

APPENDIX

Recipes

The Practice of Living Well: Cooking as an Act of Self-compassion

The recipes in this section are designed to nourish both your mind and your gut – two systems that speak constantly to each other. They're built on the same principles that underpin the world's most researched longevity and mental-health diets, from the SMILES trial to the Blue Zones: a Mediterranean foundation rich in plant diversity, omega-3 fatty acids, extra-virgin olive oil, and an abundance of fibre, amino acids and complex carbohydrates.

But beyond the science, food should bring joy. These dishes are vibrant, colourful and flexible – made for real life. They're quick to prepare, easy to batch-cook, and perfectly suited to cooking for one.

Cooking for yourself is not an act of indulgence. It's an act of self-respect. It's a way of saying, *I am worth the effort*. Too often, we save our best meals for when someone else is joining us, as if our own presence isn't reason enough. Yet preparing a nourishing meal just for you is one of the simplest ways to practise self-compassion.

When you cook for yourself, you're not just feeding your body. You're reminding yourself that you are someone worth caring for.

The recipes are divided into five sections to suit every mood and moment:

- **Rise and Shine** – breakfast recipes to gently energize your mind and body for the day ahead.
- **Self-love: Cooking for One** – because we rarely see recipes written just for you. This section is about reclaiming solo cooking as an act of care, not compromise.
- **Evening Reset Recipes** – dinner recipes to help you unwind, digest with ease and bring your body back into balance, ready for a restorative night's sleep.
- **Twenty-minute Meals** – because most of the time, we don't have time. Simple, balanced dishes for busy days when you still want to eat well.
- **Batch-cooking for Friends (or Yourself)** – because community matters, and sharing food – even with future you – is one of the most nourishing forms of connection.

Each recipe (except the batch-cooking section) makes one portion.

All temperatures are non-fan oven.

My kitchen tool kit

1. A good playlist or podcast to listen to is essential.
2. Dance! Cooking is a great form of creativity, so allow yourself to express yourself – from how you move to what seasoning you use.
3. Invest in some good pans and knives to make your cooking experience more enjoyable.
4. High-quality ingredients: Treating yourself to good ingredients is a form of self-respect.
5. Variety of spices: This encourages exploration and brings added health benefits!
6. Recipe notebook and a nice pen: For reflecting on your cooking experiences and tracking progress.
7. A candle or diffuser: This helps you relax and is a lovely ritual I enjoy doing for myself.
8. Cook with intention: Dicing carrots equals nurturing yourself. It's not merely manual; it's also meaningful.
9. Forget about perfection: Remember, kitchen catastrophes make *great* stories.
10. Breathe and take it at your pace: No one is judging you apart from you!

Rise and Shine

Whether you consider yourself a morning person or not, the first food that enters your body sets the tone for everything that follows. This is where so many people go wrong: the first meal isn't just about satisfying hunger; it shapes your energy, mood, focus and cravings for the rest of the day. A nourishing breakfast helps stabilize blood sugar, supports your mind and muscles, and gives you the best possible foundation to thrive.

For women especially, eating breakfast before training can be particularly important. It supports hormone balance, prevents mid-morning energy dips and enhances performance. That's why every recipe in this section contains a good amount of protein, to fuel your body intelligently and intentionally from the very first bite.

Peanut Butter Overnight Oats

PREP TIME: 5 minutes

PROTEIN: ~30g

Ingredients

Base

50 g rolled oats

1 tablespoon chia seeds

1 tablespoon peanut butter (or almond butter)

120 ml milk of choice (dairy, soy or oat)

1 scoop vanilla or plain protein powder

Toppings

120 g Greek yogurt

handful of berries (fresh or frozen)

1–2 teaspoons peanut butter

Method

1. In a jar or bowl, combine oats, chia seeds, peanut butter, milk and protein powder. Stir well until evenly mixed.
2. Cover and refrigerate overnight (or at least 4 hours).
3. In the morning, top with Greek yogurt, berries and a spoonful of peanut butter.

WHY IT'S GOOD FOR YOU:

Creamy, satisfying and full of slow-release energy. The balance of protein, fibre and healthy fats makes this the perfect breakfast for calm focus and blood-sugar stability – proof that comfort and nourishment can coexist.

- **Protein (~30 g):** You want around 30 grams of protein at breakfast to switch off your overnight catabolic state, support muscle repair and kick-start

your metabolism. It's what sets up your strength and energy for the rest of the day.

- **Fibre + healthy fats:** steady blood sugar and longer-lasting satiety.
- **Tryptophan + magnesium:** from oats, chia and peanuts, precursors for serotonin, the calm-focus neurotransmitter.

Turkish-style Eggs with Herbed Yogurt and Chilli Oil

PREP AND COOK TIME: 10 minutes

PROTEIN: 36 g

Ingredients

2 medium eggs
 150 g full-fat Greek yogurt
 ½ tablespoon fresh dill, finely chopped (plus extra for garnish)
 ½ tablespoon fresh mint, finely chopped
 generous pinch of salt
 1¼ tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
 ¼ teaspoon smoked paprika
 pinch of chilli flakes
 1–2 slices sourdough toast

Method

1. Bring a small pan of water to a boil. Carefully lower the eggs in and cook for 6 minutes.
2. While they cook, prepare a bowl of iced water.

3. In a small bowl, mix together the Greek yogurt, dill, mint and salt.
4. When the 6 minutes are up, transfer the eggs to the iced water for 2 minutes to stop the cooking.
5. Meanwhile, gently heat the olive oil, smoked paprika, chilli flakes and a pinch of salt in a pan for 1 minute – just until fragrant.
6. Spread the yogurt mixture between 2 plates and then remove the shells from the eggs.
7. Slice the eggs in half and place them on top of the yogurt. Drizzle over the paprika oil.
8. Serve with sourdough toast.

WHY IT'S GOOD FOR YOU:

A protein-rich, gut-loving breakfast that balances blood sugar, keeps you full and fuels your morning without the crash.

Crispy Chickpea Power Toast

PREP AND COOK TIME: 10–12 mins

PROTEIN: ~22 g

Ingredients

- 1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ can chickpeas (≈120 g), drained and rinsed
- ½ teaspoon za'atar (or cumin + sesame if you don't have it), plus extra to finish
- pinch of salt
- 1 slice sourdough bread
- ½ avocado, smashed
- juice of ½ lime

¼ fresh chilli, finely sliced

20 g pea shoots or rocket

Tahini drizzle

2 teaspoons tahini

juice of ½ lemon

1 tablespoon water (to thin)

pinch of salt and pepper

Method

1. **Crisp the chickpeas:** Heat olive oil in a pan. Add the chickpeas, za'atar and a pinch of salt. Fry for 4–5 minutes, shaking occasionally, until golden and slightly crisp.
2. **Make the tahini drizzle:** In a small bowl, whisk tahini with lemon juice, water, salt and pepper until smooth.
3. **Prep the base:** Toast the sourdough. Spread with smashed avocado, and season with lime juice and salt.
4. **Build it up:** Top with crispy chickpeas, chilli slices and pea shoots. Finish with the tahini drizzle and a final dusting of za'atar.

WHY IT'S GOOD FOR YOU:

This toast combines all four 'happy brain' nutrients – protein (chickpeas), healthy fats (tahini and avocado), complex carbs (sourdough) and polyphenols (za'atar and chilli).

The Self-love Yogurt Bowl

PREP TIME: 5 minutes

PROTEIN: ~32 g

Ingredients

- 200 g full-fat Greek yogurt (or high-protein plant yogurt)
- 1 scoop vanilla or plain protein powder (optional)
- 1 tablespoon chia seeds
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon or cardamom
- 60 g mixed berries (fresh or frozen)
- 1 kiwi fruit
- 1 tablespoon almond butter or peanut butter
- 1 tablespoon crushed walnuts or pumpkin seeds
- zest of ½ lemon (optional, for brightness)

Method

1. **Blend the base:** In a bowl, mix yogurt, protein powder, chia seeds and cinnamon until thick and creamy.
2. **Add** berries and kiwi, drizzle with nut butter, sprinkle with nuts or seeds, and finish with lemon zest.
3. **Pause:** Take one mindful breath before you eat, and say something compassionate to yourself.

WHY IT'S GOOD FOR YOU:

The probiotics in yogurt support a healthy gut microbiome, while the soluble fibre in chia seeds absorbs water to form a gentle gel. Together, they feed your gut, support digestion and help keep bowel movements regular.

The Three-ingredient Protein Pancakes

PREP AND COOK TIME: 10 minutes

PROTEIN: ~32 g per serving

Ingredients

- 1 medium-ripe banana
- 2 large eggs
- 1 scoop plain protein powder (≈25–30 g)
- ¼ teaspoon baking powder (optional, for fluffiness)
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- pinch of sea salt
- 1 teaspoon olive oil (for cooking)

Optional toppings:

- 2 tablespoons Greek yogurt
- fresh berries, kiwi or sliced banana
- 1 teaspoon nut butter or crushed walnuts
- drizzle of honey

Method

1. **Mash and mix:** In a bowl, mash the banana until smooth. Whisk in eggs, protein powder, baking powder, cinnamon and salt until you have a thick batter.
2. **Cook low and slow:** Heat a non-stick pan with a little oil over medium-low heat. Pour 2–3 small pancakes at a time.
3. **Flip gently:** Cook for 1–2 minutes per side until golden.
4. **Serve warm:** Stack high, top with yogurt, fruit and a drizzle of nut butter and honey.

WHY IT'S GOOD FOR YOU:

These pancakes are naturally gluten-free, rich in fibre and protein to balance blood sugar and keep you fuller for longer. Plus, they're quick and only need a few ingredients . . . I love making these on a Saturday morning with a cup of coffee.

Blueberry Glow Pancakes (No Flour)

PREP AND COOK TIME: 12 minutes

PROTEIN: ~32 g per serving

Ingredients

- 1 medium-ripe banana
- 2 large eggs
- 1 scoop vanilla protein powder (≈25–30 g)
- ¼ teaspoon baking powder (optional, for lift)
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- pinch of sea salt
- 40 g blueberries (fresh or frozen)
- 1 teaspoon olive oil (for cooking)

Toppings

- 2 tablespoons Greek yogurt or coconut yogurt
- handful of extra blueberries
- ½ teaspoon lemon zest
- drizzle of honey or maple syrup
- sprinkle of crushed walnuts or almonds (for crunch and omega-3s)

Method

1. **Make the batter:** Mash the banana in a bowl, whisk in eggs, protein powder, baking powder, cinnamon and salt until smooth.
2. **Add the berries:** Gently fold in the blueberries.
3. **Cook low and slow:** Heat oil in a non-stick pan on medium-low. Pour 2–3 small pancakes at a time, cooking for 1–2 minutes per side until golden and set.
4. **Assemble:** Stack the pancakes, spoon over yogurt, scatter more blueberries and lemon zest, drizzle with honey and top with nuts.

WHY IT'S GOOD FOR YOU:

Blueberries are rich in antioxidants and polyphenols that help combat oxidative stress, supporting skin, cellular repair and overall vitality. Paired with high-quality protein and healthy fats, these pancakes fuel recovery, stabilize energy and nourish from the inside out.

The Mind–Body Protein Smoothie

PREP TIME: 3 minutes

PROTEIN: ~32 g

Ingredients

1 scoop protein powder
 ½ frozen banana
 1 tablespoon almond butter or peanut butter
 1 tablespoon chia seeds
 handful of spinach or kale

RECIPES

200 ml almond milk or milk of choice
½ teaspoon cinnamon
optional: 1 espresso shot or 1 teaspoon cacao powder
(dopamine support)

Toppings (optional, if you prefer a smoothie bowl)
handful of blueberries or raspberries
1 teaspoon crushed walnuts or hemp seeds

Method

1. Blend all ingredients until smooth and creamy.
2. Adjust consistency with a splash more milk if needed.
3. Pour into a glass or bowl, add toppings if you like, and take one deep breath before you drink: a small moment of presence to start your day.

WHY IT'S GOOD FOR YOU:

For those who struggle with breakfast, a balanced smoothie can be an easy way to fuel your body without the heaviness of a full meal. Keeping the fruit content lower helps stabilize blood sugar while still giving you steady energy to start your day.

Self-love: Cooking for One

These recipes are designed for those days when you need to mother yourself. They're:

- **Grounding** – earthy ingredients like lentils, sweet potato and warm spices.
- **Soothing** – creamy textures, gentle flavours, nothing harsh or demanding.
- **Nourishing** – packed with protein, healthy fats and mood-supporting nutrients.
- **Forgiving** – flexible recipes that work even if you're not at your best.

Cook these slowly. Stir with intention. Plate them beautifully. Eat without distraction. This is nourishment that feels like care because it is care.

The Serotonin Bowl – Green Goddess Risotto

PREP TIME: 10 minutes

COOK TIME: 30 minutes

PROTEIN: 30 g

Ingredients

For the risotto:

½ tablespoon olive oil

½ small onion, finely diced

1 garlic clove, minced

80 g arborio rice

50 ml white wine (or extra stock)

500 ml warm vegetable stock

100 g frozen edamame beans

75 g frozen peas

50 g spinach

zest of ½ lemon

30g parmesan, grated (or 2–3 tablespoons nutritional yeast)

salt and pepper

For the pesto:

30 g fresh basil

15 g pine nuts or walnuts

1 garlic clove

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon tahini

20 g parmesan (or 1 tablespoon nutritional yeast)

squeeze of lemon juice

salt and pepper

To serve:

2 tablespoons hemp seeds
drizzle of olive oil
extra basil leaves
lemon wedge

Method

1. Make the pesto: blend basil, nuts, garlic, olive oil, tahini, parmesan, lemon juice, salt and pepper until smooth. Set aside.
2. Heat olive oil in a wide pan over medium heat. Add onion and cook until soft, about 4 minutes. Add garlic and cook for 1 minute.
3. Add rice and stir for 1–2 minutes until lightly toasted and coated in oil.
4. Pour in wine (if using) and stir until absorbed.
5. Add stock one ladleful at a time, stirring frequently and waiting until each addition is absorbed before adding more. This takes about 20 minutes.
6. After 15 minutes, add edamame and peas to the risotto.
7. When rice is creamy and *al dente*, stir in spinach, lemon zest, parmesan and 2 tablespoons of the pesto. Season generously.
8. Serve in a warm bowl, topped with hemp seeds, olive oil and extra pesto drizzled over, with fresh basil and a squeeze of lemon.

WHY IT'S SOOTHING:

The rhythmic stirring of risotto is meditative. Green foods are naturally uplifting, and the creamy texture feels like a warm hug.

Warm Lentil, Tahini and Egg Kindness Bowl

PREP TIME: 10 minutes

COOK TIME: 25 minutes

PROTEIN: 30 g

Ingredients

150 g sweet potato, cubed
1 tablespoon olive oil
½ teaspoon cumin
½ teaspoon smoked paprika
150 g cooked puy lentils (from a pouch or can)
50 g baby spinach
1 large egg
1 teaspoon white vinegar (for poaching)
½ avocado, sliced
small handful of fresh coriander and parsley

For the tahini dressing:

2 tablespoons tahini
50 g Greek yogurt
juice of ½ lemon
1 small garlic clove, minced
1–2 tablespoons warm water
pinch of salt

To serve:

1 tablespoon hemp seeds
1 tablespoon pumpkin seeds
pinch of chilli flakes
lemon wedge

Method

1. Preheat oven to 200°C (400°F).
2. Toss sweet potato cubes with olive oil, cumin, paprika, salt and pepper. Spread on a baking tray and roast for 20–25 minutes until golden and tender.
3. Make the tahini dressing: whisk together tahini, Greek yogurt, lemon juice, garlic and enough warm water to create a drizzly consistency. Season with salt.
4. Warm the lentils gently in a pan with a splash of water. Stir in spinach until wilted.
5. For the 6-minute egg: bring a pot of water to a boil, add vinegar and gently lower the egg in. Boil for exactly 6 minutes, then transfer to cold water. Peel carefully.
6. Assemble your bowl: start with the warm lentils and spinach, add roasted sweet potato, sliced avocado and the halved egg.
7. Drizzle generously with tahini dressing, sprinkle with hemp seeds, pumpkin seeds, chilli flakes and fresh herbs.

WHY IT'S SOOTHING:

Warm, earthy lentils ground you. The runny yolk feels indulgent, and each element comes together for balanced comfort.

The Compassion Curry

PREP TIME: 10 minutes

COOK TIME: 25 minutes

PROTEIN: 30 g

Ingredients

For the curry:

½ tablespoon coconut oil
½ onion, diced
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 tablespoon fresh ginger, grated
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon turmeric
¼ teaspoon cinnamon
100 g canned tomatoes
1 can (240 g) chickpeas, drained and rinsed
150 ml coconut milk
100 g spinach
2 tablespoons almond butter
1 tablespoon tahini
juice of ¼ lemon
salt and pepper

For the quinoa:

50 g quinoa
125 ml vegetable stock

To serve:

100 g Greek yogurt
pinch of turmeric
1 tablespoon hemp seeds
fresh coriander
warm naan or flatbread

Method

1. Cook quinoa in vegetable stock according to packet instructions (about 15 minutes).
2. Heat coconut oil in a pan over medium heat. Add onion and cook until soft, about 5 minutes.
3. Add garlic and ginger, cooking for 1 minute until fragrant.
4. Stir in all spices (cumin, coriander, turmeric, cinnamon) and cook for 30 seconds.
5. Add canned tomatoes, chickpeas and coconut milk. Simmer gently for 15 minutes.
6. Stir in spinach, almond butter and tahini until the spinach wilts and the sauce becomes rich and velvety. Add lemon juice and season with salt and pepper.
7. Serve curry over quinoa, topped with Greek yogurt swirled with a pinch of turmeric, hemp seeds and fresh coriander, with naan bread or flatbread alongside.

WHY IT'S SOOTHING:

Golden turmeric is anti-inflammatory and warming. The creamy coconut feels nurturing, and the ritual of making curry is inherently caring.

Lemon and Herb Salmon Tray Bake

PREP TIME: 10 minutes

COOK TIME: 25 minutes

PROTEIN: 38 g

Ingredients

For the tray bake:

1 courgette, sliced into rounds

½ fennel bulb, thinly sliced
100 g cherry tomatoes (on the vine if possible)
3 garlic cloves (whole, unpeeled)
2 tablespoons olive oil
zest and juice of ½ lemon
1 teaspoon dried oregano
fresh thyme sprigs
1 salmon fillet (about 140 g)
salt and pepper

For the herbed yogurt:

100 g Greek yogurt
1 tablespoon tahini
handful of fresh dill and parsley, chopped
1 small garlic clove, minced
squeeze of lemon juice
salt

To serve:

1 tablespoon hemp seeds
extra lemon wedges
fresh herbs
crusty bread or quinoa

Method

1. Preheat oven to 200°C (400°F).
2. Arrange courgette, fennel, cherry tomatoes and garlic cloves on a baking tray. Drizzle with 1 tablespoon olive oil, season with salt, pepper and half the lemon zest. Scatter oregano and thyme sprigs over.
3. Roast vegetables for 10 minutes.
4. Place salmon on the tray, skin-side down. Drizzle with

remaining olive oil, lemon juice, remaining zest and oregano. Season well.

5. Return to oven and roast for 12–15 minutes until salmon is cooked through and vegetables are tender and slightly caramelized.
6. Meanwhile, make herbed yogurt by mixing Greek yogurt, tahini, herbs, garlic, lemon juice and salt.
7. Serve the tray bake as is, with herbed yogurt dolloped over, hemp seeds sprinkled on top, extra lemon wedges, herbs and crusty bread for mopping up juices.

WHY IT'S SOOTHING:

Everything roasts together with no fuss. The lemon and herbs are bright and uplifting, and omega-3s in salmon support mood and brain health.

The Green Goddess Buddha Bowl

PREP TIME: 25 minutes

PROTEIN: ~30 g

Ingredients

Base

100 g cooked quinoa or brown rice

100 g edamame beans, shelled

½ avocado, sliced

1 small sweet potato, roasted, cubed

handful of baby spinach or kale

1 tablespoon pumpkin seeds

Dressing

1 tablespoon tahini

juice of ½ lemon
1 teaspoon honey or maple syrup
1 tablespoon olive oil
1–2 tablespoons warm water (to loosen)
pinch of sea salt

Topping

1 soft-boiled or poached egg (*optional, but adds ~7 g protein*)
fresh herbs – coriander or parsley

Method

Combine the base ingredients in your favourite bowl and add dressing.

WHY IT'S SOOTHING:

A grounding, colourful bowl designed to balance energy and mood. Packed with fibre, plant protein and healthy fats, it supports your gut–brain axis while leaving you feeling nourished – not restricted.

Cacao Almond Mousse

PREP TIME: 10 minutes

CHILL TIME: 30 minutes (or overnight)

PROTEIN: 24 g

Ingredients

For the mousse:

200 g Greek yogurt (full-fat for creamiest texture)
2 tablespoons raw cacao powder
2 tablespoons almond butter
1½ tablespoons maple syrup or honey

½ teaspoon vanilla extract
pinch of sea salt
1 tablespoon chia seeds

To serve:

1 tablespoon hemp seeds
1 tablespoon sliced almonds
1 square dark chocolate, grated
fresh raspberries or strawberries
pinch of cacao nibs (optional)

Method

1. In a bowl, whisk together Greek yogurt, cacao powder, almond butter, maple syrup, vanilla extract and sea salt until completely smooth and glossy.
2. Stir in chia seeds.
3. Transfer to a serving glass or bowl. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes (or overnight) to allow the chia seeds to swell and the flavours to meld.
4. Before serving, top with hemp seeds, sliced almonds, grated dark chocolate, fresh berries and a sprinkle of cacao nibs if using.
5. Eat slowly with a spoon, savouring each bite.

WHY IT'S SOOTHING:

Cacao contains compounds that support serotonin production and mood. The ritual of making something sweet for yourself is an act of self-compassion. It tastes indulgent but nourishes deeply.

Make it extra special:

Light a candle, put your phone away, and eat this mindfully. You deserve sweetness.

Evening Reset Recipes

For unwinding, digestion and restoring balance after overstimulation.

Evenings are your body's cue to shift gears, from doing to restoring. After a day of stimulation, your nervous system craves calm, your digestion needs space to reset, and your mind benefits from a softer landing.

The foods you eat at night can either support that natural wind-down or work against it. These recipes are designed to help you unwind, digest with ease and bring your body back into balance, so you can sleep deeply and wake feeling replenished.

Creamy Tofu and Peanut Stir-Fry

PREP TIME: 25 minutes (or 10 minutes if you use prepared packet rice instead of boiling it yourself)

PROTEIN: 34 g

Ingredients

- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 teaspoon fresh ginger, grated
- 150 g firm tofu, cubed
- 1 cup mixed vegetables (broccoli, peppers, carrots)
- 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- 1 tablespoon tamari
- ½ lime, squeezed
- 1 teaspoon honey or maple syrup
- 100 g cooked brown rice

Method

1. Heat the sesame oil and stir-fry garlic, ginger and tofu until golden.
2. Add the vegetables and cook for 5 minutes.
3. Whisk peanut butter, tamari, lime, and honey with a splash of warm water. Pour this mixture over the vegetables.
4. Serve with brown rice.

WHY IT WORKS:

High-protein tofu + peanuts = sustained dopamine release. Magnesium and B-vitamins counter stress.

Miso Broth Bowl with Greens and Tofu

PREP AND COOK TIME: 20 minutes

PROTEIN: ~30 g

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 teaspoon fresh ginger, grated
- 500 ml low-salt vegetable stock
- 1 tablespoon white miso paste
- 1 nest soba or rice noodles
- 100 g firm tofu, cubed
- handful of spinach or pak choi
- ½ cup edamame beans
- 1 teaspoon tamari or soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon sesame seeds & spring onions, to serve
- lime wedge
- chilli flakes

Method

1. Heat sesame oil in a pan, then sauté garlic and ginger for 1 minute.
2. Add stock and miso paste. Whisk to dissolve.
3. Simmer noodles for 5–7 minutes until tender.
4. Add tofu, greens and edamame beans for the final 2 minutes.
5. Serve topped with sesame seeds, spring onion, lime and chilli flakes.

WHY IT'S GOOD FOR YOU:

Fermented miso nourishes the gut microbiome; tofu adds plant

protein; greens supply magnesium – your body's natural stress buffer. This is a soothing, mineral-rich bowl that supports gut repair and nervous-system calm. Perfect after an overstimulating day.

Creamy Cashew Mushroom Pasta

PREP TIME: 20 minutes

PROTEIN: 28 g

Ingredients

75g wholegrain pasta
 1 tablespoon olive oil
 1 garlic clove, minced
 100 g mixed mushrooms (chestnut, shiitake, oyster)
 60 g cashews, soaked in hot water for 15 min
 100 ml oat milk or milk of choice
 1 tablespoon nutritional yeast
 1 tablespoon lemon juice
 1 teaspoon tamari or soy sauce
 salt and pepper to taste
 optional: parsley, chilli flakes (add 1 tablespoon hemp seeds for 30 g protein)

Method

1. Cook pasta according to packet instructions.
2. Heat the olive oil and sauté garlic and mushrooms until golden.
3. Blend soaked cashews, milk, nutritional yeast, lemon juice, tamari, salt and pepper until creamy.
4. Combine pasta, sauce and mushrooms. Warm gently.
5. Top with parsley or chilli flakes, and hemp seeds, if using.

WHY IT'S GOOD FOR YOU:

Cashews and mushrooms provide zinc, selenium and B-vitamins that help stabilize mood and energy; wholegrain pasta maintains steady glucose for focus. This is comfort food with a serotonin-boosting twist.

One-pan Cod with Tomatoes, Olives and Herbs

PREP TIME: 25 minutes

PROTEIN: 35 g

Ingredients

1 cup cherry tomatoes
1 tablespoon olives or capers
1 garlic clove, sliced
½ teaspoon dried oregano
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 cod fillet (~150 g)
½ lemon, zest and juice
salt and pepper

To serve:

quinoa or roasted new potatoes

Method

1. Preheat oven to 200°C.
2. Toss tomatoes, olives, garlic, oregano and olive oil on a tray.
3. Roast for 10 minutes. Add cod fillet, drizzle with lemon juice and bake for another 10–12 minutes.
4. Serve with quinoa or roasted new potatoes.

WHY IT'S GOOD FOR YOU:

This is a Mediterranean-inspired dish that supports heart and brain health. Cod provides lean protein and B12 for energy metabolism. Tomatoes and olive oil boost lycopene absorption – a brain-protective antioxidant.

Baked Ricotta with Honey, Lemon and Pistachios

PREP AND COOK TIME: 15 minutes

PROTEIN: 29 g

Ingredients

150 g ricotta cheese
1 teaspoon honey
zest of ½ lemon
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
1 tablespoon crushed pistachios
150 g Greek yogurt
optional: sprinkle of sea salt

Method

1. Preheat oven to 180°C.
2. Place ricotta in a ramekin or small ovenproof dish.
3. Drizzle with honey, lemon zest and vanilla.
4. Bake for 10–12 minutes until lightly golden.
5. Sprinkle pistachios on top before serving with the Greek yogurt.

WHY IT'S GOOD FOR YOU:

I love this nourishing dessert (or breakfast) that balances blood sugar while satisfying sweet cravings. Ricotta delivers slow-release casein protein; pistachios and lemon add antioxidants and magnesium – a perfect ‘self-love’ treat that feeds both mood and microbiome.

Twenty-minute Meals

Life doesn't always leave space for slow cooking. But nourishing your body shouldn't depend on having hours to spare. In fact, when your time is stretched, the way you fuel yourself matters even more. Quick food doesn't have to mean compromised health.

These recipes are designed to work with real life – fast, balanced meals that support your energy, blood sugar and focus, without leaving you feeling heavy or depleted. Because taking care of yourself isn't about perfection; it's about small, meaningful choices that help you stay steady in the rush.

Even on your busiest days, you still deserve food that truly nourishes you. These twenty-minute meals are your reminder that *easy* can also be *powerful*.

Halloumi and Avocado Grain Bowl

PREP AND COOK TIME: 20 minutes

PROTEIN: 32 g

Ingredients

100 g cooked brown rice or farro (you can use the packets if easier!)

80 g halloumi, sliced

½ avocado, sliced

½ red pepper, roasted

handful of spinach or rocket

1 tablespoon hummus

1 tablespoon olive oil

squeeze of lemon

Method

1. Cook the brown rice or farro according to packet instructions. If you are using a prepared packet, gently dry-fry it for 2–3 minutes with a dash of water.
2. Fry halloumi until golden.
3. Layer rice, avocado, pepper and greens.
4. Top with halloumi and hummus and drizzle with olive oil and lemon juice.

WHY IT'S GOOD FOR YOU:

Halloumi's protein and calcium balance avocado's fats – a stabilizing, blood-sugar-friendly combination.

Harissa White Fish with Butter-bean Mash

PREP TIME: 10 minutes

COOK TIME: 10 minutes

PROTEIN: 42 g

Ingredients

For the fish:

½ tablespoon harissa paste

½ tablespoon olive oil

1 white fish fillet (cod, haddock, or sea bass – about 150 g)

juice of ¼ lemon

salt and pepper

For the butter-bean mash:

1 can (240 g) butter beans, drained and rinsed

1½ tablespoons tahini

1 garlic clove, minced

juice of ¼ lemon

1½ tablespoons olive oil

25 ml warm water

salt and pepper

To serve:

50 g Greek yogurt

fresh coriander and parsley

1 tablespoon hemp seeds

pomegranate seeds (optional)

lemon wedge

Method

1. Preheat oven to 200°C (400°F) or heat a grill pan.
2. Mix harissa paste with olive oil and brush over fish fillet.
Season with lemon juice, salt and pepper.
3. Meanwhile, make the butter-bean mash: add beans, tahini, garlic, lemon juice, olive oil and warm water to a food processor. Blend until smooth and creamy.
Season well.
4. Cook fish for 10–12 minutes in the oven or 4–5 minutes per side in a grill pan until cooked through and flaky.
5. Warm the butter-bean mash gently in a pan if needed.
6. Serve fish on a bed of butter-bean mash, topped with Greek yogurt, fresh herbs, hemp seeds and pomegranate seeds. Finish with a squeeze of lemon.

WHY IT'S GOOD FOR YOU:

This dish delivers a powerful combination of lean protein, healthy fats and fibre – all key for balanced blood sugar and lasting satiety. The white fish is rich in high-quality protein to support muscle repair and recovery, while the butter-bean mash adds plant-based fibre and minerals to nourish your gut. The tahini, olive oil and hemp seeds bring in healthy fats to keep energy steady and support hormone health.

Greek-style Omelette with Feta and Greens

PREP AND COOK TIME: 15 mins

PROTEIN: 30 g

Ingredients:

3 whole eggs, plus 2 egg whites
oregano
salt and pepper
1 teaspoon olive oil
handful of spinach
4 cherry tomatoes, halved
40 g feta cheese

Method:

1. Beat eggs and whites with oregano and seasoning.
2. Heat olive oil and sauté spinach and tomatoes.
3. Pour in egg mix, crumble in feta.
4. Cook on low heat until set.

WHY IT'S GOOD FOR YOU:

Eggs are rich in choline, crucial for brain health and neurotransmitter balance.

Tip:

Pair with a slice of rye bread for extra fibre.

Spiced Lentil and Spinach Dahl

PREP AND COOK TIME: 18 minutes

PROTEIN: 32 g

SERVES: 1–2

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ½ onion, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- ½ teaspoon turmeric, cumin and coriander
- 150 g cooked red lentils
- 100 ml vegetable stock or water
- 1 handful of spinach
- 2 tablespoons Greek yogurt (or coconut yogurt for vegan)
- 1 scoop plant protein (optional)

Method:

1. Sauté onion and garlic with the spices for 2 minutes.
2. Add lentils and stock. Simmer for 10 minutes.
3. Stir in spinach until wilted.
4. Top with yogurt, and plant protein if you like.

WHY IT'S GOOD FOR YOU:

Lentils are rich in soluble fibre, which acts as a prebiotic, feeding beneficial gut microbes and supporting a diverse gut microbiota. A healthy gut plays a key role in regulating digestion and producing compounds that influence serotonin signalling – around 90 per cent of serotonin is produced in the gut.

The yogurt's fat content helps nutrient absorption.

Lemon Herb Chickpea and Quinoa Bowl with Tzatziki

PREP TIME: 15 minutes

COOK TIME: 20 minutes

PROTEIN: 30 g

SERVES: 2

Ingredients

For the bowl:

100 g quinoa (dry weight)
1 can (240 g) chickpeas, drained and rinsed
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 teaspoon smoked paprika
½ teaspoon cumin
100 g cherry tomatoes, halved
½ cucumber, diced
50 g rocket
¼ red onion, thinly sliced
2 tablespoons hemp seeds
handful of fresh mint and parsley
juice of ½ lemon

For the tzatziki:

200 g Greek yogurt (full-fat)
¼ cucumber, grated and squeezed
1 garlic clove, minced
1 tablespoon tahini
1 tablespoon lemon juice
pinch of salt
fresh dill

Method

1. Cook the quinoa according to packet instructions. Fluff with a fork and set aside.
2. In a bowl, toss chickpeas with olive oil, paprika and cumin. Roast in a pan over medium-high heat for 8–10 minutes until crispy.
3. Make the tzatziki by combining Greek yogurt, grated cucumber, garlic, tahini, lemon juice, salt and dill. Mix well.
4. Assemble the bowls: divide quinoa between two bowls, top with crispy chickpeas, cherry tomatoes, cucumber, rocket and red onion.
5. Sprinkle hemp seeds over the top and drizzle generously with tzatziki.
6. Garnish with fresh herbs and a squeeze of lemon juice.

WHY IT'S GOOD FOR YOU:

This bowl delivers a smart balance of plant protein, fibre and healthy fats, to keep energy steady and support hormone and gut health. Quinoa provides all nine essential amino acids, making it a complete plant protein, while chickpeas add both extra protein and prebiotic fibre to support a healthy gut microbiome. Olive oil, tahini and hemp seeds provide healthy fats to enhance nutrient absorption and keep you fuller for longer. The herbs and lemon bring antioxidants and polyphenols, adding an anti-inflammatory boost.

Batch-cooking – for Friends (or Yourself)

Most of us make hundreds of food decisions a day. Batch-cooking reduces that cognitive load. With a little planning upfront, you can free up mental space for other things that matter and still eat well.

Some of my favourite meals have involved cooking a little extra and handing someone a bowl or a Tupperware container on their way out the door. Cooking for friends is one of my great joys – it's genuinely my love language.

But if it *isn't* your love language, or if cooking feels stressful or overwhelming, batch-cooking is still one of the simplest ways to make your week easier and more streamlined. Something nourishing for you now, and something your Thursday-night self will be deeply grateful for.

One-pan Miso Salmon

PREP TIME: 5 minutes

COOK TIME: 20 minutes

PROTEIN: 40 g

SERVES: 2 (I would batch-cook this and keep the rest for tomorrow!)

Ingredients

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
3 salmon fillets (option to remove skin if preferred)
salt and pepper
½ red onion, thinly sliced
½ courgette, thinly sliced and halved
½ red pepper, thinly sliced
100 g tenderstem broccoli
3 garlic cloves, crushed
1 teaspoon fresh ginger, grated
1 tablespoon white miso paste
1 can haricot beans, drained and rinsed
150 ml vegetable stock
250 ml canned coconut milk
juice of ½ lime
50 g spring greens, thinly sliced with stalk removed
optional: sliced red chilli, spring onions, fresh coriander to garnish

Method

1. Heat a large non-stick pan on a medium-high heat and add half of the olive oil.
2. Place the salmon fillets in a bowl and drizzle over the other half of the oil. Season with salt and pepper.

3. Carefully place the salmon into the hot pan and sear on both sides for 90 seconds each side. Remove from the pan and set aside.
4. Add the sliced red onion to the pan and cook for a few minutes before adding the courgette, red pepper and broccoli.
5. Cook for a few minutes. Once they start to soften, add the garlic, ginger and miso paste.
6. Combine well, then add the haricot beans, vegetable stock, coconut milk, lime juice and sliced spring greens.
7. Give everything a good stir and leave to simmer for 5 minutes, before placing the salmon fillets back into the pan.
8. Cook for a further 5–7 minutes, until the salmon is cooked through.
9. Garnish with red chilli, spring onions and coriander if desired.

WHY IT'S GOOD FOR YOU:

A balanced blend of omega-3s, fibre and plant diversity to support both mood and gut health. Salmon provides brain-supportive fats and 30 g of protein per serving, while beans and miso feed your gut microbes. Batch-cooking it is a simple act of self-compassion: future you will thank you.

Protein-packed Green Sauce with Beans and Crusty Bread

PREP TIME: 10 minutes

COOK TIME: 30 minutes

PROTEIN: 30 g (without bread)

SERVES: 2

Ingredients

For the sauce:

½ tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

½ leek, thinly sliced

75 g peas

40 g cavolo nero, stalks removed

½ can (120 g) cannellini or white beans, drained and rinsed

2½ heaped tablespoons tahini

1½ tablespoons hemp seeds

200 ml vegetable stock

juice of ¼ lemon

1–2 garlic cloves, crushed

small handful of fresh parsley

small handful of fresh basil

For the rest:

½ tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

½ courgette, halved and sliced

½ can (120 g) haricot beans, drained and rinsed

½ can butter beans, drained and rinsed

¼ teaspoon salt

sliced sourdough (plus extra olive oil)

extra tahini to drizzle

½ teaspoon sesame seeds

fresh basil and parsley, to garnish

Method

1. Begin by preparing the sauce. In a pan add the olive oil and sliced leek and cook down until soft.
2. Meanwhile cook the peas on the hob or in the microwave, and also blanch the cavolo nero.

3. Add the cooked leeks, peas and cavolo nero to a blender, along with the remaining ingredients for the sauce (white beans, tahini, hemp seeds, stock, lemon juice, garlic and herbs). Blend until smooth and creamy.
4. In the same pan you cooked the leek in, add the olive oil and sliced courgette.
5. Cook until it starts to brown and then add the haricot and butter beans along with the green sauce.
6. Add salt to season and cook for 10 minutes, stirring frequently.
7. Heat up some sourdough in a pan with some extra olive oil until crispy.
8. Serve the green sauce with some extra tahini drizzled over, and garnish with sesame seeds and fresh herbs.

WHY IT'S GOOD FOR YOU:

The beans – a mix of cannellini, butter and haricot – provide plant protein and prebiotic fibre that help stabilize blood sugar and support a diverse gut microbiome. When paired with sourdough, the combination forms a complete amino-acid profile, offering all the building blocks needed for repair and energy. The vibrant green sauce, made with cavolo nero, peas and herbs, is rich in chlorophyll, folate and polyphenols – compounds that help protect cells from oxidative stress.

Sweet Potato and Chickpea Curry with Herbed Yogurt

PREP TIME: 15 minutes

COOK TIME: 30 minutes

PROTEIN: 30 g

SERVES: 2

Ingredients

For the curry:

1 tablespoon olive oil
½ onion, diced
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 tablespoon fresh ginger, grated
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground coriander
½ teaspoon turmeric
½ teaspoon cinnamon
¼ teaspoon chilli flakes
300 g sweet potato, peeled and cubed
200 g canned tomatoes
2 cans (480 g total) chickpeas, drained and rinsed
200 ml coconut milk
100 ml vegetable stock
100 g spinach
4 tablespoons tahini
2 tablespoons almond butter
juice of ½ lemon
salt and pepper

For the herbed yogurt:

200 g Greek yogurt
1 tablespoon tahini
small handful of fresh mint, chopped
small handful of fresh coriander, chopped
pinch of salt

To serve:

3 tablespoons hemp seeds
2 tablespoons pomegranate seeds (optional)
fresh coriander
lemon wedges
warm flatbread

Method

1. Heat olive oil in a large pan over medium heat. Add onion and cook until soft, about 5 minutes.
2. Add garlic and ginger, cooking for 1 minute until fragrant.
3. Stir in all the spices (cumin, coriander, turmeric, cinnamon, chilli flakes) and cook for 30 seconds.
4. Add sweet-potato cubes and stir to coat in the spices. Cook for 2 minutes.
5. Add canned tomatoes, chickpeas, coconut milk and vegetable stock. Bring to a simmer, cover, and cook for 20 minutes until sweet potato is tender.
6. Stir in spinach, tahini and almond butter until the spinach wilts and the sauce becomes rich and creamy. Add lemon juice and season generously with salt and pepper.
7. Meanwhile, make the herbed yogurt by mixing Greek yogurt, tahini, mint, coriander and salt.
8. Divide curry between two bowls. Top with a generous dollop of herbed yogurt, hemp seeds, pomegranate seeds if using, and fresh coriander.
9. Serve with lemon wedges and warm flatbread for scooping.

WHY IT'S GOOD FOR YOU:

This curry is a masterclass in plant-based nourishment, rich in fibre, healthy fats and plant protein. The chickpeas provide a steady source of amino acids and prebiotics that feed the

gut microbiome, which supports your digestion. Sweet potato delivers complex carbohydrates and beta-carotene, which the body converts into vitamin A to support skin and immune health. The blend of spices (cumin, turmeric, coriander and cinnamon) all count as ‘one of your 5 a day’ and offer anti-inflammatory compounds that protect cells and support metabolic balance.

Sarah's Famous Chickpea Stew

COOK TIME: 25 minutes

PROTEIN: ~30 g per serving

SERVES: 2

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 small onion, finely diced
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- ½ teaspoon za'atar
- 1 tablespoon tomato purée
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- small dash (30 ml) red wine (optional, for depth)
- 1 can (400 g) chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 150 g baby tomatoes, halved
- ½ can (200 g) chopped tomatoes
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- black pepper to taste
- 1 tablespoon crushed walnuts
- fresh parsley or basil and extra chopped walnuts, to serve
- pinch of chilli flakes for heat (optional)

For the side:

1 small head broccoli, cut into florets
1 teaspoon olive oil
sea salt
squeeze of lemon

Method

1. Heat olive oil in a deep pan. Add onion and cook for 3–4 minutes until soft. Stir in garlic, cumin, smoked paprika and za'atar.
2. Add tomato purée, balsamic vinegar and a small dash of red wine. Cook for 2 minutes until it smells rich and sweet.
3. Stir in chickpeas, baby tomatoes and canned tomatoes. Season with salt and pepper. Simmer gently for 15–20 minutes until thickened.
4. Stir through crushed walnuts and a drizzle of olive oil for texture and healthy fats. Adjust seasoning.
5. Toss broccoli in olive oil and a little salt, then grill or roast for 8 minutes until charred at the edges. Finish with lemon juice.
6. Spoon the stew into bowls, top with parsley and a few extra walnuts, and chilli flakes if liked. Serve with the charred broccoli on the side (or on top).

WHY IT'S GOOD FOR YOU:

This has also been my default go-to for when guests come round. It has tons of flavour, it's healthy and as it's fully plant-based it meets most dietary requirements. I always want to have the leftovers for lunch the next day . . . if there is any left! The chickpeas provide plant protein and prebiotic fibre to nourish the gut microbiome – a key player in inflammation and mood regulation. The tomatoes and spices are rich in polyphenols and antioxidants that help protect skin and cellular health, while olive

oil and walnuts add omega-rich fats known to support heart and brain function.

Root Vegetable and Salmon Grounding Salad

COOK TIME: 30 minutes

PROTEIN: ~35 g per serving

SERVES: 2

Ingredients

- 3 carrots, peeled and cubed
- 1 small sweet potato, chopped
- 1 small red onion, cut into wedges
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon white or brown miso paste
- salt and pepper
- 2 salmon fillets (120–150 g each)

For the salad base

- ½ can chickpeas (≈120 g), drained and rinsed
- handful of fresh parsley, chopped
- 2 sundried tomatoes, sliced
- 1 tablespoon capers
- 2 tablespoons pomegranate seeds

Tahini–Yogurt Dressing

- 2 tablespoons Greek or coconut yogurt
- 1 tablespoon tahini
- 1 teaspoon miso paste
- juice of ½ lemon

pinch of salt and pepper
 splash of warm water (to loosen)

To finish

chilli flakes
 ½ teaspoon za'atar
 extra drizzle of olive oil

Method

1. Preheat oven to 200°C (fan 180°C). Toss the carrots, sweet potato and onion with olive oil, miso, salt and pepper. Roast for 25 minutes until golden and caramelized.
2. Place salmon fillets on a lined tray, drizzle lightly with oil and season. Roast for the final 10–12 minutes of the vegetable cooking time until flaky.
3. In a small bowl, whisk together yogurt, tahini, miso, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Add a splash of warm water until smooth and pourable.
4. In a large bowl, combine chickpeas, parsley, sundried tomatoes, capers and pomegranate seeds. Toss with half the dressing.
5. Add roasted vegetables, then top with salmon. Drizzle over the remaining dressing. Sprinkle with chilli flakes, za'atar and a final drizzle of olive oil.

WHY IT IS GOOD FOR YOU:

The salmon provides high-quality protein and omega-3 fatty acids (EPA and DHA), which are essential for reducing systemic inflammation, supporting brain health and promoting supple, resilient skin. The root vegetables supply slow-release carbohydrates and carotenoids – natural antioxidants that protect against oxidative stress – while the miso and yogurt add beneficial bacteria to support the gut–immune axis.