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Opening Extract from...

Honestly Healthy Cleanse

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Gooey vegan brownies

Brownies on a cleanse? You're kidding! No, I'm not. These are one exceptional treat – perhaps the healthiest brownie recipe I have ever created and, I have to say, utterly delicious. You might be surprised to see tahini in the ingredients list, but this highprotein paste gives a wonderfully nutty taste. Give it a try.

makes 4

100g dates
2 tbsp chia seeds
6 tbsp water
45g coconut oil, melted
85g tahini
50ml rice milk
80g agave syrup
1 tsp vanilla extract
a generous pinch of Himalayan pink salt
½ tsp baking powder
30g coconut flour
50g cacao powder

Put the dates in a bowl, cover with hot water and leave to soak for 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 17o°C/gas mark 3, and line a shallow baking tin with baking parchment.

Put the chia seeds and measured water in a small bowl and leave to soak until gloopy.

Drain the dates, discarding the soaking water, and pop into a blender along with the melted coconut oil, tahini, rice milk, agave syrup and vanilla extract and blend until fairly smooth (a few small lumps of date are fine, as they add to the brownies' texture).

Put the salt, baking powder, coconut flour and cacao powder in a bowl.

Pour the mixture from the blender into the bowl of dry ingredients, mix and then add the soaked chia seeds. You'll end up with a really thick batter.

Pour the mixture into the prepared tin (it should sit about 2.5cm deep all around) and bake in a preheated oven for 25–30 minutes.

Remove from the oven, take out of the tin and leave to cool on a wire rack. Enjoy the wonderfully gooey interior of this chocolate delight.

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Butternut squash and spinach tagine

This is a dish I love to serve at a dinner party; what's more, it's simple to make and you can do all the prep and cooking the night before, leaving you more time with your guests. Butternut squash is an alkaline food, and the cinnamon included here gives it an antiviral boost, something we all benefit from during the winter months.

serves 6

1 tbsp sunflower oil
1 large red onion, finely chopped
4 cardamom pods
¼ tsp ground nutmeg
½ tsp ground cumin
1 tsp ground coriander
½ tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp chopped red chilli
1 tsp chopped root ginger
1 raw honey or agave syrup
700g butternut squash, cut into 2cm cubes
1 tsp bouillon powder
400ml boiling water
150g unsulphured dried apricots, chopped
finely grated zest of ½ lemon
140g almonds (optional)
200g spinach
4 tbsp roughly chopped coriander leaves

for the millet cous cous (optional)
200g millet
1 onion, sliced
1 tsp sunflower oil
1 garlic clove, chopped
1 tsp ground cumin
2 tbsp mint leaves
2 tbsp parsley
2 tbsp coriander
Juice of ½ a lemon

Heat the oil in a frying pan and sauté the onion for 2 minutes until starting to soften. Add all the spices, chilli, ginger and raw honey/agave, stir well and continue to cook for a further 5 minutes.

Add the butternut squash and continue to sauté for a further 5 minutes, adding a tablespoon of water if the pan gets too hot.

Add the bouillon powder to the boiling water to make a vegetable stock and stir until the powder has dissolved. Set aside.

Preheat the oven to 170°C/gas mark 3.

Add the apricots, lemon zest and the bouillon to the squash mix and simmer on a medium heat until the squash is soft but not quite mashable.

If using the almonds toast them on a baking sheet in the oven for around 5 minutes until they start to release a delicious smell. Remove them from the oven, chop them finely and set aside.

If serving the millet couscous with the tagine, cook the millet as per packet instructions. While the millet is cooking, caramelise the onions in a pan with the sunflower oil. Once they begin to develop a good colour, add the cumin and garlic and continue to sauté for a further 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and set aside.

Roughly chop the herbs. Add the onions to the cooked millet and stir through with the chopped herbs and salt. If the mixture is looking thick and stodgy, stir through some water to loosen it. Finally, stir through the lemon juice, check the seasoning and set aside until the tagine is ready.

The sauce will have reduced a little during cooking. Five minutes before serving, stir through the spinach until it has all wilted. Finally, stir through the chopped coriander and sprinkle over the almonds (if using) before serving.