

A top-down photograph of two white ceramic bowls filled with a vibrant orange soup. Each bowl is garnished with a small cluster of fresh microgreens, including green and purple leaves. The bowls are placed on a dark, rustic wooden surface, with each bowl resting on a small, square, white, textured fabric coaster. To the right of the bowls, a portion of a round, golden-brown bread is visible. The overall composition is warm and inviting, suggesting a comforting winter meal.

Winter warmers – fast, delicious, nutritious
soups, stews and savouries

Roasted red pepper soup

Romano peppers are longer, sweeter and more flavourful than the peppers that are available in different colours. Roasting the peppers with leeks and garlic before blending brings the flavours out even more and makes a soup that can be enjoyed hot or chilled. Rich in antioxidant vitamins A & C, red peppers are also a rich source of Lycopene, to maintain healthy vision.

Ingredients

4 romano peppers, chopped
2 leeks, sliced into thin rings
2 cloves of garlic, halved
2 tablespoons avocado oil
3 sprigs of thyme
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
Stock, made with an organic stock cube, to taste

Ring the changes by using tomatoes, orange or yellow peppers instead. Roasting the veg before cooking brings out the flavour.

Method

1. Heat oven to 200C/gas mark 6.
2. Put all the vegetables in a roasting tin, drizzle with oil and top with thyme.
3. Roast for around half an hour, until the veg has started to soften and caramelise.
4. Strip the leaves from the thyme and tip the contents of the tin into a blender (or into a bowl if you are using a hand held blender) then add the vinegar and enough stock to liquidise to a smooth consistency (around 100mls).
5. Serve immediately topped with olive slices, basil leaves or seeds, with seeded crackers or oatcakes on the side.

Smoothest root veg soup

Choose butternut squash, carrots, turnip, swede or pumpkin. Sprinkle with herbs such as Rosemary and Thyme and roast in the oven to soften first. Rich in vitamin A to support healthy night vision, add a swirl of yogurt for extra protein.

Ingredients

- 500g mixed root vegetables, as suggested above
- 2 onions, roughly chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 2 tablespoons avocado oil
- 3 sprigs of thyme
- Stock, made with an organic stock cube, to taste (around 200ml)
- 1 can of coconut milk

Add lemongrass and dried lime leaves (remove before blending), for a zingy, Thai twist

Method

1. Heat oven to 200C/gas mark 6.
2. Put all the vegetables in a roasting tin, drizzle with oil and top with herbs.
3. Roast for around half an hour, until the veg has started to soften and caramelise.
4. Strip the leaves from the thyme and tip the contents of the tin into a saucepan along with the stock. Simmer until the flavours have combined then add the coconut milk and blend to serve.
5. Serve immediately topped with natural yogurt and fresh herbs or freeze to use later.



Hearty mushroom soup

Here's a warming, nutritious soup made from chestnut mushrooms enriched with vitamin D. This can be one of the nutrients that is harder to include in a totally plant-based diet as fatty fish, cheese and eggs are the usual sources. Opting for foods fortified with vitamin D can be a way round this, especially in winter.

Ingredients

2 leeks

1 onion

400g chestnut mushrooms (we used vitamin D – enriched mushrooms)

Tablespoon of avocado oil

Garlic salt

Ground black pepper

500ml vegetable stock

1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar

Dairy-free yogurt alternative

Dried or fresh herbs as topping



Combine different varieties of mushroom together and add a slice of bread before blending for a smoother, thicker soup.

Method

1. Slice the leeks into rings and the onions into chunks and sautee in a little oil before adding the mushrooms.

2. Add the salt and pepper and put the lid back on the pan and allow all the veggies to simmer together for around 10 minutes until translucent.

4. 3. Pour the stock and vinegar into the pan and allow to simmer for around 20 minutes until all the ingredients are soft. Blend and top with dairy free yogurt alternatives and herbs.

Supergreen soup

Dark green leafy veg are rich in flavonoids and carotenoids and pack an antioxidant-rich punch. Antioxidants may help to counter inflammation in the body and encourage cells to regenerate. Enjoy as a filling lunch or serve as a starter.

Ingredients

- 2 leeks, sliced into rings
- 2 crushed cloves of garlic
- 3cm piece fresh ginger, peeled and sliced
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 teaspoon of coconut or olive oil
- 500ml stock, (use a Kallo organic, low salt stock cube or make your own by boiling up a chicken carcass)
- 100g courgettes
- 200g mix of greens – try kale, Chinese cabbage, pak choi, collard greens and broccoli
- 1 tin of white haricot beans
- Herbs and squeeze of lime to garnish



High in fibre, rich in vitamins C, K and folate, as well as minerals potassium, selenium and calcium, greens can also be lightly steamed, or added to stews.

Method

1. Sauté leeks, spices and ginger with leeks in oil briefly, until just starting to become translucent add the chopped courgettes and stock and simmer until soft (around 20 minutes).
2. Add the mixed greens and beans and continue to cook for ten more minutes until softened and the flavours are mixed together well. Serve as a chunky soup or blend if preferred.
3. Top with chopped herbs of your choice eg. parsley, coriander, chives and a squeeze of lime.

Chicken noodle soup

Boil a chicken carcass left over from the Sunday roast and add any vegetables from the fridge that need using up to make the perfect midweek meal. Noodles add protein while the collagen from the broth helps support healthy digestion.

Ingredients

- 2 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 leek, sliced thinly
- 2 carrots, sliced into ribbons with a potato peeler
- 1 head of broccoli, broken into florets
- 2 tablespoons avocado oil
- 3 sprigs of thyme or parsley
- Handful of dried noodles
- 500ml stock, made with an organic stock cube, or chicken carcass



Replace the noodles with brown rice – just add it along with the stock.

Method

1. Lightly sautee the garlic, onion and leek in the avocado oil until soft and translucent.
2. Add the carrot ribbons, broccoli and herbs and simmer for around 5 minutes.
3. Pour the stock over the vegetables and chopped herbs; continue to cook for 10 minutes, adding the noodles for the last few minutes, as per the pack instructions. Simmer until ingredients are soft.
4. Top with cooked chicken if liked and warm through then serve.
5. To give the soup an Asian twist, add soy sauce and oyster sauce to the stock; replace the onions with spring onions and the broccoli with pak choi.

Butternut and red lentil lasagne

Packed with antioxidant ACE vitamins, this vegetable lasagne uses 'mushroom mince' (finely chopped mushrooms) instead of the usual beef filling. Red lentils give a creamy texture to the filling and add protein.

Ingredients

- 1 bag of chopped butternut squash
- 1 pack of ready-prepared onions, fresh or frozen (around 150g)
- 1 of each red, yellow and orange peppers
- 1 pack of mushroom mince, or 150g chopped mixed mushrooms
- 2 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 2 tablespoons avocado oil
- 2 tins of chopped tomatoes
- 100g red lentils, washed
- Stock, made with an organic stock cube, to taste



The filling also makes a good pasta sauce or can be served as a side.

Method

1. Heat oven to 200C/gas mark 6.
2. Put the butternut squash, tomatoes and peppers in a roasting tin, drizzle with oil .
3. Roast for around twenty minutes, until the veg has started to soften and caramelize.
4. Add the mixture to a pan along with the mushroom mince, tins of tomatoes, lentils and stock.
5. Cook for half an hour until all the ingredients are combined.
6. Layer up the filling with butternut lasagne and slices of cheese, or make a cheese sauce if more time. Serve with green salad or veg.

Roasted root vegetables with herbs

This combination of root vegetables works well with cherry tomatoes. Dried or fresh herbs will bring out their full flavour. Full of vitamin C, and beta-carotene, this dish is full of flavour and fast to prepare.

Ingredients

- 1 pack of butternut squash slices
- 1 pack of baby carrots
- 2 carrots sliced into rings
- 250g cherry tomatoes
- 2 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Good sprinkling of dried herbs



Choose slices, cubes or baby root veg so it is all ready at the same time

Method

1. Heat oven to 200C/gas mark 6.
2. Put the vegetables in a roasting tin, drizzle with oil .
3. Roast for around twenty minutes, until the veg has started to soften and caramelise.
4. Blend if using for pasta, or leave chunkier and add butter beans or chickpeas for a vegetarian main course or serve as a colourful accompaniment to a roast dinner of chicken or beef.

Butterbean and tomato casserole

Tinned pulses make a perfect store cupboard standby – combine with whatever vegetables you happen to have in the fridge for a warming, nutrient packed dish. Choose organic tinned pulses as they have more flavour - drain well before using. Chill any leftovers and use for tomorrow's lunch – the flavours will intensify overnight.



- 1 tablespoon avocado oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1/2 butternut squash, chopped
- 2 carrots, sliced
- 2 celery sticks, sliced
- 1 tbsp turmeric
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tsp mixed herbs
- 1 jar of passata
- 1 tin butterbeans
- 1 tin cherry tomatoes

Slow-releasing complex carbohydrates and fibre from the root vegetables and pulses help to keep you fuller for longer.

1. Saute the onions and garlic until soft, but not browned (around 10 minutes).
2. Add the chopped vegetables, herbs, spices and passata to pan, season and simmer until vegetables are softened but still hold their shape well.
3. Add butter beans and cherry tomatoes, stir through well, then simmer until piping hot and cooked through. Any tinned beans and pulses work well in this dish and you can ring the changes by adding green, leafy veg instead of the root veg used here. Adding it along with the tins at the end will prevent it becoming overdone.

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Tried and tested timesavers

While it's best to chop vegetables just before you are ready to use them to prevent the vitamin C from oxidising, ready prepared packets (fresh or frozen) have their place and mean a meal can be prepared from scratch in a lot less time. If it's a choice between choosing prepared vegetables or reaching for a ready meal, look at these ranges to help you work towards your five a day, add diversity to your diet (your gut will thank you) and put dinner on the table in no time at all. Store in the fridge.



Look for combinations that work well for soup or stew – mixed vegetable broth can be ready in under 20 minutes with minimal chopping and prep



Make your own stock or bone broth

Use the leftover carcass from a roast chicken, or use bones from a joint or leg of lamb. Cover with boiling water, season and add herbs then simmer to reduce the volume of stock and allow the stock to become more concentrated. Adding onion, turnip, carrot and parsnip, cut into rough chunks adds extra flavour. Leave it to boil as long as you can (at least half a day!) then strain through a sieve and combine with ready-prepared vegetables before simmering it all together to create a tasty, nutritious, mineral - rich soup or stews that helps to support the integrity of the gut lining, to ensure healthy digestion and absorption. The high collagen content makes it helpful for supporting healthy hair, teeth and nails.

The longer you boil up the bones, the more they will start to break down and release Magnesium, Calcium, Phosphorus and amino acids proline and glycine (helpful for healing, growth and repair and to help counter inflammation).



Cool and store stock in the fridge if not using straightaway – it will last up to 3 days. It also freezes well.