How to
GROW
your
family

How to GROW *your* family

From pregnancy to new parents – one meal at a time

Adam Shaw



NOURISH
EAT WELL, LIVE WELL

This book is dedicated first of all to my amazing wife Anni. You not only inspired me to start At Dad's Table but gave me all the encouragement to try and make something of it. I love you and thank you. And thank you for keeping the boys occupied while I was cooking and writing! To my wonderful two boys, Basti and Benji. I'm hoping this will help explain a bit more what Daddy's job is now! ("Why does Daddy keep taking a picture of my dinner by the window?") Thank you for being my tasters-in-chiefs and for being brutally, brutally honest when you didn't like a dish.

This book is also dedicated to everyone who follows me on At Dad's Table, whether you've been there from the start or just come on board. Thank you for your kind messages, your time but, most importantly, thank you for your support as without you this book would never have come about! I really hope you enjoy the recipes. Love, Adam

How to Grow Your Family
Adam Shaw

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Notes on the recipes
Unless otherwise stated:
Use medium fruit and vegetables
Use medium (US large) organic or free-range eggs
Use fresh herbs, spices and chillies
Use granulated sugar (Americans can use ordinary granulated sugar when caster sugar is specified)
Do not mix metric, imperial and US cup measurements:
1 tsp = 5ml 1 tbsp = 15ml 1 cup = 240ml

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AT DAD'S TABLE

Introduction

Welcome to How to Grow Your Family! I'm Adam, a proud husband and father to two young boys (Basti and Benji) born in 2017 and 2020. I'm also a trained chef and regularly post on Instagram at @At_Dads_Table, where I've built up a community of thousands of foodies and parents around the world.

My story

This book really came about through love. A few years ago, I fulfilled a long-held ambition of mine and trained after work at the prestigious Leiths School of Food and Wine in London. A few months later when my wife Anni became pregnant for the first time I was really looking forward to putting my new skills to use and cooking lots of healthy and delicious food for her and our unborn baby. However, after doing some research I became disheartened with the available guidance for eating in pregnancy as it seemed to focus on what you can't eat, rather than what you can. The whole issue of food in pregnancy was framed in this rather pessimistic narrative instead of what food should be: **a way to make yourself feel good**. It was as if overnight Anni was expected to go from someone who loved eating lots of varied foods to someone who should now restrict and deny herself.

So, I decided to design my own recipes to accompany my wife's pregnancy and At Dad's Table was born. I focused on all the wonderful foods she could eat at that special time – food that was not only good for her, but made her feel good too. I also tailored different recipes to different trimesters when the nutritional requirements change slightly and mum-to-be can experience changes in not only how she feels but what she wants to eat.

When our first child Sebastian was born, we both found ourselves sledgehammer-hit in the face by how life changed. My wife was home alone caring for our newborn while I was working, commuting and out of the house for 12 hours a day. There just wasn't enough time in the day for either of us to get everything done. Amongst the never-ending to-do list, I didn't want to sacrifice eating well, so I designed quick, high-energy meals for both of us that were also suitable for batch-cooking and were therefore timesaving. With me out of the house all day and Anni spending all her time with Basti, food she could prepare and eat with one hand was also crucial!

When Basti turned six months, we started to wean him and after a few weeks of vegetable purées I began to include him in what Anni and I ate each day (although a few things obviously needed to be adapted slightly). I think it's really important that as soon as baby has tried some first foods and been exposed to allergens that they experience as many different tastes and flavours as possible. Plus, from a time-saving perspective, it made sense to just make one meal for the whole family. A few months later my wife became pregnant with our second son Benji and we started the whole process from scratch again!

As a partner I've found that cooking for my pregnant wife and then my family has helped me to stay involved at a time when, as a working parent, I was missing seeing my family change and a lot of the pressure seemed to be unfairly on the new mum.

Through @At_Dads_Table I've helped thousands of people around the world feel positive about eating well during these crazy, exhausting years and I love the community I've built up online. What with all of life's pressures I am a firm believer in cooking one dish for whoever is sharing your table. At the time of writing, sharing mine is my wonderful wife, a kind, absolute rocket of a threenager and an inquisitive, curious one-year old. These recipes have really helped me to grow my family and I hope they do the same for you.

Love, Adam

Breaking down each chapter

The six chapters in this book cover the journey from early pregnancy all the way through to parenthood, weaning and baby-friendly family recipes. Chapters 1 to 3 cover the carb-craving fog of the first trimester, the eat-the-rainbow second trimester and the energy-loading third trimester. Each recipe is designed to make mum-to-be (and whoever is eating with her) feel good. Chapter 4 details energy-boosting meals for tired new parents as well as one-handed snacks and light dishes for when you're home alone with a newborn you can't quite put down! Chapter 5 explains how to start weaning at six months and features finger foods everyone will enjoy. Chapter 6 finishes with recipes for the whole family, be it hangry parent, toddler or baby.

Each chapter provides an overview of the importance of different foods at different points of the journey and then around 20 recipes (split into brunch, main meals, snacks and something sweet). There are also spotlight sections in each chapter that take one relevant area (getting more veg into meals, batch-cooking, one-handed dips) and go into greater detail.

I'm a working dad of two and I know that time is precious, so most recipes are on the table in around 30 minutes. Alternatives, including plant-based and gluten-free options, are provided, and at the end of the book you'll find a handy list of all ingredients used and their nutritional contents. This way you'll know exactly how each ingredient can combine to give you a plate of food full of the nutrients you need. Each recipe also tells you if it's suitable for batch-cooking and if it's baby- and family-friendly.

While eating well during pregnancy is particularly important, it's worth stating that the recipes in no way replace any vitamins and supplements that mum-to-be is taking. No recipe should be followed if it is in direct conflict with any advice a medical professional has recommended personally.

Equipment

I cook in quite a basic home kitchen, and I want all of my recipes to be accessible to everyone. Beyond the essentials, the items I couldn't live without are a stick blender for making soups and a small hand blender for pesto and purées – both are inexpensive and available from any home-appliance store.

Nutrients for Mum-to-be and Baby

VITAMIN A: Good for your body's immune system, vision, maintaining internal organs and healthy skin. During pregnancy it's important for baby's growth as well as the development of the heart, lungs, eyes, kidneys and bones, and the respiratory, circulatory and central nervous systems.

VITAMINS B1, 2, 3 AND 5: Help break down food and turn it into energy as well as keep skin, eyes and the nervous system healthy. B1 is also important for baby's brain development.

VITAMIN B6: Helps the body to store and use energy from protein and carbohydrate sources. Helps the body form haemoglobin, which carries oxygen around the body in red blood cells. In pregnancy it's important for baby's brain and nervous system development.

VITAMIN B7 (BIOTIN): Helps the body make fatty acids as well as maintain healthy hair and nails.

VITAMIN B9 (FOLATE): Helps the body form red blood cells and reduces the risk of birth defects like spina bifida.

VITAMIN B12: Helps the body make red blood cells and keeps the nervous system healthy. It also helps release energy from food. In pregnancy it helps develop baby's spine and central nervous system.

VITAMIN C: Helps protect cells and keep them healthy as well as maintain healthy skin, blood vessels, bones and cartilage. In pregnancy it helps baby's bone and teeth develop.

VITAMIN D: Helps regulate the amount of calcium in the body which is responsible for keeping teeth, bones and muscles healthy. In pregnancy it helps baby's bones, teeth, heart, kidneys and nervous system develop.

VITAMIN E: Helps maintain healthy skin and eyes and strengthens the immune system.

VITAMIN K: Helps develop and keep bones healthy and helps blood to clot.

CALCIUM: Helps build and develop strong bones and teeth. It also boosts nerve, muscle and heart development, regulates muscle contractions (like your heartbeat) and makes sure blood clots normally.

COPPER: Helps produce red and white blood cells and triggers the release of iron to form haemoglobin, which carries oxygen around the body. Copper also helps form your baby's heart, blood vessels, skeletal and nervous systems.

FIBRE: Essential for maintaining a healthy digestive system.

IRON: Very important in the creation of red blood cells. This is especially true in pregnancy, when mum-to-be is creating more blood to supply oxygen to baby.

MAGNESIUM: Helps turn food into energy and build strong teeth and bones. Regulates insulin and blood sugar levels and builds and repairs tissues.

MANGANESE: Helps the body form connective tissue, bones, blood clotting factors and sex hormones.

OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS: Support brain and eye development.

PHOSPHOROUS: Helps build and repair bones and teeth and helps nerves function and muscles contract.

POTASSIUM: Helps control the balance of fluids in the body as well as helps the heart muscle to work properly.

PROTEIN: For building and repairing muscles and bones as well as making hormones and enzymes. Protein is also a source of energy. In pregnancy it ensures the normal growth of tissues and organs, including the brain.

SELENIUM: Essential for thyroid health and a working metabolism.

ZINC: Helps make new cells. Processes protein, carbohydrates and fat in foods.

The recipes in this book should in no way replace any vitamins and supplements that should be taken during pregnancy and beyond.

Source: www.nhs.uk



CHAPTER 1:
The Secret Trimester
(weeks 1–12)

Eating Well in the Secret Trimester

During the first trimester a life is being created. During the second and third trimesters a life is being grown. This goes some way towards explaining the feelings of exhaustion some women experience during the first trimester. It's also why mum-to-be may find herself craving carbs carbs carbs, to give herself the energy boost she needs. Food-wise, the first trimester can be a tricky time. True, it's not always quite like the films where mum-to-be suddenly runs out of a meeting due to morning sickness, but it may be surprising to suddenly have no appetite for the healthy greens she was eating just a few weeks before. My wife, for example, couldn't bear the sight of an avocado (her favourite food) during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.

Even if morning sickness isn't an issue (and it is in around 75 per cent of pregnancies), what with mum-to-be experiencing massive hormonal changes early on in the first trimester, it's totally normal for appetites to change. Add to that the strains of modern life and the fact that a lot of people keep pregnancies a secret in the first trimester, eating well just isn't top of the list – getting to the end of each day is.

As is true of any time really, it's important that mum-to-be listens to what her body is telling her, not what anyone else is. She may well be craving just carbs and may only want bland food. There is absolutely nothing wrong with this and if that's how she feels, go with it. Some people want nothing more than mac 'n' cheese (see page 24), poached eggs (see page 20) and meatballs and mash (see page 34) on repeat. In fact, you could call this time the beige-food trimester too!

As long as mum-to-be is taking her recommended vitamin supplements, it's totally normal to just respond to what her body is telling her and eat the foods she wants. However, there are certain types of food that are really good to eat in the secret trimester and this is what this chapter focuses on. If mum-to-be is feeling great and has an appetite for a wide variety of foods, then brilliant, go wild. If, however, she isn't, this chapter will give some ideas on how to incorporate those foods.

It's also worth saying that every pregnancy is different for every woman. In her first pregnancy my wife couldn't even sniff a vegetable for the first trimester; second pregnancy first trimester, all she wanted to eat was a tomato and onion salad every day. Go figure!

What to focus on

>> **COMPLEX CARBS:** If carb-heavy, bland foods are what mum-to-be wants to eat then she should eat them. However, with a few simple changes she can really increase her nutrient intake. Instead of white bread, try switching it for some wholegrain bread with lots of seeds. Instead of white potatoes, she could eat more sweet potatoes (or cauliflower mash) and swap white rice and pasta for brown rice and whole-wheat pasta. All these foods contain lots of vitamins and minerals such as calcium, iron, B vitamins and potassium, which are really good for mum-to-be, and for baby's development. They are also great sources of fibre, which helps her to not feel bloated or heavy.

>> **PROTEIN:** As well as wanting carb-heavy foods, it's quite normal to crave protein for the extra energy kick. Protein is also essential for mum-to-be and baby's growth and development, so portions of lean meats (chicken, turkey, pork and beef), fish, eggs, yogurt, cheese, tofu, nuts, beans and pulses/legumes are super.

>> **FOLATE:** Folic acid (or folate as it's called when it naturally occurs in food) is an essential nutrient in pregnancy, as it prevents neural tube defects in baby. Mum-to-be's supplements will contain all the folate she needs but it is also found in high quantities in green leafy vegetables (spinach, kale, cabbage), broccoli, peas, avocado, peppers, chickpeas/garbanzo beans, lentils, eggs, nuts and seeds, bananas and citrus fruits.

You'll find that all of the recipes in the secret trimester focus on helping mum-to-be incorporate more wholegrains, protein, folate and other essential nutrients into her diet. In some pregnancies spicier foods are craved early on, so there are a few recipes that include spices and chillies. If that's not the case, however, just remove them.

SPOTLIGHT:

Six Awesome Folate-Rich Pesto Recipes

✻ EACH RECIPE MAKES APPROX. 12 ICE CUBES OF PESTO ✻
✻ BATCH-COOK ME! ✻
✻ FAMILY-FRIENDLY, JUST LEAVE OUT THE SALT ✻
✻ VEGETARIAN/VEGAN IF YOU LEAVE OUT THE PARMESAN ✻

It's very common in the first trimester for vegetables to be something mum-to-be can't stomach or has literally no appetite for. While leaving out vegetables in this early period isn't a big deal (as long as you're taking supplements) we can make them a bit more appealing. Making your own pesto is a great way of getting in a relatively large quantity of veg (folate-rich greens too, so great for the first trimester). Pesto is so versatile. Plus, it's totally freezable, so make a big batch, freeze in ice-cube trays and then you have a ready-made supply to use as and when you want.

>> **SERVING SUGGESTIONS:** Pesto isn't just for stirring into pasta. Here are a few ways you can use pesto to not only add flavour to dishes but improve their nutritional content too: stir a teaspoon or two into any soup; spread it over some chicken, lamb, fish or vegetables before grilling or roasting; stuff inside a chicken breast; stir into a bowl of boiled Jersey potatoes; use as a salad dressing; or simply spread it thickly on some wholegrain toast.

>> **STORAGE:** Store pesto in the refrigerator in an air-tight container with a thin layer of olive oil on top. The oil acts like a seal and stops the pesto from going bad. It will keep for around five days. My preference, however, is to make a big batch and freeze it in ice-cube trays, then remove from the tray and store loose in freezer bags. It will last around three months this way. Just leave it out to defrost for about an hour before using, then add directly to your chosen dish.

>> **MIX IT UP:** While I've used cheese in a few of the recipes in this chapter, feel free to leave it out or replace it with a vegan cheese substitute. Experiment with alternative ingredients such as kale, courgette/zucchini, cauliflower and so on too. Leave out any nuts mentioned too, if you have an allergy.

All recipes make 12 ice cubes. Two cubes serve one person. Some recipes require 20 minutes' roasting but otherwise all prep time is minimal.

The Classic: Basil, Pine Nut & Parmesan Pesto

Ingredients

60g/2¼oz/½ cup pine nuts ✻ 100g/3½oz fresh basil (including stalks) ✻ 2 garlic cloves ✻ 60g/2¼oz/½ cup grated Parmesan cheese ✻ 100ml/3½fl oz/scant ½ cup olive oil ✻ Salt and pepper, to taste

METHOD

1 Lightly toast the pine nuts in a hot, dry frying pan for a few minutes until they start to smell nutty.

2 Blend together the basil, garlic, Parmesan, pine nuts and approximately two-thirds of the oil in a food processor.

3 Taste, then season and add more oil, if needed, to achieve your preferred texture.

Roasted Red Pepper, Tomato & Almond Pesto

Ingredients

2 red peppers, core removed, deseeded and sliced ✻ 2 large tomatoes, sliced ✻ 3 garlic cloves, unpeeled ✻ 2 tablespoons olive oil ✻ 60g/2¼oz/½ cup almonds ✻ Salt and pepper, to taste

METHOD

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas 4.

2 Put the peppers, tomatoes and garlic into a roasting pan, season and drizzle one teaspoon of olive oil over. Roast for 20 minutes. Add the almonds to the pan halfway through the cooking time.

3 Remove the pan from the oven. Squeeze the roasted garlic from their skins, which you can discard, then blend everything together in a food processor, along with the remaining olive oil. As the tomatoes have so much liquid, you don't need as much olive oil as in the other recipes.

Rocket, Walnut & Parmesan Pesto

Ingredients

60g/2¼oz/⅓ cup walnuts ✻ 100g/3½oz rocket/arugula ✻ 60g/2¼oz/½ cup Parmesan cheese ✻ 2 garlic cloves ✻ 100ml/3½fl oz/ scant ½ cup olive oil ✻ Salt and pepper, to taste

METHOD

1 Lightly toast the walnuts in a hot, dry frying pan for a few minutes until they start to smell nutty.

2 Blend the rocket/arugula, Parmesan, garlic, walnuts and approximately two-thirds of the olive oil in a food processor, then season and add more olive oil to taste.

Pea, Pistachio & Mint Pesto

Ingredients

100g/3½oz/½ cup frozen peas ✻ 25g/1oz mint leaves ✻ 60g/2¼oz/⅓ cup shelled pistachios ✻ 3 tablespoons olive oil ✻ Salt and pepper, to taste

METHOD

1 Place the peas in a bowl, pour boiling water over them and leave to stand for a few minutes.

2 Lightly toast the pistachios in a hot, dry frying pan for a few minutes until they start to smell nutty.

3 Drain the peas then blend everything together in a food processor and season to taste.



Broccoli, Spinach & Cashew Nut Pesto

Ingredients

1 head of broccoli, cut into florets ✻ 60g/2¼oz/⅓ cup cashew nuts ✻ 30g/1oz spinach ✻ 100ml/3½fl oz/scant ½ cup olive oil ✻ Salt and pepper, to taste

METHOD

1 Place the broccoli florets into a pan of boiling water for 2–3 minutes, then drain.

2 Lightly toast the cashew nuts in a hot, dry frying pan for a few minutes until they start to smell nutty.

3 Blend two-thirds of the olive oil, the cashew nuts, spinach and broccoli together in a food processor, adding more olive oil and salt and pepper to taste.

Beetroot & Walnut Pesto

Ingredients

250g/9oz pre-cooked beetroot/beets, thinly sliced ✻ 60g/2¼oz/⅓ cup walnuts ✻ Juice of 1 lemon ✻ 4 tablespoons olive oil ✻ Salt and pepper, to taste

METHOD

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas 4.

2 Place the sliced beetroot/beets in a roasting pan and roast for 20 minutes. Halfway through the cooking time, add the walnuts. Remove the pan from the oven and tip everything into a food processor.

3 Blend with the lemon juice and olive oil, then season to taste.

Making your own pesto is a great way of getting a relatively large amount of folate-rich greens into a dish

Spanish Tortilla with Sweet Potato & Peas

Using sweet potatoes instead of traditional white potatoes, as well as adding peas, immediately ramps up the nutritional value of this dish. It's great for brunch or a light lunch – or if mum-to-be isn't feeling like eating that much. Cut it into squares, keep in the fridge and snack on it over the next day or so.

SERVES 2, plus leftovers for lunch the next day
Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 30 minutes

* VEGETARIAN
* FAMILY-FRIENDLY, just leave out the salt

Ingredients

A knob of butter (or a plant-based alternative)
2 sweet potatoes, peeled and diced into 1cm cubes
100g/3½oz/½ cup frozen peas
8–10 eggs
Salt

>> **MIX IT UP:**
* Loads of possibilities here: add in some diced onion, kale, spinach, bacon, chorizo, mozzarella, olives, sun-dried tomatoes, and so on.
* Top with grated cheese or eat it in a crusty baguette. I like to cover my tortilla with hot sauce and eat it alongside a green salad.

1 Melt the butter in a frying pan (minimum 24cm/9½ in) over a medium heat. Add the sweet potatoes along with a pinch of salt and cook for 6–8 minutes until they begin to soften. Add the frozen peas, stir and remove from the heat.

2 Crack the eggs into a large bowl and mix well. Add the sweet potato and pea mixture to the bowl, stir well, then tip everything back into the pan (adding a little butter to the pan first if you need). Cook over a medium heat for around 15 minutes until the top of the tortilla begins to solidify. Run a spatula occasionally around the sides of the tortilla to ensure it doesn't stick.

3 Remove the pan from the heat and cover with a chopping board. Flip the pan over so the tortilla is on the board, then slide it back into the pan. Cook for a further 3–4 minutes.

4 Remove the tortilla from the pan and either eat straight away or leave to cool, then refrigerate. Eat within 24–48 hours.

Poached Egg, Chorizo, Red Pepper & Sweet Potato Hash

A hearty brunch made all the better by mixing the gooey egg yolk in with the delicious sweet potato and chorizo. This dish packs some heat and is full of folate, protein, healthy carbs and vitamins – ideal for a first trimester bowl of comfort food.

SERVES 2–3
Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 15 minutes

Ingredients

2–3 sweet potatoes, peeled and diced
1 teaspoon olive oil
1 onion, diced
150g/5½oz chorizo, sliced
1 red pepper, cored, deseeded and diced
4–6 eggs
1 teaspoon white wine vinegar (to cook the poached eggs)
2–3 spring onions/scallions, thinly sliced
1 green chilli, diced
A few leaves of parsley, chopped
Salt

>> MIX IT UP:
* Swap the sweet potatoes for squash or pumpkin.
* Replace the poached eggs with fried.
* Leave out the chorizo but replace with a teaspoon of smoked paprika to keep the heat.

1 Tip the sweet potatoes into a pan of lightly salted boiling water and cook for 4–5 minutes. Drain and leave to steam-dry.

2 Heat the oil in a frying pan over a medium heat. Add the onion and a pinch of salt and cook for 2–3 minutes. Add the chorizo and red pepper and cook for a further 2–3 minutes.

3 Add the sweet potatoes to the pan and mix well. Gently crush the potatoes with the back of a wooden spoon just to squish everything down a bit and create a hash.

4 To make the poached eggs, bring a deep, wide pan of water to the boil. Reduce to a simmer, add the vinegar and stir gently to create a circular effect, this helps wrap the egg white around the yolk. Crack the eggs from a low height one or two at a time into the pan and cook for 3–4 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon and place on some paper towels to remove the excess water.

5 Spoon the hash into bowls. Top with the poached eggs, spring onions/scallions, diced chilli and parsley before serving.





Sirloin Steak with Sweet Potato Feta Mash & Chimichurri

A steak is an excellent choice in the first trimester because of its high iron content. Feta is a great source of calcium, swapping standard mash for sweet potato mash increases mum-to-be's nutrient intake and the homemade chimichurri provides a good dose of folate and other vitamins.

SERVES 2
Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 10 minutes

Ingredients

3–4 sweet potatoes, peeled and sliced
100g/3½oz/⅔ cup feta cheese (optional)
a bunch of coriander/cilantro, roughly chopped
a bunch of parsley, roughly chopped
1 shallot, roughly chopped
1 garlic clove
1 green chilli, deseeded
5 tablespoons olive oil, plus extra for frying
1 teaspoon red wine vinegar
2 sirloin steaks, about 200g/7oz each
Salt and pepper

1 Tip the sweet potatoes into a pan of lightly salted water, bring to the boil and cook for 5 minutes. Drain and then mash with the feta. Keep warm.

2 To make the chimichurri, place the coriander/cilantro and parsley (stalks included) in a food processor. Blend along with the shallot, garlic, chilli, olive oil, red wine vinegar and a pinch of salt.

3 Heat a little oil in a frying pan over a medium heat. Season the steaks and cook to your preference (2 minutes each side for medium-rare, 3 for medium and 4 for well done). Allow the meat to rest for 5 minutes and then serve alongside the mashed sweet potato and chimichurri.

>> **MIX IT UP:**
* If you don't fancy beef, chimichurri works well with either pork or cauliflower steaks.
* Swap the feta for grated Cheddar, Gouda or vegan cheese.

Hearty Mac 'N' Cheese with Butternut Squash & Sage Crisps

This is not just delicious, warming and satisfying for when mum-to-be craves carbs carbs carbs, but it also contains some fantastically healthy squash and sage. The whole-wheat pasta contains fibre and other lovely nutrients. My wife ate this a lot in her first trimester. Make a big batch to keep in the freezer or transform the leftovers into mac 'n' cheese "arancini" (see page 178). Bookmark this for later on in pregnancy when you're batchcooking too.

SERVES 2, plus a few portions for the freezer
Prep time: 15 minutes
Cook time: 35 minutes

- ✻ BATCH-COOK ME!
- ✻ FAMILY-FRIENDLY, just leave out the salt and sage crisps for under-1s
- ✻ VEGETARIAN

Ingredients

1 butternut squash, peeled and cut into small cubes
2 teaspoons olive oil
500g/1lb 2oz/5 cups whole-wheat macaroni
50g/1¾oz unsalted butter
50g/1¾oz/⅓ cup plain/all-purpose white flour
600ml/21fl oz/2½ cups full-fat/whole milk
200g/7oz/1½ cups grated Cheddar cheese
100g/3¾oz/¾ cup Parmesan cheese, grated
2 garlic cloves, crushed
8–10 sage leaves
Salt and pepper

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas 4.

2 Place the squash in a roasting pan, drizzle with about a teaspoon of olive oil, season and roast for 15 minutes until softened. Meanwhile, cook the macaroni in salted boiling water for 2 minutes less than the packet instructions state, then drain.

3 Melt the butter in a saucepan over a medium heat and then add the flour. Allow to cook for 30 seconds before whisking well. Add the milk in slowly, whisking continuously until you have a thick sauce. Cook for a further minute without stirring. Add the Cheddar and half of the Parmesan and mix well. Finally, add the garlic into the mix.

4 Tip the macaroni into an ovenproof dish along with the squash. Pour over the cheese sauce and stir well. Bake for 20 minutes.

5 Meanwhile, heat a little olive oil in a pan and fry the sage leaves for about a minute on each side until they become crispy. Remove and place on some paper towels to drain.

6 Remove the macaroni cheese from the oven when the top is bubbling and golden. Serve in bowls, topped with the sage crisps.



>> **MIX IT UP:**

* Blend half of the squash and add to the cheese sauce.
* Swap the squash for pumpkin (especially at Halloween), courgette/ zucchini, parsnip or carrot.
* Some diced bacon also works well.



Prawn & Chorizo Jambalaya

Another dish that's packed full of bold flavours and is great to tuck into at the end of a long day. Red peppers are packed full of vitamins, including folate, and prawns/shrimp are little parcels of protein – so all in all, a great first trimester dish! This one is perfect for batch-cooking and freezing.

SERVES 4, plus some for the freezer
Prep time: 15 minutes
Cook time: 35 minutes

* BATCH-COOK ME!
* FAMILY-FRIENDLY

Ingredients

1 teaspoon olive oil
1 onion, diced
1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon smoked paprika
1 teaspoon dried thyme
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
250g/9oz chorizo, sliced
2 red peppers, cored, deseeded and diced
2 carrots, diced
400g/14oz/2 cups brown rice
1 x 400g/14oz can of chopped tomatoes
600ml/21fl oz/scant 2½ cups vegetable stock
300g/10½oz raw peeled king prawns/shrimp
A few parsley sprigs, chopped

1 Heat the oil in a wide frying pan over a medium heat. Add the onion and fry for 2–3 minutes. Add the cayenne pepper, oregano, paprika and thyme, stir and cook for another 2 minutes.

2 Add the garlic to the pan, along with the chorizo. Cook for 3–4 minutes.

3 Add the peppers and carrots and cook for 3 more minutes. Add the rice, chopped tomatoes and stock. Bring to the boil, then reduce to a simmer and cook for 20 minutes. The pan must be covered or the rice won't cook so quickly.

4 Finally, add the prawns/shrimp and cook for about 3 minutes until they turn pink. Sprinkle over the parsley and serve.

>> **MIX IT UP:**
* For a chorizo or prawn/shrimp jambalaya, simply leave out one and double the quantity of the other.
* For a vegan option, swap out the chorizo and prawns for butter/lima beans.



>> MIX IT UP:

* Swap either the chicken or prawns/shrimp for tofu or add more vegetables, such as mushrooms and peppers, if you prefer.
* Toast a few cashew nuts for added nutrients.

Nasi Goreng

This is perfect first trimester food. The heat and salt hit those early pregnancy cravings, the rice ticks the carbs box, and the chicken, prawns and eggs are full of protein. It's also great for hiding veg.

SERVES 2
Prep time: 15 minutes
Cook time: 20 minutes

Ingredients

250g/9oz/1¼ cups brown basmati rice
4 tablespoons olive oil
4 eggs
1 onion, half thinly sliced and half diced
200g/7oz raw peeled prawns/shrimp
1 chicken breast, diced into 1cm/½in pieces
3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 carrot, diced
100g/3½oz green beans, chopped
1 red chilli, deseeded and diced
4 tablespoons soy sauce
1 tablespoon honey
1 tablespoon sriracha or other hot sauce
1 large tomato, thinly sliced
2.5cm/1in piece of cucumber, thinly sliced
2 spring onions/scallions, thinly sliced

1 Cook the rice as per the packet instructions. Drain, then allow to cool. Set aside.

2 Meanwhile, heat a tablespoon of the oil in a frying pan over medium heat. Whisk 2 of the eggs in a bowl, then pour into the pan. Move the pan around to spread the eggs out evenly to create a thin omelette. It will only take a few minutes to cook. Remove from the pan and set aside.

3 Heat a tablespoon of the oil in the pan and add the sliced onions. Cook for 7–8 minutes until golden and crispy. Remove and set aside.

4 Add the prawns to the pan and cook for 2–3 minutes until pink. Remove and set aside.

5 Heat another tablespoon of oil in the pan, add the diced onions and cook for 2–3 minutes. Add the chicken and cook for 5 minutes. Add the garlic, carrot, green beans and chilli.

6 Mix the soy sauce, honey and sriracha together in a small bowl, then add to the pan along with the rice. Slice the omelette into small pieces and add to the pan along with the cooked prawns. Cook for 2 minutes.

7 Fry the remaining 2 eggs in a separate pan in the remaining tablespoon of oil over medium heat.

8 Divide the nasi goreng between 2 plates. Scatter over the tomato and cucumber. Top each with a fried egg and garnish with the crispy onions and spring onions/scallions.

Minestrone

A big bowl of chunky soup is sometimes just what the doctor ordered. Minestrone is full of so many fantastic vegetables, pulses and greens and is also a delicious carb-heavy, warming broth that's ready in no time at all. Perfect for a first trimester evening.

SERVES 2, plus lots for the freezer
Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 25 minutes

* BATCH-COOK ME!
* VEGETARIAN/VEGAN
* FAMILY-FRIENDLY, just leave out the salt

Ingredients

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 onion, diced
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1 teaspoon dried thyme
1 teaspoon dried sage
2 large carrots, diced
2 celery stalks, diced
1 x 400g/14oz can of chopped tomatoes
1 tablespoon tomato purée/paste
600ml/21fl oz/2½ cups vegetable stock (use baby-friendly stock if cooking for babies)
200g/7oz small pasta, such as farfalline, ditalini, orzo or macaroni
1 x 400g/14oz can of butter/lima beans, drained
Large handful of kale, tough stalks removed, roughly chopped

1 Heat a tablespoon of oil in a large frying pan over a medium heat. Add the onion and fry for 2–3 minutes. Add the garlic along with the thyme and sage. Add the carrots and celery and cook for 5 minutes.

2 Add the chopped tomatoes, tomato purée/paste and stock to the pan, bring to a simmer, cover and cook for 15 minutes.

3 Cook the pasta as per the packet instructions. Drain then set aside.

4 Add the butter/lima beans to the pan along with the kale. Add the pasta and cook for a further 2 minutes before serving.

>> **MIX IT UP:**
* Add some Parmesan or other grated cheese at the end.
* Swap the butter/lima beans for cannellini or borlotti.
* Add some brown rice instead of pasta, if you prefer, or serve with some crusty bread.





Carrot, Lentil, Cumin & Coriander Soup

An easy way to increase vegetable intake is with a simple warming soup, especially if this time occurs over winter. (For some chilled soup recipes to have when it's warmer, see page 58.) Not only are soups straightforward to make and a wonderful way to use up pretty much any vegetable in the refrigerator, they're also great for batch-cooking and freezing. If mum-to-be wants to increase her nutrient intake but the thought of crunching vegetables makes her stomach turn, blending them into soups is a great solution.

SERVES 2
Prep time: 5 minutes
Cook time: 20 minutes

* BATCH-COOK ME!
* FAMILY-FRIENDLY, just leave out the salt
* VEGETARIAN/VEGAN

Ingredients

1 teaspoon olive oil
1 onion, diced
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground coriander
600ml/20fl oz/2½ cups vegetable stock (use baby-friendly stock if cooking for babies)
8 carrots, chopped
1 x 400g/14oz can of green lentils, drained
A few coriander/cilantro sprigs, leaves chopped

1 Heat the oil in a frying pan over a low heat. Add the onion and cook for 2–3 minutes. Add the cumin and ground coriander, mix well, and cook for a few more minutes. Turn off the heat and set aside.

2 In a saucepan, bring the vegetable stock to the boil. Add the carrots along with the cooked onion and spices, bring back to the boil and simmer for 10 minutes.

3 Add the lentils, cook for another 2 minutes, then blend to your chosen consistency, either in a blender or using a hand-held/immersion blender. Sprinkle over the fresh coriander/cilantro before serving.

>> **MIX IT UP:**
* Stir in some cooked whole-wheat pasta or brown rice for a more filling meal.
* Add a dollop of yogurt (pictured), a splash of coconut milk, a spoonful of pesto, chunks of cooked sausage or chorizo, croutons or – my favourite – add a few cubes of cheese to the soup and let them melt.
* Try Parmesan crisps! Grate Parmesan, arrange in small discs on baking paper and bake for 10 minutes at 180°C/350°F/Gas 4.



Pork, Courgette & Cheese Meatballs with Cauliflower Purée & Mushroom Gravy

This is one of my most popular dishes and a real bowl of comfort. Making your own meatballs lets you hide some vegetables in them, but shop-bought are fine too. Swapping mash for cauliflower is a game-changer. One portion of cauliflower contains three-quarters of the vitamin C you need in one day and I also think it tastes better!

SERVES 2
Prep time: 10 minutes, plus 30 minutes chilling time
Cook time: 20 minutes

✻ FAMILY-FRIENDLY, just leave out the salt

Ingredients
2 shallots, diced
1 courgette/zucchini, grated
50g/1¾oz/⅓ cup Cheddar cheese, grated
1 egg, beaten
400g/14oz minced/ground pork
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 head of cauliflower, cut into florets
a knob of butter (or a plant-based alternative)
2 tablespoons full-fat/whole milk (or a plant-based alternative)
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
200g/7oz/3 cups chestnut/cremini mushrooms, thinly sliced
1 tablespoon plain/all-purpose white flour (or any alternative)
200ml/7fl oz/scant 1 cup beef stock
A few parsley sprigs, leaves chopped
Salt

1 Place half of the shallots, the grated courgette/zucchini, Cheddar, egg and pork in a bowl. Season with salt, then mix well with your hands. Roll the mixture into golf-ball-sized balls; you should have enough for about 16. Place on a plate, cover with cling film/plastic wrap then refrigerate for 30 minutes.

2 Heat a tablespoon of oil in a frying pan over a medium heat. Add the meatballs and cook, turning regularly, for about 10 minutes. Allow the meatballs space to cook; you may need to cook in two batches. When cooked, set aside.

3 Cook the cauliflower in a pan of boiling water for 3–4 minutes. Drain then place in a food processor or blender along with the butter and milk. Blend to a purée consistency.

4 Heat the remaining tablespoon of oil in the frying pan. Add the remaining shallots and cook for a few minutes. Then add in the garlic, stir in the mushrooms and cook for a few more minutes. Mix the flour into the beef stock and pour into the pan. Add the meatballs back in and cook for 2–3 minutes.

5 Spoon the purée onto two plates. Add the meatballs on top, spoon over the mushrooms and gravy, and finally sprinkle with parsley.

Ramen Three Ways: Salmon, Tofu & Beef

Ramen is an excellent dish that's so easy to make at home. Sweetcorn and pak choi/bok choy are often-overlooked sources of folate. The combination of these with whole-wheat noodles and protein like beef, salmon or tofu makes a great first trimester meal.

SERVES 2
Prep time: 15 minutes
Cook time: 20 minutes

✻ FAMILY-FRIENDLY, just leave out the salt

Ingredients

1 x 200g/7oz pack of tofu, cut into bite-size cubes, or 1 salmon fillet (about 200g/7oz), or 1 sirloin steak (about 200g/7oz)
2 teaspoons soy sauce, plus 1 extra teaspoon if using salmon
2 eggs
200g/7oz whole-wheat noodles
500ml/17fl oz/2 cups vegetable stock
3 tablespoons miso paste
5cm/2in piece of fresh root ginger, peeled and finely grated
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
100g/3½oz/½ cup frozen sweetcorn
200g/7oz pak choi/bok choy, sliced
3–4 spring onions/scallions, sliced
2–3 teaspoons sesame seeds
Salt and pepper

1 Heat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas 4 if you're using tofu or salmon. For the tofu, place the cubes on a baking sheet and cook for 15 minutes. For the salmon, place on a baking sheet, sprinkle over a teaspoon of the soy sauce and cook for 8 minutes.

2 If using steak, season and cook to your liking (2 minutes each side for medium-rare, 3 for medium, 4 for well done). Let rest for 5 minutes.

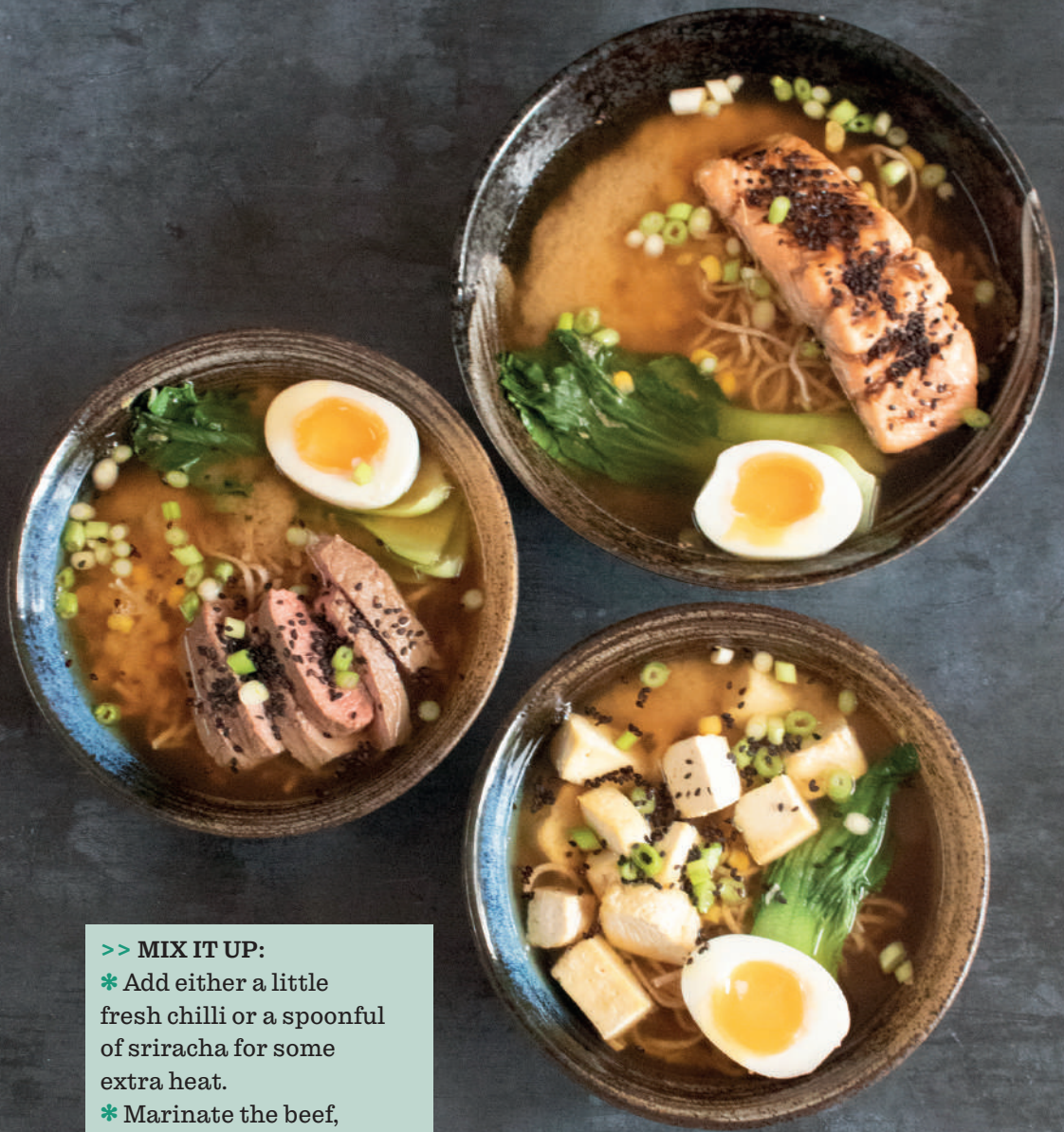
3 Cook the eggs in a pan of boiling water for around 5–6 minutes. Drain then leave in a bowl of iced water (to stop them cooking).

4 Cook the noodles as per the packet instructions, then drain and set aside.

5 Pour the stock into a saucepan and bring to the boil over a medium heat. Stir in the miso and 1 teaspoon of the soy sauce. Add the ginger, garlic, sweetcorn and pak choi/bok choy and cook for a further minute.

6 Peel the eggs, cut them in half, put them in a bowl and pour over the remaining soy sauce.

7 Assemble: divide the noodles into 2 bowls. Add the tofu, salmon or beef. Place the eggs on top. Remove the pak choi from the broth and add to the bowls. Spoon in the broth. Finally, sprinkle with spring onions/scallions and sesame seeds before serving.



>> MIX IT UP:

* Add either a little fresh chilli or a spoonful of sriracha for some extra heat.
* Marinate the beef, salmon or tofu in a little honey and soy sauce before cooking.
* Add in mushrooms, peas or carrots for more vegetables.



>> **MIX IT UP:**

* Add courgettes/zucchini alongside the aubergine.
* Marinate sliced chicken breast in the same spices for a meatier version.
* Crumble feta or paneer into the dahl before serving.

Spiced Aubergine, Spinach & Green Lentil Dhal

A hearty dhal tends to go down very well in early pregnancy as it's so easy to eat. When you cook the lentils in the spices and stock, they take on such a delicious flavour and they go so well with the texture of the vitamin- and folate-rich aubergine/eggplant. Top with some pomegranate seeds for a burst of sweetness and vitamin C.

SERVES 2
Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 30 minutes

* BATCH-COOK ME!
* VEGETARIAN/VEGAN
* FAMILY-FRIENDLY, just leave out the salt

Ingredients

1 large aubergine/eggplant
3 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon garam masala
1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
1 tablespoon ground coriander
1 tablespoon ground cumin
1 onion, diced
3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
2.5cm/1in piece of fresh root ginger, peeled and grated
2 x 400g/14oz can of green lentils, drained
500ml/17fl oz/2 cups vegetable stock
2 large handfuls of baby spinach
a handful of coriander/cilantro leaves
2 tablespoons pomegranate seeds

1 Cut the top and bottom off the aubergine/eggplant, then slice into 1cm/½in discs. Drizzle with 2 tablespoons of the oil and sprinkle with a pinch of each of the spices. Cook on a griddle/grill pan over a medium heat for 12–15 minutes, turning once. You may need to do this in batches.

2 While the aubergine is cooking, heat a tablespoon of the oil in a frying pan over a medium heat. Add the onion and the remaining spices and mix well. Cook for around 3 minutes. Add the garlic and ginger to the pan and cook for a further minute.

3 Add the green lentils and vegetable stock. Bring to the boil, turn the heat down and simmer for 15 minutes.

4 Towards the end of the cooking time, add the spinach and stir until wilted. Divide the dhal between 2 bowls, then top with the aubergine, a few coriander/cilantro leaves and pomegranate seeds before serving.

Sweet Potato & Pea Tartiflette

Tartiflette is a gorgeous French dish of potatoes, cream, cheese and lardons. My wife inhaled a tartiflette in a restaurant in her first trimester, so I created a slightly healthier version. I've upped the nutrients with sweet potatoes and peas, swapped Reblochon for Gruyère and made it lighter by using milk rather than cream.

SERVES 2
Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 40 minutes

Ingredients

2 large Maris Piper/russet potatoes (or similar), peeled and diced into 2cm /¾in cubes
a knob of butter (or a plant-based alternative)
1 onion, diced
1 garlic clove, crushed
2 large sweet potatoes, peeled and diced into 2cm/¾in cubes
6–8 thick-cut bacon rashers/slices, diced
100g/3½oz/½ cup frozen peas
400ml/14fl oz/1⅔ cups full-fat/whole milk (or a plant-based alternative)
100g/3½oz/¾ cup Cheddar cheese, grated
200g/7oz/1½ cups Gruyère cheese, sliced
Salt

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas 4.

2 Cook the white potatoes in a pan of lightly salted water for 7–8 minutes until soft. Drain and leave to cool.

3 Melt the butter in a pan over a medium heat. Add the onion along with a pinch of salt, and cook for 5 minutes.

4 Add the garlic and sweet potatoes and cook for another 5 minutes. Mix in the bacon and cook for a further 2 minutes. Add the frozen peas and the white potatoes and mix everything together well. Spoon the mixture into a baking dish.

5 Pour the milk into the empty pan and gently warm it over a low heat for a few minutes. Stir in the Cheddar.

6 Pour the milk over the potato mix. Scatter over the Gruyère, then bake for 20 mins or so until the cheese is golden and melting.

>> **MIX IT UP:**
* Try adding some nutmeg or a spoonful of mustard to the milk for a hint of spice.
* Swap the bacon for chorizo, but cook the chorizo separately before adding.
* For a non-meat version, broccoli or cauliflower work well instead of the bacon.
* Plant-based milks and vegan cheese can also be used.





Thai Coconut & Lemongrass Soup with King Prawns & Tofu

Coconut milk is so delicious when mixed with ginger, chilli, lemongrass and lime in this Thai soup. Add your choice of protein and some folate-rich pak choi/bok choy and you have a great first-trimester dish.

SERVES 2
Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 15 minutes

Ingredients

4–6 slices of very firm tofu, cut into bite-size cubes
400ml/13½fl oz/1¾ cups vegetable stock
5cm/1in piece of fresh root ginger, peeled and finely chopped
1 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
2 lemongrass stalks, chopped
2 limes
1 carrot, sliced
6–8 chestnut/cremini mushrooms, sliced
1 x 400ml/14fl oz can of coconut milk
1 tablespoon fish sauce
2 tomatoes, quartered
16 king prawns/jumbo shrimp
1 pak choi/bok choy, sliced
A few coriander/cilantro sprigs, leaves chopped

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas 4.

2 Place the tofu on a baking sheet and bake for 15 minutes.

3 Pour the stock into a saucepan over a medium heat and bring to the boil. Add the ginger, chilli and lemongrass along with the juice of 1 of the limes. Reduce the heat to low and keep at a simmer.

4 Add the carrot and mushrooms, then pour in the coconut milk and fish sauce. Bring back to the boil before reducing to a simmer.

5 Add the tomatoes and cook for another 5 minutes. Add the prawns/shrimp and pak choi/bok choy and cook for another 2 minutes until the prawns turn pink. Squeeze in the juice of the remaining lime. Add the tofu and chopped coriander/cilantro before serving.

>> **MIX IT UP:**
* Swap the tofu and prawns/shrimp for chicken or beef, or leave out the prawns for a vegan option.
* Add whole-wheat noodles for some carbs.

Harissa-Roasted Butterfly Chicken with Olive & Tomato Couscous & Parsley Mint Yogurt

A smoky dish that's perfect for those evenings when all mum-to-be wants to do is curl up on the couch with a good meal. The parsley and mint yogurt adds a zing while adding calcium and folate.

SERVES 2
Prep time: 15 minutes
Cook time: 25 minutes

Ingredients

2 chicken breasts
2 teaspoons harissa paste (or tomato purée for a spice-free option)
Juice of 1 lemon
12 cherry tomatoes
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 onion, diced
60g/2¼oz/½ cup pitted green olives
600ml/21fl oz/2½ cups chicken stock
250g/9oz/1⅔ cups couscous
Knob of butter
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
a few mint sprigs, finely chopped
a few parsley sprigs, finely chopped
6 tablespoons Greek yogurt (or a plant-based alternative)
Salt

>> MIX IT UP:
* Roast cauliflower steaks instead of chicken breasts.
* Swap the couscous for brown rice, mashed sweet potato, or quinoa.
* Sprinkle pomegranate seeds for extra nutrients.

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas 4.

2 Using a sharp knife butterfly the chicken breasts by cutting them in half width-wise (make sure you don't cut all the way through) and open them up like a book. Rub the harissa paste into the chicken along with a pinch of salt, place the breasts on a baking sheet, squeeze over the lemon and roast for 25 minutes. Remove when cooked and keep warm.

3 Place the cherry tomatoes in a baking pan, sprinkle with some salt, drizzle over a tablespoon of olive oil and roast alongside the chicken for 25 minutes.

4 Heat another tablespoon of oil in a saucepan over a medium heat. Add the onion and cook for a few minutes. Add the sliced olives and cook for a further 2 minutes. Add the chicken stock to the pan and bring to the boil, then remove from the heat, add the couscous and cover with a lid. Leave for 10 minutes, then stir in the knob of butter and fluff with a fork.

5 Combine the garlic, parsley and mint with the yogurt in a bowl.

6 Remove the tomatoes from the oven and mix into the couscous. Divide between 2 plates and place the chicken on top. And the parsley and mint yogurt before serving.

Coconut Black Rice Pudding & Cinnamon Bananas Topped with Coconut Caramel

Oh, just where to start with this dish! Rich and creamy coconut black rice, sweet bananas and rich vegan coconut caramel drizzled over the top. A truly delicious dessert that is packed full of antioxidants and fibre and also gives mum-to-be a load of nutrients suitable for the first trimester. The caramel will last up to a week in the fridge.

SERVES 2
Prep time: 5 minutes
Cook time: 45 minutes

* VEGETARIAN
* FAMILY-FRIENDLY

Ingredients

250g/9oz/1 cup black rice
400ml/14fl oz/1⅔ cups cold water
2 x 400ml/14fl oz cans of coconut milk
2 tablespoons chia seeds
8–10 tablespoons maple syrup
a knob of butter
1 teaspoon of cinnamon
2 bananas, sliced at an angle
Salt

>> MIX IT UP:
* Other vitamin-rich fruits work well here, such as mango, papaya or orange.
* Other seeds, such as flaxseeds or sunflower seeds, would also work well instead of the chia.

1 Place the black rice in a pan and add 400ml/14fl oz/1⅔ cups cold water. Bring to the boil, then add 1 can of the coconut milk. Bring it back to the boil, then reduce to a simmer. Cook uncovered for 20 minutes, then cover and cook for another 20 minutes. Remove from the heat, stir in the chia seeds and keep covered.

2 Pour the other can of coconut milk into a separate pan, add the maple syrup and bring to the boil. Reduce to a simmer for around 20 minutes until the volume of liquid has halved. Remove from the heat and leave to cool and refrigerate until needed.

3 Melt the butter in a frying pan over a medium heat. Sprinkle the cinnamon over the bananas along with a pinch of salt and cook for a few minutes, turning once until they begin to colour.

4 Divide the rice between 2 bowls, place some banana slices on top of each and drizzle with the coconut caramel.

Pomegranate & Raspberry Chocolate Bites

If mum-to-be is craving chocolate in the first trimester, give these a whirl. They're a great treat to make and each bite contains a juicy burst of vitamin C from the pomegranate. I love this recipe as it takes only 5 minutes and works with so many different fruits. You will need an empty ice cube tray. Bookmark this recipe for a great snack while doing late-night feeds when baby arrives!

MAKES 8

Prep time: 10 minutes, plus 2 hours freezing time

✻ BATCH-COOK ME!

Ingredients

200g/7oz good-quality chocolate
50g/1¾oz/¼ cup pomegranate seeds
50g/1¾oz/⅓ cup raspberries

1 Place a large heatproof bowl over a pan of gently simmering water, making sure the bowl doesn't touch the water. Break the chocolate up into small pieces and place in the bowl, allowing the heat from below to slowly melt it.

2 Half fill each compartment of the ice-cube tray with the melted chocolate. Spoon a few pomegranate seeds or half a raspberry into each one, then fill with the remaining chocolate. Place in the freezer for at least 2 hours.

3 Remove the chocolate from the tray and using a sharp knife cut the cubes in half. Use any remaining fruit to sprinkle over the chocolate. Eat immediately before they begin to melt.

>> **MIX IT UP:**
✻ Endless possibilities here. Go for milk or white chocolate (but I think the darker the better).
✻ Experiment with different fruits like passionfruit, blueberries, strawberries, orange and pear.

