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Opening Extract from...

Have Your Cake & Eat it Too

Written by Sally Bee

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HAVE YOUR CAKE & EAT IT TOO

Sally Bee



Collins

Dedication

This book is dedicated, as ever to my wonderful little family: Dogan, Tarik, Kazim, Lela and Dad!

It is also dedicated to all my heart patients around the country. I know how tough it is to face the day sometimes when you have a worry about your health. We all know that life is too short and healthy eating is crucial to our wellbeing and survival. We also all appreciate how important a special treat and a celebration is. So, this book, filled with goodies, is for you when you need a little pick-me-up to pick you up! Enjoy, my friends, and stay well xx

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introduction

Life is too short and time is too precious not to make the most of a heavenly pud! When I thought about writing *Have Your Cake And Eat It Too* it was a very easy decision to make. You see, although healthy eating for me is a more than a lifestyle choice – it's actually a life or death choice – I also appreciate how important treats are. Food has to do many jobs for us. It has to satisfy our hunger and it has to give us essential nutrition to help us stay fit, well and strong. But food also needs, sometimes, to support us emotionally. When we are a little low and down in the dumps, a bit of sugar can boost the endorphins and give us a lift. A great meal with friends and family is a treat and shows a kinship; and as food is the glue that holds us all together, finishing a delicious meal off with a heavenly dessert makes us all feel satisfied and worthy of the treat before us.

Having said all that, and keeping in mind our need to stay fit and well, I am always mindful that to enjoy our greatest pleasures guilt-free, sometimes a little tweaking of old favourite recipes is necessary!

In this book I hope I have offered you some perfect, healthier alternatives to some old-fashioned classics and some new ideas to try too. In some of my recipes you will notice that I've managed to lose the fat all together; in others I have cut the fat content in half by lessening the quantity or using a low-fat ingredient. In all the recipes, I have followed my general rule of adding as much benefit, nutrition and flavour to my dish as possible. So even though a particular dish may have some fat content, it will be balanced by added nutrition to boost your health. Remember, these aren't dishes to serve up everyday but they will help you balance your healthy lifestyle and diet with your cravings, desires and that impossible need for a bit of chocolate!

My 10 principles for having your cake and eating it

* I love sweet desserts. You love sweet desserts. Let's just accept that and enjoy them, but let's also try to make them as good for us as we can.

* Having established our desire for puddings, let's still try to stay true to giving our bodies the best nutrition possible. Food is the one thing that gives us health. There are many things that take our health away, like drinking, smoking and a sedentary lifestyle. But food is one of the things which we can control and which can actually make us stay healthy. Although desserts are usually classed as 'naughty', we all enjoy a treat once in a while, so we could say that they are good for our soul. Also, many ingredients used in my desserts still offer a good balance of nutritional benefits.

* Sugar is not always the enemy! Although we need to watch the amount of sugar we eat, it is not considered as bad for us as, say, saturated fat. Obviously sugar is high in calories, so we need to watch the quantities we eat, but a little sugar can give us a lift with immediate energy levels. There's no pretending; it's a fact that too much sugar is bad for us, but as it's also something that we crave, I believe that it is better to regulate how we use sugar and in what amounts to ensure healthy sugar levels, healthy weight and a healthy brain function. All my children are lucky to be very active and they all struggle to maintain a healthy weight, therefore, as long as they have had a good-sized nutritional meal with plenty of fresh vegetables, I am very happy for them to enjoy a homemade dessert that will satisfy their cravings and give them the extra vitamins they need from any added fruit.

* Although these are the healthiest possible desserts, they should still be looked upon as a treat! Portion size is very important. It's no

good making a healthier version of a cake if you eat the whole thing in one go! Take note of the portion size guides I have given on each recipe where possible. So even though we are going to accept that a little sugar and fat is fine in a dessert we are not going to eat a huge portion, everyday – are we? If you do get carried away and have a few too many portions, don't panic – just go for a lovely long walk and give thanks for the energy that delicious dessert has given you!

* A little note on dairy produce. You will notice that many of my dessert recipes either contain some low-fat dairy produce or are served with some. This was a conscious decision on my part, as including some low-fat dairy products into your diet is really important for your general health. Calcium is essential for healthy bones. It is also important for muscle contraction, blood vessel expansion and contraction, secretion of hormones and enzymes, transmitting impulses throughout the nervous system and normal blood clotting. So, it's pretty important!

* A study into the health benefits of milk and dairy produce commissioned by The British Heart Foundation showed that consuming milk and dairy products can massively reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. So, while we often focus on the value of dairy foods for healthy bones and teeth in the young and elderly, this study reminds us of the importance of including dairy foods in our diet throughout our life. Dairy products can help our heart health at any age, but it's important to ensure they are low fat. So often, people following a healthy eating plan concentrate heavily on the fish, chicken fruit and vegetables, and they forget about dairy. And, in the past, heart patients especially have been warned away from dairy foods, but now it seems that common sense and balance prevail and as long as you stick to the low-fat varieties, a little dairy will do you good.

* 1 egg is an oeuf! Or is it? Contrary to common belief, your body does not absorb cholesterol from eggs. If you are on a low cholesterol diet, eggs are not a problem in this respect. Eggs do contain up to 5 grams of fat in the yolk, so this certainly has to be considered, but as far as cholesterol is concerned, eggs are not the enemy. Nutrition scientists have found that eggs are one of the most nutrient-dense foods available and are recommending that we eat at least one egg a day to get the optimum benefits. In the study, to be published in the journal 'Nutrition and Food Science', researchers discovered that eggs can play an important role in maintaining health as well as help with weight loss and dieting. The study discovered that, despite being low in calories, eggs are a rich source of protein and are packed with essential nutrients thought vital to good health, particularly vitamin D, vitamin B12 and selenium. The report also confirms that among protein foods, eggs contain the richest mix of essential amino acids, which is crucial for children, adolescents and young adults since a balance of amino acids is required for proper growth and repair. So, that proves that an egg a day keeps the doctor away!
* Fruit, fruit and more fruit. Fresh fruit is the best starting point for any dessert because of its generally sweet flavour, juicy nature, bright colour and nutritional content. So, even if you are making a dish that doesn't contain fruit, serve a side portion of fresh fruit with it to make sure you're making the most of your treat!
* Make substitutions! If you have a favourite family recipe, try to make some substitutions to make it more healthy. If you have a dessert recipe that contains butter, one of the first things you can do is use a low-fat, heart-healthy spread instead. There are wonderful heart-healthy products available that are suitable for baking, give great results

and contain only half the saturated fat of butter. It is also sometimes possible to substitute the fat in cakes for another 'wet' ingredient, such as apple sauce (see page 185) or prune purée. This will be a trial-and-error scenario for you, but do be brave and give it a go: with just a little tweaking here and there, you can produce an old favourite with half the fat. And if you come up with a really great recipe, send it to me!

* Try cutting the sugar content in a recipe in half as this often works and will just cut down on the sweetness – obviously! Or you can swap the sugar for one of the sugar substitute products on the market. I actually prefer to keep my recipes as natural as possible, so I don't use artificial sweeteners.

Why all the fruit?

Good nutrition is key to living a long and healthy life. Increasingly we are receiving poor nutrition from ready-meals, fast food and processed foods. These foods contain little, or no nutritional value, and are usually loaded with salt, hydrogenated fats and sugar. Poor nutrition can lead to various health problems in the short and long term, and make you feel tired, lethargic, and miserable too.

Nutritional Value of Fruit

Fruit is so nutritious, that we can almost live off it. A diet that is packed with plenty of fruit and nuts will be rich in protein, calcium and vitamins, which is essential for a healthy lifestyle.

Most fruit is naturally low in fat, sodium, and calories. What's more, they don't contain cholesterol, but are packed full of vitamins and minerals – the right nutrients your body needs. These nutrients include potassium, dietary fibre, vitamin C and folate (folic acid).

Potassium

Diets rich in potassium will contribute to a healthy blood pressure and a reduced risk of developing kidney stones. Fruits that contain potassium include bananas, plums, prunes, peaches, apricots and oranges.

Dietary Fibre

Regular amounts of dietary fibre help reduce blood cholesterol levels and may lower the risk of heart disease. It is also important in maintaining regular bowel movements. Fibre helps reduce constipation and therefore reduce the amount of toxins exposed to the bowel for any length of time. All fruits contain dietary fibre, but fruit juice doesn't, so you will need to eat the whole fruit to get this nutritional benefit.

Vitamin C

Vitamin C is essential for the growth and repair of body tissues. It helps heal cuts and wounds, and keeps teeth and gums healthy. It is also a powerful antioxidant that neutralises free radicals in the body. Fruits that contain vitamin C include oranges, mangoes, apples and grapes.

Folate (folic acid)

Folate helps the body form red blood cells. It is especially important for pregnant women, as folate has been proven to help prevent foetal defects from developing, such as spina bifida. Fruits that contain folate include oranges, bananas and kiwi fruit.

Antioxidants in fruit

Free radicals and antioxidants are both terms used to describe groups of vitamins, minerals and elements that help to gather up and destroy all the bad bugs and boost growth of the good bugs. Therefore when a fruit is considered high in free radicals or antioxidants, this means that it will help protect your immune

system, guard against certain cancers and help boost your general good health.

Protein from Fruit

The body makes proteins to create muscles, tendons, ligaments, hair and nails. Proteins are also important in the make-up of enzymes, genes and hormones. Fruits that contain protein include: dates, avocados, figs, peanuts, almonds, Brazil nuts, and walnuts.

Fats from Fruit

Most of the fat in the Western diet is bad fat – saturated and hydrogenated fats – that increases our risk of developing heart disease and cancers. Some fat is good fat, however, and these fats contain essential fatty acids (which are the fats that are needed to help our body function rather than the type of fat that acts as a fuel which we burn for energy) and vitamins that help our bodies stay healthy. Fat improves the body's absorption of vitamins A, D and E. Fruits that contain essential fatty acids include olives, avocados, and nuts and seeds. It's also important to note that all my recipes use a low-saturated-fat, heart-healthy spread instead of butter.

So, although most people will find a diet that consists exclusively of fruit and nuts a little extreme, it shows that they contain much of what we need to live a healthy, happy life. Fruits are packed full of vitamins, minerals, essential fatty acids and proteins, and don't contain all the bad nutrition that can contribute to obesity, diabetes, Alzheimer's, and cancer. So why not take a look at your eating habits over the space of a week and add the odd healthy dessert along with extra fruit. It won't just make you feel better; it could save your life.



Tuscan Grape Cake

This is one of my all-time favourite cakes. Butter is replaced by a little low-fat spread and olive oil, and feel free to use extra virgin instead of light, as the cake is strong enough to take the extra flavour.

SERVES 12

225ml (8fl oz) sweet white wine
175ml (6fl oz) extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for oiling
225g (8oz) plain flour, plus 1 tbsp for dusting
200g (8oz) light muscovado sugar
100g (3½oz) low-fat spread
3 eggs
grated zest of 1 orange
grated zest of 1 lemon
1 tsp baking powder
175g (6oz) grapes, halved and deseeded
4–5 tbsp demerara sugar

TIP
This cake will store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas mark 4.
2. Pour the wine into a small pan and bring to the boil, then lower the heat and keep simmering until the wine has reduced down to 85ml (3fl oz), about 5–10 minutes. Allow to cool.
3. Oil a 23cm (9in) loose-bottomed cake tin with olive oil, tip in 1 tablespoon of flour, then shake all over the pan until covered. Tip out any excess flour.
4. Using a wooden spoon, beat the light muscovado sugar and low-fat spread together in a bowl until creamy and well combined. Add the eggs, one at a time, then stir through the citrus zests.
5. Stir the cooled wine and olive oil together, then pour a little into the cake mixture. Stir, then fold in one-third of the flour and the baking powder. Keep alternating between adding the liquid and flour until everything has been incorporated and the mixture is smooth.
6. Spoon the cake mixture into the prepared tin, smoothing the surface with the back of the spoon. Scatter the halved grapes over the top and sprinkle over the demerara sugar. Bake for 35–40 minutes until a skewer inserted into the centre of the cake comes out clean. Allow to cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then turn out onto a wire rack to cool. Eat warm or cool.