

Filling

1 cup cheddar cheese, finely grated
 1 Tbsp fresh parsley, chopped
 1 Tbsp fresh chives, chopped
 1 tsp fresh thyme, picked
 Salt and pepper, to season

Dipping sauce

¼ cup Mrs H.S. Ball's Original Chutney Lite
 ½ cup Crosse & Blackwell Mayonnaise Lite
 1 tsp Brookes Tru-Lem Lemon Juice
 Pinch of salt
 Pinch of pepper

Method

1. Cook maize meal according to packet instructions to achieve a softish pap, adding the chilli flakes and thyme halfway through cooking.
2. Once cooked, remove from heat and allow to cool.
3. In a bowl, mix together the cheddar cheese, parsley, chives, thyme and season lightly with salt and pepper, set aside.
4. Make the dipping sauce by mixing all ingredients together in a bowl, mix well and set aside.
5. Once pap is cool, scoop out about a tablespoon of pap and flatten it in your hands, spoon in a little of the cheese and herb mixture and wrap the pap around this, to form a ball, set aside.
6. Roll the pap balls into beaten eggs and then into the breadcrumbs or breading mix.
7. Repeat until all your mixture is finished.
8. Bake or air fry.
9. Serve pap balls while warm with the dipping sauce.

To bake

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C and line a baking tray with baking paper.
2. Place pap balls on the baking sheet and spray each one with a light coating of Spray n' Cook.
3. Bake for 20-25 minutes, turning midway.
4. Remove once golden and crispy.

To air fry

1. Spray the air fryer base and also the pap balls with a little Spray n' Cook, and then cook them at 190°C for 10-15 minutes, flipping over midway through cooking.
2. Remove once golden and crispy.

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