



the
Sunday Baking Sessions

THE ART OF REAL FOOD BAKING

---without all the sugar + Carbs---



rules + games

For my Mum.
Thank you for teaching me how to bake.
Sorry I haven't been able to follow your rule that
'good cooks don't lick their fingers'.
I miss you xx

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Thank you!

THANK YOU for supporting Stonesoup and picking up a copy of 'The Sunday Baking Sessions'! I really appreciate it.

Before we delve into the recipes, I thought I'd share a little of my motivation for writing this cookbook...

--- Why The Sunday Baking Sessions? ---

I've always wanted to write a baking book.

While I love getting creative with savoury cooking, I find baking to be almost magical. I love how simple ingredients are transformed into beautiful, tasty creations.

My first cooking experiments were all sweet treats. From sponge cakes, to lamingtons (an Australian classic!) to cheesecake to pavlova I became hooked on spending time in the kitchen.

It wasn't until I left home that I learned how to cook proper meals, but I remained a baker at heart. Always jumping at the opportunity to make dessert for my flat mates and friends.

Without me planning it, my career dipped into the world of professional baking (and chocolate making) when I worked in the product development team at Arnotts - Australia's largest cookie manufacturer.

Yes, I used to design Tim Tams for a living. It was a tough job but someone had to do it.

When I started blogging full time, I knew that one day I would write a baking book, but I put the idea on hold while I focused on simple, healthy, 5-ingredient meals.

The more I learned about healthy eating, the less baking I did. I tended to save desserts for rare treats. But there were two things that got me back into baking on a regular basis.

First was discovering stevia - a natural sugar-free sweetener that doesn't cause blood

sugar spikes. It made me realise that baked goods based on nutritious ingredients like eggs, butter, nuts and even veggies could be part of a healthy way of eating.

The second spur for my return to baking was becoming a mother.

Growing up, my Mum always had home made cakes for our lunch boxes and afternoon tea. I wanted to do the same for my family.

I also knew that baking first got me excited about cooking, so I figured it would be a great place to start sharing my love of cooking with my boys. Fergal and I started baking together on Sunday afternoons and so the Sunday Baking Sessions was born.

I hope you enjoy reading and cooking from this eCookbook as much as I enjoyed writing it. Happy baking!

With love,

Jules

www.thestonesoup.com

--- why the sunday baking sessions? ---

-- Using This -- eCookbook

If you're anything like me, you probably have a lot of cookbooks in your 'collection'.

And probably a lot of cookbooks that you've never actually cooked anything from.

Sound familiar?

I used to be the same.

But then I came up with an idea to make sure I do use my cookbooks.

Basically I have a rule that when a new cookbook comes into my life I have to cook something from it within 2 weeks. And if I don't, I have to donate the book to charity.

I find that personal challenge is enough to make me take action.

It's so much nicer to look at my cookbook collection knowing that I've actually used each one.

So I challenge you to choose at least one recipe from 'The Sunday Baking Sessions', make a note of the ingredients, buy what you need and get baking.

---using this eCookbook---

Preferably next Sunday, but if you can't wait that long you can start sooner. I won't mind.

I promise, cooking something from this book will make it much more enjoyable. And useful!

- Making The most of This eCookbook

1. SAVE IT IN MULTIPLE LOCATIONS.

Work computer, home computer, smart phone and tablet. You will always have these recipes at your fingertips.

Perfect for after dinner 'I need something sweet' moments or for when you find yourself stuck for what to make for your next dinner party dessert.

2. FIND EXACTLY WHAT YOU WANT WITH THE SEARCH FUNCTION.

Got a craving for something chocolate? A quick search and you'll have all the chocolate recipes ready to choose from.

3. JUMP STRAIGHT TO YOUR CHOSEN PAGE WITH THE HYPERLINKS.

My favourite feature. Just click on the links and be taken instantly to your chosen page. The bookmarks help navigation as well.

4. MAKE THE MOST OF THE VARIATIONS.

Each recipe has at least 4 suggestions for alternatives to suit different dietary requirements.

If you think a recipe might not be exactly right for you, make sure you check out the variation suggestions.

The variations are also there to keep things interesting. If you enjoy a particular recipe, challenge yourself next time to try one of the different options.

An Important Note about Stevia

Before you put on your apron and fire up your oven we need to have a little chat about stevia and sweeteners.

The majority of the recipes in this book use stevia because it's my favourite low-carb blood sugar-friendly option for replacing sugar.

I like stevia because it comes from the stevia plant and is generally considered to be 'natural'. And when it's used sparingly, I like the taste.

But there is a downside.

It can be confusing because there are 4 different types of stevia on the market and they act in different ways.

So let's look at them all to make sure you know what I mean when I call for stevia in the recipes in this eCookbook.

---The 4 Types--- of Stevia

1. PURE STEVIA POWDER

This is what I generally use because it has the cleanest flavour and no additives.

It looks like icing (powdered / confectioners) sugar. It's expensive but a tiny amount goes a long long way. We're talking 1/4 teaspoon to sweeten a whole cake.

I've had the same 100g (3oz) jar since I started using stevia powder and it's still half full after me testing all the recipes in this book multiple times.

2. GRANULAR STEVIA

Looks like regular white sugar. It's a blend of erythritol (a sugar alcohol) and stevia. Common brands include Natvia and Truvia.

Usually 1/8 teaspoon pure stevia powder = 3-4 tablespoons granular stevia.

I do occasionally use granular stevia, mainly when I want a small amount of sweetness and measuring out the tiny amount of pure stevia powder isn't practical.

But I limit my intake because I'm not sure if erythritol is harmful for our gut microbes. I also find erythritol doesn't dissolve in the same way as sugar does so it can give a gritty texture which I don't like.

3. FRESH OR DRIED STEVIA LEAVES

These come from a real stevia plant! I haven't baked with them but they will behave similar to the pure stevia powder. Just add to taste.

4. LIQUID STEVIA

I haven't used this. But add to taste.

---Please Note---

If you don't like stevia, it's OK! I've included options for using a variety of sweeteners in the 'variations' for each recipe. I've got you covered.

---about stevia and low-carb sweeteners---

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--- Ice Cream ---

Ice Cream

Raspberry 'Gelato'

Peanut Butter Ice Cream

Refreshing Fruit Sorbet

Coconut Sorbet

Coffee Granita

Raspberry 'Gelato'



Raspberry 'Gelato'

MAKES 2 serves

TAKES 10 minutes

150g (5oz) frozen raspberries

1/4 cup whipping cream

1. Place all ingredients in a food processor and whizz until you have a smooth creamy mixture that looks like soft gelato. If your raspberries are frozen solid it may take a while for them to defrost enough to puree. You will have a grainy mixture to begin with but keep going and soon it will all be gelato heaven.

2. Either enjoy straight away or return to the freezer for up to a few hours until you're ready to eat.

I love this dessert and always keep frozen raspberries on hand. I tend to whip up a batch as soon as I get home from work and then pop it in the freezer to firm up while my guests are eating their main course.

The cream is really optional. It adds a lovely creaminess but if you're after a fresher more sorbet vibe, by all means leave it out.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Best within about 4 hours of making. Longer storage will result in ice crystals and a hard frozen texture. Still edible for months in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

different fruit – pretty much any frozen fruit can be used here. Berries are my favourite. For things with stones like mangoes, peaches, nectarines or plums, it's easier to remove the stones and chop into bite sized chunks before storing in the freezer. Tropical fruit like mango, pineapple and banana are also super delicious but I tend to avoid them because of their naturally high sugar content (although my boys love them!).

fresh fruit – feel free to pre-freeze your own fresh fruit if you prefer.

sweeter – if your fruit is on the tarter side, add a little stevia or sugar.

dairy-free – skip the cream or use coconut milk instead. Or try adding a spoon of cashew or almond butter.

richer – use double cream or mascarpone.

ice blocks / ice pops – put the pureed mixture into an ice block / ice pop mould (I love the ones from Ikea) and return to the freezer for an hour or two before serving.

no food processor – a stick blender or regular blender can work instead.

---ice cream---

Peanut Butter Ice Cream



Peanut Butter Ice Cream

MAKES 1 serve

TAKES 6 hours freezing + 10 minutes

1 banana

2 pitted dates

2 tablespoons peanut butter

2 tablespoons whipping cream

1. Peel and chop banana into large chunks. Place in a ziplock bag or other container and freeze until solid. At least 6 hours or longer.

2. About 10 minutes before you're ready to serve, get the banana out of the freezer.

3. Chop dates into quarters. Place dates and peanut butter in the food processor and whizz until smooth. Then add the banana and cream and keep mixing until you have a lovely soft serve ice cream. It might take a while to get going so be patient.

Even though I'm not the hugest banana fan, I do love this healthier take on 'ice cream'. With the dates and banana this is quite carby so make sure you check out the low carb variation if you're watching your blood sugar. Feel free to play around with the flavourings or even pare it back to plain banana.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Best within about 4 hours of making. Longer storage will result in ice crystals forming and a hard frozen texture. Still edible for months in the freezer but not as nice.

VARIATIONS

low carb – skip the dates and replace banana with a very ripe pear (no need to peel).

nut-free – just skip the peanut butter.

caramel ice cream – replace peanut butter with extra dates.

chocolate chip – stir chunks of chocolate into the ice cream.

chocolate – add a tablespoon of cocoa powder to the mixture.

dairy-free/paleo – replace cream with nut milk or coconut milk.

sugar-free – skip the dates or replace with a little stevia and some vanilla extract.

vanilla – skip the peanut butter and add a teaspoon of vanilla extract or vanilla powder.

short on time – mash together all ingredients and serve at room temp as a peanut butter 'mousse'.

---ice cream---

CARB
ALERT!



Refreshing Fruit sorbet

Refreshing Fruit sorbet

MAKES 2 serves

TAKES 6 hours freezing + 10 minutes

2 serves of fruit

- 1.** Peel (if needed), remove any stones (if needed) and chop (if needed) your fruit into large chunks. Place in a ziplock bag in a single layer and freeze until solid. At least 6 hours or longer.
- 2.** Get your fruit out of the freezer about 10 minutes before you would like to serve.
- 3.** Place fruit in the food processor with 2 tablespoons water and puree until you have a lovely soft serve sorbet. It might take a while to get going so be patient. If you're really struggling, adding a splash more water can help bring it together.
- 4.** Either serve immediately or return to the freezer for up to a few hours.

It doesn't get much better than a good sorbet for a light Summer dessert. The options are endless. You just need some delicious ripe fruit. Of course if you're short on time, pre-frozen fruit like berries, cherries or mango is the go.

The photo above is a mango sorbet which is absolutely delicious but if you need to watch your blood sugar not the best idea I'm afraid.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Best within about 4 hours of making. Longer storage will result in ice crystals and a hard frozen texture. Still edible for months in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

ice pop / ice block – puree fruit and freeze in an ice pop / ice block mould (I love the ones from Ikea because they're a great size for small mouths and tummies).

ice cream / gelato – add a few tablespoons cream or yoghurt instead of the water.

different fruit – think mango, pineapple, peaches, apricots, plums, cherries, nectarines, berries (especially good!), banana, oranges, grapefruit, roasted pears, stewed apples, rockmelon (cantaloupe), watermelon.

short on time – just serve the ripe fruit with cream.

no food processor? – you really need one here.... just serve the fresh fruit with cream instead.

boozy – add a splash of vodka or white rum.

---ice cream---



Coconut sorbet

Coconut sorbet

MAKES 2-4 serves as a side

TAKES 6 hours freezing + 10 minutes

1 can coconut cream, unsweetened
(400mL / 14oz)

1 ripe pear or banana

1 teaspoon vanilla extract (optional)

stevia, honey or maple syrup, to
taste (optional)

1. Place coconut cream in a ziplock bag. Place in the freezer until frozen, about 6 hours.

2. Chop pear or banana (peeling banana first) into chunks and place in another ziplock bag or a container. Freeze.

3. About 15 minutes before you're ready to serve the sorbet, remove the coconut cream and fruit from the freezer.

4. Bash the coconut cream in the bag to break into chunks (or throw it on the floor). Remove coconut chunks from the bag and place in a food processor along with the frozen fruit.

5. Whizz with the vanilla (if using) until you have a soft-serve sorbet consistency. This will take a while, so be patient. If it's not coming together add a few tablespoons water to hasten the process.

6. Taste and add your preferred sweetener (if needed). When you're happy, serve asap or place in a container and return to the freezer for up to 4 hours. Longer than this and your sorbet will start to turn icy but will still be edible.

For the dairy-free and vegan options in my recipes, I usually include coconut sorbet as an alternative to vanilla ice cream or cream to serve with desserts. While there are some great commercial coconut sorbets out there, they can be hard to find. So here's my recipe.

Make sure your coconut cream is unsweetened or you'll end up with a super-sweet mush that won't freeze properly.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Best within about 4 hours of making. Longer storage will result in ice crystals and a hard frozen texture. Still edible for months in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

coconut milk – is fine, will just be less rich than coconut cream.

no fruit / low carb sorbet – you could skip the fruit for a lower carb sorbet but you'll need to add some stevia or other sweetener.

other fruit – feel free to play around! Berries are awesome and for a tropical vibe frozen mango or pineapple (or both) are delicious.

boozy – add a splash of vodka or white rum.

no coconut – use whipping cream or your favourite plant based milk (these will be lighter and more icy in texture).

Coffee Granita



Coffee Granita

MAKES 2

TAKES 6 hours freezing

1 cup black coffee, cooled

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 tablespoon vodka

1/16th teaspoon pure stevia powder*

double cream or whipped cream,
to serve (optional)

1. Combine coffee, vanilla, vodka and stevia in a freezer proof container. Freeze 3 hours.

2. Stir, using a fork to smash any ice crystals around the edge. Then freeze another 2-3 hours stirring with a fork every hour or so.

3. To serve, use your fork to break up the ice crystals, divide between two cups and top with cream (if using).

Ever since having diabetes and committing to Low Carb, I've been trying to figure out a way to make a really delicious Low Carb ice cream.

I love the idea of granita where you actually encourage the ice crystals (like in a slushie) instead of always fighting against them as in ice cream.

This coffee granita takes 'iced' coffee to new heights.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Will keep in the freezer for months but will go harder with time. Best within the first week.

VARIATIONS

sugar-lovers – use a little sugar or maple syrup to sweeten instead.

dairy-free – skip the cream or use whipped coconut cream.

alcohol-free – the vodka reeky helps prevent the ice crystals freezing in a whole block. If you want to omit the booze, stir more frequently with your fork.

chocolate chunk – stir in shaved chocolate with the ice crystals before serving.



--- Cookies ---

Cookies

Salted Chocolate Chip Cookies

Ginger Tahini Cookies

Peanut Butter Cookies

Coconut Cloud Cookies

Date & Nut 'Linda' Cookies



Salted Chocolate Chip Cookies

Salted Chocolate Chip Cookies

MAKES 6

TAKES 20 minutes

200g (7oz) smooth peanut butter

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1/8 teaspoon pure stevia powder

1 egg

50g (2oz) dark chocolate

sea salt flakes

1. Preheat oven to 180C (350F). Line a cookie tray with baking paper.
2. In a medium bowl, stir together peanut butter, stevia and baking powder.
3. Stir in egg to form a wet dough. Break chocolate into chunks and add to the dough.
4. Use a tablespoon to form into 6 balls and place on your prepared tray. Press on cookies to flatten slightly until they're about 1cm (1/3in) high. Sprinkle with a little sea salt. I like to manually redistribute the chocolate chunks to make sure each cookie has enough.
5. Bake for 12-15 minutes or until cookies are golden at the edges. Cool on the tray.

Apart from potatoes, two of my Irishman's favourite foods are chocolate and peanut butter. Needless to say, these cookies are one of his all time favourite sweet treats to have with a hot cup of tea.

If you're not worried about your blood sugar, they're even better used to make ice cream sandwiches, like in the photo above. But I'm trying to forget this little piece of wisdom. I should also note they're super rich and one of the few baked goods that I find tastes better if you allow them to cool to room temperature before eating.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Best on the day of baking. Can be kept for a few days in an airtight container in the fridge. Still edible for a few weeks in the fridge but will soften over time. Keeps for months in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

sugar-lovers / budget / no stevia – use my original recipe to make 12 cookies – 250g (9oz) smooth peanut butter, 200g (7oz) brown sugar, 1 teaspoon baking powder, 1 egg, 100g (3.5oz) chocolate. Bake 180C (350F) for 10 minutes (all the extra sugar binds up moisture so less baking is needed. It also provides bulk so you get more cookies!).

peanut-free – replace peanut butter with almond, cashew, brazil nut or other nut butter.

nut-free – sunflower seed butter 'sunbutter' instead of the peanut butter.

crunchy – use crunchy peanut butter if you prefer.

---cookies---



Ginger Tahini Cookies

Ginger Tahini Cookies

MAKES 4

TAKES 30 minutes

100g (3.5oz) hulled tahini

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1 teaspoon ground ginger

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/4 teaspoon pure stevia powder

1 egg

sesame seeds (optional)

- 1.** Preheat oven to 180C (350F). Line a cookie tray with baking paper.
- 2.** Mix tahini well before weighing out. In a medium bowl, stir together tahini, baking powder, ginger, cinnamon and stevia.
- 3.** Stir in egg to form a wet dough.
- 4.** Use a tablespoon to form into 4 balls and place on your prepared tray. Press on cookies to flatten slightly and sprinkle with some sesame seeds (if using).
- 5.** Bake for 15-20 minutes or until cookies are golden at the edges. Cool on the tray.

If you're a fan of ginger (like I am) you're going to LOVE these cookies! They're brilliant dunked into a hot mug of milky tea.

If you're not so big on ginger, though you can either reduce the amount or just skip it all together. Make sure you use hulled tahini, otherwise you'll end up with very bitter cookies like one of my recipe testers.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Best on the day of baking. Can be kept for a few days in an airtight container in the fridge. Still edible for a few weeks in the fridge but will soften over time. Keeps for months in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

sugar-lovers / budget / no stevia – replace stevia with 3 tablespoons white or brown sugar and expect the baking time to be slightly longer.

almond butter cookies – replace tahini with almond or other nut butter.

chocolate chip – stir in a handful of chocolate chunks or chips.

different spice – feel free to play around with the spice. A little mixed spice or pumpkin spice can be a nice alternative to ginger.

different quantities – can be easily doubled or quadrupled.



Peanut Butter Cookies

Peanut Butter Cookies

MAKES 6

TAKES 20 minutes

200g (7oz) smooth peanut butter

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1/8 teaspoon pure stevia powder

1 egg

sea salt flakes (optional)

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Line a cookie tray with baking paper.
2. In a bowl, stir together peanut butter, stevia and baking powder.
3. Stir in egg to form a wet dough.
4. Use a tablespoon to form into 6 balls and place on your tray. Press on cookies to flatten slightly and sprinkle with a little sea salt (if using).
5. Bake for 12-15 minutes or until cookies are golden at the edges. Cool on the tray.

I actually discovered these cookies via a comment someone left on my blog. You'll be amazed at how easy (and delicious!) these simple gluten-free treats are.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Best on the day of baking. Can be kept for a few days in an airtight container in the fridge. Still edible for a few weeks in the fridge but will soften over time. Keeps for months in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

sugar-lovers / budget / no stevia – use my original recipe to make 12 cookies – 250g (9oz) smooth peanut butter, 200g (7oz) brown sugar, 1 teaspoon baking powder, 1 egg. Bake 180C (350F) for 10 minutes (all the extra sugar binds up moisture so less baking is needed. It also provides bulk so you get more cookies!).

almond butter cookies – replace peanut butter with almond or other nut butter.

super crunchy peanut butter cookies – stir in a large handful of roasted peanut halves.

nut-free – try with 'sunbutter' ie paste made from sunflower seeds.

chocolate chip – stir in a handful of chocolate chunks or chips.



Coconut Cloud Cookies

Coconut Cloud Cookies

MAKES 4–8

TAKES 30 minutes

100g (3.5oz) unsalted butter

1 egg

20g (0.75oz) coconut flour

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1/8 teaspoon pure stevia powder

1. Preheat oven to 180C (350F). Line a baking tray with baking paper (parchment).
2. Melt butter in a small saucepan.
3. In a small bowl, use a spoon to whisk egg, coconut flour, baking powder and stevia until well combined.
4. Add the melted butter to the coconut flour mixture. Keep mixing vigorously until the coconut flour has soaked up all the butter and you have a smooth batter.
5. Scoop mixture into 4 little piles then use a spoon to spread into circles about 5cm (2in) diameter OR make 8 piles and spread about 2.5cm (1in). Allow room in between – these cookies like to spread!
6. Bake 15-20 minutes or until cookies are puffed and deeply browned. Cool on the tray.

Even though my boys are still small, I'm always looking for nut-free lunchbox ideas that are also easy on the carbs. So I had to include a coconut flour based cookie recipe. Of all the treats in this book, these cookies took the longest to perfect. I literally tried at least twenty different versions before finally nailing it. Thank heavens for persistence. I've kept this version plain but see the variations for some more exciting options. And if you're wondering, the name comes from how the cookies look when they're baking – little fluffy clouds.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Best on the day of baking. Can be kept for a few days in an airtight container in the fridge. Still edible for a few weeks in the fridge but will soften over time. Keeps for months in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

granular stevia – use 2-3 tablespoons.

sugar-lovers / budget / no stevia – replace stevia with 3-4 tablespoons white or brown sugar.

no coconut flour – choose a different cookie recipe! Coconut flour is a unique beast so there aren't really any substitutes.

chocolate chip – stir in a handful of chocolate chunks or chips.

spiced – feel free to add a little spice. Try a teaspoon of ground ginger, cinnamon or pumpkin spice.

different quantities – can be easily doubled or quadrupled.

brown 'sugar' cookies – add 1/2 teaspoon molasses.

chunky macadamia / nut – stir in a large handful chopped macadamias or other nuts.

---cookies---



Dates and Nut Linda' Cookies

Date and Nut 'Linda' Cookies

MAKES 12

TAKES 60 minutes

150g (5oz) pitted dates

100g (3.5oz) almond meal

150g (5oz) smooth peanut butter

50g (1.75oz) neutral flavoured oil

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

1 teaspoon baking powder

sea salt flakes (optional)

1. Boil your kettle.
2. Place dates in a heat proof bowl and cover with boiling water. Stand for 5 minutes then drain.
3. Place drained dates in your food processor and whizz until you have a smoothish paste. Keep an ear out for any pits, you'll hear them!
4. Scrape down the sides and add the almond meal, peanut butter, oil, vanilla and baking powder. Whizz again until you have a soft dough.
5. Scoop the dough out onto a large piece of cling wrap and use your hands to form into a log, approx 5cm (2in) diameter and 12cm (5in) long. Wrap tightly in cling wrap and pop in the freezer to firm up for at least 30 minutes.
6. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Line a large tray with baking paper.

My friend Linda brought these cookies to our place for brunch. Fergal couldn't get enough of them. So I decided to have a go at making a simplified version.

Even though they use dates to sweeten and stick them together, I decided to include these cookies here with the warning that they are neither low-carb nor sugar-free. Proceed with caution!

And a note about dates, I use pitted dates because I can't resist eating the fancy Medjool ones. Plus they're a fraction of the price.

7. Slice dough into 12 round cookies, getting the thickness of each as close as you can to being uniform. They will crumble a bit. Lay cookies on your prepared tray and use your hands or a rolling pin to flatten into discs about 1cm (1/3in) thick. Sprinkle each with sea salt flakes (if using).

8. Bake for 10-15 minutes or until cookies are deeply golden. Cool on the tray for few minutes then move to a wire rack so the bottoms don't get soggy.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Can be kept for a week or more in an airtight container in the fridge but will soften over time. Keeps for months in the freezer. The raw dough can be kept in the fridge for a week or frozen indefinitely (just defrost before slicing and baking).

Date and Nut 'Linda' Cookies

VARIATIONS

medjool dates – use 200g (7oz) medjool dates. These will need to be pitted but no need to soak in boiling water because they have a naturally higher moisture content.

different shapes – instead of forming the dough into a log and freezing, just roll out between two sheets of baking paper until about 1cm (1/3in) thick. Use your favourite cookie cutters to make shapes.

sugar-free – the dates are critical for achieving the texture of these cookies, I'm afraid. You'll need to use another recipe.

chocolate – mix in chocolate chunks before chilling.

extra chunky – stir in chopped nuts such as pecans or macadamias.

different fruit – feel free to use dried fruit like figs, apricots or prunes. Prunes and apricots won't be as sweet so you may want to add a little sweetener.

nut-free – replace almond meal with ground sunflower seeds and use sunbutter or tahini instead of the peanut butter.

peanut-free – use cashew butter, almond butter or other nut butter.

no food processor – you want to puree the dates so a blender or stick blender can work.



--- Cakes ---

Cakes

Honey & Almond Zucchini Cake

Super Moist Carrot Cake

Lemon Delicious Cake

Chocolate Peanut Butter Cheesecake

Blueberry Yoghurt Cake

Cherry & Ricotta Crumble Cake

Coconut Sponge Cake

Strawberry Almond Shortcakes

No-Bake Chocolate Cherry 'Cake'

*Honey & Almond
Zucchini Cake*



Honey & Almond Zucchini Cake

MAKES 6–8 serves

TAKES 60 minutes

400g (14oz) zucchini

250g (9oz) almond meal

1/4 teaspoon pure stevia powder

2 teaspoons baking powder

2 tablespoons honey

2 eggs

100g (3.5oz) neutral flavoured oil

1 teaspoon vanilla extract
(optional)

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F) and grease. Line a loaf pan 24cm x 12cm (approx 9.5in x 5in) with baking paper.

2. Grate your zucchini (I use my food processor). Mix zucchini, almond meal, stevia and baking powder, honey, eggs, oil and vanilla (if using) in a medium bowl or just add it to the food processor. Mix with a spoon to combine but don't stress if you end up with a few lumps.

3. Scoop the mixture into the prepared tin. Bake for 45-55 minutes or until the cake is deeply golden brown and feels springy. And a skewer inserted in the middle comes out clean. The honey will cause it to brown more than you'd normally expect.

4. Cool in the tin before serving.

What!?! Honey in a sugar-free baking book!?! Believe me, I know honey is pretty much just sugar and I treat it as such. I spent a long time tossing up whether to include this recipe in the book and decided to leave the honey in because a zucchini and almond cake doesn't sound as good. AND I've included a honey-free variation so that if you do want to keep your cake completely sugar-free you can. Plus it's only 2 tablespoons in the whole cake. I'm using stevia to do most of the sweetening and the honey to just provide interesting flavour.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Can be kept for 1-2 weeks in an airtight container in the fridge. Keeps for months in the freezer. I like to slice before freezing and defrost slices in the toaster (delicious with lashings of butter).

VARIATIONS

honey / sugar-free – just skip it or turn it into a Vanilla & Almond Zucchini Cake – replace honey with an extra teaspoon vanilla extract to make 2 teaspoons total.

nut-free / budget – replace almond meal with plain (all purpose) flour. Reduce baking time to 25-30 minutes. Or replace almond meal with finely ground sunflower seeds (I use a little coffee grinder) – no need to change the baking time.

different veg – zucchini is my favourite because it's low carb and mild in flavour. But feel free to experiment with carrot, parsnip, sweet potato or butternut squash.

muffins – divide mixture between 8 lined holes in a muffin tray. Bake for 20-25 minutes.

round cake – use a 20cm (8in) round cake tin. Baking time should be closer to 40 minutes.

no stevia – use your favourite sweetener... honey, maple syrup, xylitol or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level.

sugar lovers – use 75g (3oz) sugar instead of the stevia. If you like things on the sweeter side double the sugar.

*Super Moist
Carrot Cake*



Super Moist Carrot Cake

MAKES 6–8 serves

TAKES 60 minutes

300g (10.5oz) carrots

300g (10.5oz) almond meal

1 teaspoon baking powder

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

2 teaspoons molasses (optional)

1/4 teaspoon pure stevia powder

250g (8.5oz) oil

3 eggs

large handful pecans (optional)

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Line a 20cm (8in) spring form cake tin with baking paper. Grease the base and side with a little oil.

2. Grate carrots using your food processor or a box grater.

3. Add almond meal, baking powder, cinnamon, molasses (if using), stevia, oil, and eggs to the food processor bowl or a mixing bowl. Stir using a spoon until just combined.

4. Scoop cake mixture into the prepared tin and level off with a spoon. Arrange pecans on top (if using).

5. Bake for 40-50 minutes, or until the top is golden and feels firm to the touch and a skewer inserted in the middle comes out without any gooey cake on it. Cool in the tin.

Make this one! Carrot cake is my all time favourite cake, more than chocolate. It took me forever to find a sugar-free version that I was 100% happy with. But I got there in the end! The secret was to use a little molasses to give the cake the colour and lovely caramelly brown sugar flavour that I always associate with a good carrot cake. If you're watching your carbs, the carrots do contribute significantly, so best to stick to dainty slices. Or replace the carrots with zucchini.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

One of those cakes that keeps really well. Still edible for about 2 weeks in the fridge. Keeps for months in the freezer, I slice before freezing so it defrosts more quickly.

VARIATIONS

granular stevia – replace pure powder with 4-6 tablespoons granular stevia.

sugar-lovers / no stevia – use white or brown sugar. You'll need at least 100g (3.5oz) but taste and add more if you prefer a sweeter cake.

nut-free / budget – my first choice would be ground sunflower seeds. Or use regular flour and reduce the baking time to about 30 minutes.

no molasses – the molasses gives that lovely caramelized flavour you'd normally get from brown sugar. It's so so good! But you could substitute some honey or maple syrup for extra flavour – just be careful of the sugar.

completely sugar-free – skip the molasses.

lower carb – replace carrot with zucchini.

Super Moist Carrot Cake



MORE VARIATIONS

extra pretty – top cake with pecan halves, sliced almonds or walnuts before baking.

different nuts – pecans are my fave but walnuts, macadamias or almonds are all good choices.

spiced! – double the cinnamon and add a teaspoon ginger or 1/2 teaspoon baharat (Lebanese spice blend).

loaf – bake in a loaf pan 24cm x 12cm (approx 9in x 5in). Will take about the same time.

muffins – makes 10 muffins. Reduce baking time to 20-25 minutes.

frosted – use a cream cheese frosting sweetened with a little stevia or maple syrup.

Lemon Delicious Cake



Lemon Delicious Cake

MAKES 6–8 serves

TAKES 60 minutes

250g (9oz) unsalted butter,
softened

400g (14oz) can
cannellini beans, drained

1/2 teaspoon pure stevia powder

zest of 2 lemons
+ 1/2 cup lemon juice

4 eggs

2 teaspoons baking powder

200g (8.5oz) almond meal

1. Line a loaf pan 24cm x 12cm (approx 9in x 5in) with baking paper. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F).

2. Whizz butter, drained beans, stevia and lemon zest in your food processor until light and creamy. Make sure you scrape down the sides a few times. Save the lemon juice for after baking.

3. Add eggs, baking powder and almond meal and whizz or mix until just combined.

4. Scoop batter into your loaf pan and bake for 45-50 minutes or until golden brown and a skewer inserted in comes out without any gooey cake attached.

5. Remove from the oven and punch holes all over the cake with your skewer. Pour over lemon juice and allow to cool in the pan.

I know I know. Canned beans in a cake?! I was skeptical when I first came across the idea of baking sweet treats with beans. But my curiosity got the better of me so I had to try it. The raw mixture tastes decidedly 'beany' so there aren't going to be any fights over who licks the bowl. But the finished cake is a revelation. The beans give it a lovely light crumb that is moist and surprisingly delicious. I dare you to try this one!

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Best on the day of baking or the next day. Can be kept for a week or so in an airtight container in the fridge. Keeps for months in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

granular stevia – replace pure stevia powder with 8-12 tablespoons granular stevia.

no stevia – use your favourite sweetener... honey, maple syrup, xylitol or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level.

sugar lovers – use 100g (3.5oz) sugar instead of the stevia. If you like things on the sweeter side add more.

nut-free / budget – replace almond meal with finely ground sunflower seeds (I use a little coffee grinder) – no need to change the baking time. Or replace almond meal with plain (all purpose) flour or chickpea flour. If using flour reduce to 150g (5oz) and reduce baking time to 25-30 minutes.

extra lemony – serve with a big dollop of [lemon curd](#).

plain cake – replace lemon zest with 1 teaspoon vanilla extract and skip the lemon juice.

Lemon Delicious Cake



MORE VARIATIONS

different citrus – feel free to use your imagination! Lime, orange or a combo of citrus would be lovely.

dairy-free – use coconut oil or other neutral flavoured oil instead of the melted butter. If you're OK with ghee or clarified butter those can be used as well.

home cooked beans – you'll need 240g (9oz) drained cooked beans.

bean-free / paleo – replace beans with 250g (9oz) almond meal.

muffins – divide mixture between 10-12 lined holes in a muffin tray. Bake for 20-25 minutes.

*Chocolate Peanut Butter
Cheesecake*



Chocolate Peanut Butter Cheesecake

MAKES 6–8 serves

TAKES 90 minutes + chilling

50g (2oz) butter

100g (3.5oz) dark chocolate,
chopped

250g (9oz) roasted peanuts

500g (1lb) Philadelphia cream
cheese, at room temp

1/8 teaspoon pure stevia powder

4 eggs

100g (3.5oz) peanut butter

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Grease and line a 20cm (8in) round cake tin. Place two layers of foil over the outside base of the tin to stop water seeping in when you bake in the water bath.

2. Melt butter in a small saucepan. Remove from the heat and add 30g (1oz) of the chocolate NOT ALL. Stand for a few minutes for the chocolate to melt.

3. Meanwhile whizz peanuts in the food processor until you have a mix of fine powder and chunky nuts.

4. Stir chocolate butter mixture and add to the peanuts. Pulse until just combined. (If the chocolate hasn't melted put saucepan back on a low heat. Stir until it melts before adding to the peanuts.) Taste and if it needs more sweetness add a pinch of pure stevia powder or a little sugar.

5. Spread nut mixture over the base of your tin and pop it in the freezer to set while you make the filling.

6. Clean and dry your food processor bowl. Whizz cream cheese and stevia until smooth. Add eggs one at a time scraping down the sides between each.

OMG peanut butter, chocolate and cheesecake are some of my favourite, favourite things. As soon as I saw a recipe for this in Nigel Slater's latest book, I knew I had to make a low carb / gluten-free version.

Luckily it was pretty easy to adapt. But I did repeat it on many an occasion just to make sure I had it 100% right - nothing to do with wanting to eat it again. Nothing.

7. To melt remaining chocolate, bring about 2cm water to the boil in the saucepan you used to melt the butter (no need to clean it). Place chocolate in a small bowl and pop it on top of the saucepan. Make sure the bottom of the bowl isn't touching the water and is just being warmed by the steam. Remove from the heat and stand to allow chocolate to melt gently.

8. Pour filling over the chilled base.

9. Using a teaspoon, top the filling with dots of peanut butter.

10. Drizzle over the melted chocolate.

11. Place tin in a large baking tray. Make sure your foil is going to protect the cheesecake from the water and pop the tin in the tray. Fill the baking tray with hot water from the tap - about 2cm (1in) up the sides of the tin - don't come up past the foil.

12. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until cheesecake is starting to puff up a little and feels firm in the middle, remembering it will firm even more as it chills.

13. Remove from the water bath and cool for about 30 minutes before chilling in the fridge for at least 3 hours but preferably overnight.

Chocolate Peanut Butter Cheesecake

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

After being well chilled, it's best eaten in the first 3 days. Can be kept for up to 2 weeks in the fridge but the base will soften over time. Keeps for months in the freezer but again the base will soften.

VARIATIONS

granular stevia – replace pure stevia powder with 2-3 tablespoons granular stevia.

vanilla – add a teaspoon vanilla extract or the scraped seeds of a vanilla bean to the filling.

sugar lovers – replace stevia with 75g (3oz) caster sugar (superfine).

no stevia – use your favourite sweetener – just add to taste as the only function of the stevia is sweetness. If I didn't have diabetes I'd totally be making it with maple syrup.

nut-free – skip the peanut butter and replace peanuts with digestive biscuits, graham cookies or other plain sweet biscuit / cookie.

no chocolate – for a pure peanut butter treat just skip the chocolate in the base and drizzle. I'm also thinking smooth peanut butter mixed through the filling by itself would be lovely.



*Blueberry
Yoghurt Cake*

Blueberry Yoghurt Cake

MAKES 6–8 serves

TAKES 50 minutes

250g (9oz) almond meal

1/8 teaspoon pure stevia powder

1.5 teaspoons baking powder

250g (9oz) natural yoghurt

3 eggs

125g (4.5oz) neutral flavoured oil

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

2 handfuls blueberries
(frozen are fine)

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F) and grease and line a 20cm (8in) cake tin with baking paper.

2. Mix almond meal, stevia and baking powder in a medium bowl. Add the yoghurt, eggs, oil and vanilla. Mix to combine but don't stress if you end up with a few lumps.

3. Pour the mixture into the prepared tin. Scatter over the blueberries and bake for 40 minutes or until the cake is golden brown and feels springy. And a skewer inserted in the middle comes out without any gooey cake attached.

4. Cool in the tin before serving.

This is my gluten-free version of the classic French yoghurt cake that I discovered in Pamela Druckerman's brilliant little book 'French Children Don't Throw Food'. It's one of Fergal's and my go-to cakes for our Sunday Baking Sessions. The yoghurt makes it super moist but also surprisingly light.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Best on the day of baking. Can be kept for a week or so in an airtight container in the fridge. Keeps for months in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

granular stevia – replace pure stevia with 2-3 tablespoons granular stevia.

no stevia – use your favourite sweetener... honey, maple syrup, xylitol or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level.

sugar lovers – use 50g (2oz) sugar instead of the stevia. If you like things on the sweeter side double the sugar.

nut-free / budget – replace almond meal with plain (all purpose) flour. Reduce baking time to 25-30 minutes.

choc-hazelnut – replace half the almond meal with hazelnut meal and replace blueberries with chopped chunks of chocolate.

different fruit – feel free to use your imagination! Raspberries, pitted cherries, blackberries, strawberries, roast peaches, rhubarb or roast pears are all lovely.

dairy-free – use coconut yoghurt or coconut cream instead of the yoghurt.

muffins – divide mixture between 8 lined holes in a 1/2 cup muffin tray. Bake for 20-25 minutes.

no yoghurt – use sour cream or whipping cream.

---cakes---

*Cherry & Ricotta
Crumble Cake*



Cherry & Ricotta Crumble Cake

MAKES 8-10 serves

TAKES 80 minutes

FOR THE BASE:

400g (14oz) almond meal

200g (7oz) butter, chopped

1/8 teaspoon pure stevia powder

2 teaspoons baking powder

FOR THE FILLING:

500g (1lb) smooth ricotta

1/8 teaspoon pure stevia powder

1 vanilla bean (optional)

2 handfuls cherries, pitted

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F) and grease and line a 24cm (9in) cake tin with baking paper.

2. Place almond meal, butter, stevia and baking powder in your food processor. Pulse or whizz in little bursts until the mixture comes together in coarse crumbs. Be careful not to mix to a smooth dough – you want it crumbly and loose.

3. Press HALF the crumbs into the base of the prepared cake tin to form the base.

4. Mix ricotta, extra stevia and the scraped seeds from your vanilla bean (if using) until combined. Save the outside of the vanilla bean for another use. Spread the ricotta filling over the base leaving a 1.5cm (1/2in) border around the edge.

5. Place cherries on top of the ricotta. I like to leave the middle clear so you can see the ricotta filling but it's up to you.

6. Loosely sprinkle the remaining crumbs around the edges of the tin to form a border around the ricotta.

This is an unusual cake that's like a cross between a cheesecake and a tart with a crumbly topping thrown in. It's soo good! Good enough to be the cake for both Finbar's 1st birthday and my Irishman's special days this year. If it's not cherry season where you are, any other fruit will work well (see variations for ideas).

IMPORTANT: Best to use smooth creamy ricotta from a tub rather than more crumbly ricotta from the deli.

7. Bake for 50 minutes to 1 hour until the cake is deeply browned.

8. Cool to room temperature before serving.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Best on the day of baking. Can be kept for a week or so in an airtight container in the fridge – still delicious but you lose the crunchy texture of the crumbs. Keeps for months in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

granular stevia – replace pure stevia powder with 2-3 tablespoons granular stevia in the base and another 2-3 tablespoons in the filling.

no stevia – use your favourite sweetener... honey, maple syrup, xylitol or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level.

sugar lovers – use 25g (1oz) sugar in the base and 50g (2oz) sugar in the filling instead of the stevia. If you like things on the sweeter side double the sugar.

nut-free / budget – replace almond meal with plain (all purpose) flour. Reduce baking time to 25-30 minutes.

Cherry & Ricotta Crumble Cake

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MORE VARIATIONS

choc-hazelnut – replace half the almond meal with hazelnut meal and replace cherries with chopped chunks of chocolate.

different fruit – feel free to use your imagination! Raspberries, blackberries, strawberries, sliced peaches, halved apricots, stewed apples, roast pears or cooked rhubarb are all lovely.

dairy-free – replace the ricotta filling with fresh or cooked fruit and use coconut oil instead of the butter – I haven't tried this!

no food processor – grate butter into the dry ingredients and rub in using your fingertips until you get the coarse crumbs.

no cherry-pitter – leave the stones in but don't forget to warn your guests!



Coconut Sponge Cake

Coconut Sponge Cake

MAKES 6–8 serves

TAKES 60 minutes

100g (3.5oz) coconut flour

2 teaspoons baking powder

1/4 teaspoon pure stevia powder

300g (10.5oz) natural (greek-style) yoghurt

3 eggs

400g (14oz) can unsweetened coconut cream or milk

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F) and grease and line a round 20cm (8in) cake tin with baking paper.

2. Mix coconut flour, stevia and baking powder in a medium bowl. Make a hole in the middle and add the yoghurt, eggs and coconut cream. Mix to combine but don't stress if you end up with a few lumps. I usually use a hand whisk to make it easier.

3. Pour the mixture into the prepared tin. Bake for 45-50 minutes or until the cake is golden brown and feels springy. And a skewer inserted in the middle comes out without any gooey cake attached.

4. Cool in the tin before serving.

While coconut flour has an excellent nutritional profile, it is fiendishly tricky to bake with because it absorbs crazy amounts of liquid. It took me months of experimenting to get this cake right but I was determined because I wanted to have a delicious go-to cake recipe that didn't rely on almond meal.

Light, super moist and easy to whip up, I'm so glad I persevered! And unlike a traditional sponge cake there isn't any whipping of egg whites required.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Best on the day of baking. Can be kept for a week or so in an airtight container in the fridge. Keeps for months in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

granular stevia – replace pure stevia powder with 4-6 tablespoons granular stevia.

no stevia – use your favourite sweetener... honey, maple syrup, xylitol or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level.

sugar lovers – use 50g (2oz) sugar instead of the stevia. If you like things on the sweeter side double the sugar.

no coconut flour – because it's such a unique ingredient, I'm afraid I can't offer an alternative. Try one of the other recipes in the book!

choc-coconut – sprinkle cake with chopped chunks of chocolate before baking. Or slather with chocolate butter ganache to ice once the cake is cool.

fruity – sprinkle over fresh or cooked fruit before baking! Raspberries, pitted cherries, blackberries, blueberries, strawberries and roast pears are all lovely.

dairy-free – use coconut yoghurt instead of the yoghurt. You could use your favourite dairy-free milk like almond milk just reduce the amount to 200g (7oz).

Coconut Sponge Cake



MORE VARIATIONS

muffins – divide mixture between 8 lined holes in a muffin tray. Bake for 20-25 minutes.

loaf pan – use a loaf pan approx 24cm x 12cm (9in x 5in) lined with baking paper. Bake for 50 minutes or slightly longer.

no coconut cream or milk – use cows milk or your favourite plant based milk.

*Strawberry Almond
Shortcakes*



Strawberry Almond Shortcakes

MAKES 6 serves

TAKES 30 minutes

200g (7oz) almond meal
2 tablespoons psyllium husks
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/8 teaspoon pure stevia powder
2 eggs
200g (7oz) sour cream
or greek yoghurt
handful raspberries (optional)
2 x 250g (9oz) punnets
strawberries, to serve
whipped cream
or double cream, to serve

---cakes---

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Line a tray with baking paper.
2. Mix almond meal, psyllium, baking powder and stevia in a medium bowl. Add eggs, and sour cream / yoghurt. Stir until just combined. Add raspberries (if using) and gently stir again. Stand for a few minutes to allow the psyllium to soak up the extra moisture.
3. Divide mixture into 6 and form each into a little shortcake ball. I find using wet hands helps stop it being too messy. Place balls on your prepared tray and flatten slightly.
4. Bake shortcakes for 15-20 minutes or until lovely and golden brown. While the shortcakes are baking remove stems from strawberries and slice. If they aren't as sweet as you'd like add a tiny pinch of stevia or a little sugar.
5. When the shortcakes are cooked, cool on a rack.
6. To serve slice shortcakes in half, layer strawberries on the bottom half and top generously with cream. Place shortcake lids on top.

I just love the idea of 'shortcakes' - such a cute name. I still remember the first time I grew my own strawberries, I couldn't believe how strong the flavour and aroma were. When I'm lucky enough to have access to amazing strawberries this is my favourite way to serve them. Although it's pretty tasty with mediocre berries too.

The raspberries may seem like a strange addition, but they add an extra boost of berry flavour. You can skip them if you don't have any rasps handy.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Best on the day of baking. Once they've been filled, they'll only last a few days (and will go soggy but still be tasty!) Unfilled shortcakes can be kept for a week or so in an airtight container in the fridge. I like to warm them in the oven slightly before serving with the strawberries and cream. Unfilled shortcakes keep for months in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

granular stevia - replace pure powder with 2-3 tablespoons granular stevia.

no stevia - use your favourite sweetener... honey, maple syrup, xylitol or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level.

sugar lovers - use 50g (2oz) sugar instead of the stevia. If you like things on the sweeter side, add more.

nut-free / budget - replace almond meal with finely ground sunflower seeds (I use a little coffee grinder) - no need to change the baking time.

different fruit - feel free to use your imagination! All berries are great but you could use any seasonal fruit instead. Sunny roast peaches are especially lovely with the raspberries in the cakes.

dairy-free / paleo - use coconut yoghurt or coconut cream instead of the sour cream / yoghurt.

higher fiber - add more psyllium or oat bran. You could also add ground linseeds (flax seeds) or chia seeds - or whole seeds for that matter.

smaller - form the shortcakes into 8 for a more dainty serve. Expect the baking time to be a few minutes less.



*No-Bake Chocolate
Cherry 'Cake'*

No-Bake Chocolate Cherry Cake

MAKES 6-8 serves

TAKES 60 minutes

250g (1 cup) whipping cream
(35% milk fat)

200g (7oz) dark chocolate

250g (9oz) pitted cherries
(defrosted if frozen)

1. Line a loaf tin with baking paper so the sides are covered. Place cream in a small saucepan and bring to a simmer.
2. Roughly chop the chocolate into chunks and place in a bowl. Pour hot cream over the chocolate and allow to stand for 5 minutes so it melts.
3. Stir until smooth then pour into the prepared pan. Arrange cherries on top.
4. Freeze until set – about 30 minutes.

This 'cake' is so so good. I made it for afternoon tea recently and Finbar (my 2-year-old) ate a whole slice before I realized what was happening. Of course he was then awake in the middle of the night from all the caffeine in the chocolate. A mistake I won't make again!

Back to the glories of this cake. It's an awesome stress-free dinner party show-stopper because you can make it ahead. It's super rich so serve dainty slices.. You can always go back for seconds!

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Will keep in the fridge for 2-3 days (if no one knows it's there). Can be frozen.

VARIATIONS

milk or white chocolate – don't be tempted to substitute in milk or white chocolate because there won't be enough cocoa butter coming from the chocolate to 'set' the cake. Plus all that sugar!

dairy free – replace the cream with coconut milk OR other dairy-free milk like soy milk or almond milk. The flavour profile will change, but not necessarily in a bad way.

crunchy – Sprinkle over shopped roast hazelnut or almonds.

lower carb – use 90% cocoa solids chocolate. You may or may not want to add a little stevia.

different fruit – any berries or a mixture of berries are lovely with chocolate.

short on time – serve cherries + shaved chocolate and cream.



--- Muffins ---

muffins

Chocolate Cream Cheese Muffins

Christmas Morning Muffins

Crunchy Peanut Butter Muffins

Quick Strawberry Muffins

Chunky Pear Cupcakes



*Chocolate Cream Cheese
Muffins*

Chocolate Cream Cheese Muffins

MAKES 6

TAKES 30 minutes

50g (2oz) butter

100g (3.5oz) dark chocolate

125g (4oz) cream cheese

100g (3.5oz) almond meal

1/8 teaspoon pure stevia powder

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

2 eggs

1. Preheat oven to 180C (350F). Line 6 holes of a 1/2 cup muffin tray with squares of baking paper or muffin papers.

2. Melt butter in a small saucepan. Remove from the heat, break chocolate into chunks and add to the butter. Stand for a few minutes.

3. While the chocolate melts, place cream cheese, almond meal, stevia, baking powder, and eggs in your food processor. Process until just combined.

4. When the chocolate has melted, stir butter and chocolate to combine. Pour into the food processor and whizz again until everything is evenly chocolate.

5. Spoon mixture into your prepared muffin tray. Bake for 15-20 minutes or until the muffins feel springy when touched.

6. Cool in the tin, then serve.

These muffins took quite a while to get right. When I removed the sugar from my favourite gluten-free chocolate muffins they didn't have the right texture.

Then one day I had the brain-wave to substitute cream cheese and stevia for the sugar. Instant winner! Now I actually love these more than the original.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Can be kept for 1-2 weeks in an airtight container in the fridge. Keeps for months in the freezer. I like to slice before freezing and defrost slices in the toaster (delicious with lashings of butter).

VARIATIONS

granular stevia – replace pure stevia powder with 2-3 tablespoons granular stevia.

no stevia – use your favourite sweetener... honey, maple syrup, xylitol or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level.

sugar lovers – use 100g (3.5oz) sugar instead of the stevia. If you like things on the sweeter side, add more.

dairy-free – you'll need a different muffin recipe.

nut-free – replace almond meal with ground sunflower seeds or plain all-purpose flour.

different chocolate – if you're OK with extra sugar, feel free to use milk or white chocolate. I use 70% cocoa solids chocolate for baking but sometimes use 90% for a more intense chocolatey hit!

more cream cheese – serve with a cream cheese frosting on top.

---muffins---



*Christmas
Morning
Muffins*

Christmas Morning Muffins

MAKES 8

TAKES 40 minutes

125g (4.5oz) unsalted butter

250g (9oz) almond meal

1/4 teaspoon pure stevia powder

2 teaspoons baking powder

250g (9oz) natural yoghurt
(Greek style)

2 eggs

1 teaspoon vanilla extract
(optional)

125g (4oz) punnet raspberries
(frozen are fine)

2 handfuls dark chocolate chunks

1. Preheat oven to 180C (350F). Line 8 holes of a 1/2 cup muffin tray with squares of baking paper or muffin papers.

2. Melt butter in a small saucepan. Place almond meal, stevia, baking powder, yoghurt, eggs, melted butter and vanilla (if using) in a medium bowl. Mix with a spoon until just combined.

3. Spoon mixture into your prepared muffin tray. Top each muffin with your raspberries and chocolate chunks.

4. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until the muffins are golden brown and feel springy when touched.

5. Cool in the tin, then serve.

These are my all-time favourite muffins. They're so delicious that we've developed a Christmas tradition around them. Every Christmas morning I bake a batch of these to have for an indulgent breakkie after a hard morning of present opening.

Of course you don't need to wait until December 25th to make them, just change the name to Raspberry & Dark Chocolate Muffins and you're good to go any day of the year.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

I like these best on the day they're made but after they've had a chance to cool down a little so the chocolate isn't still molten. I find them too rich straight from the oven. Can be kept for 1-2 weeks in an airtight container in the fridge. Keeps for months in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

granular stevia – replace pure powder with 4-6 tablespoons granular stevia.

no stevia – use your favourite sweetener... honey, maple syrup, xylitol or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level.

sugar lovers – use 75g (3oz) sugar instead of the stevia. If you like things on the sweeter side add more.

dairy-free – coconut oil and coconut yoghurt (or use your favourite dairy-free milk).

nut-free – replace almond meal with ground sunflower seeds or plain all-purpose flour (reduce cooking time if using flour).

different flavourings – skip the chocolate or raspberries for a plain muffin. Or play around with different fruit options. Other berries are all good but feel free to use your imagination!

---muffins---

Crunchy Peanut Butter Muffins



Crunchy Peanut Butter Muffins

MAKES 6

TAKES 30 minutes

150g (5oz) natural (Greek)
yoghurt

200g (7oz) crunchy peanut butter
1 egg

1/4 teaspoon pure stevia powder

1 teaspoon baking powder

1 teaspoon vanilla (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 180C (350F). Line 6 holes of a 1/2 cup muffin tray with papers.

2. Combine yoghurt, peanut butter, egg, stevia, baking powder and vanilla (if using) in a medium bowl.

3. Spoon the mixture into your 6 prepared holes.

4. Bake for 20 – 25 minutes or until the muffins are golden brown and a skewer inserted in the middle comes out without any gooey cake attached.

5. Cool in the tin then serve with an extra dollop of peanut butter if you like.

Peanut butter is one of my all time favourite ingredients for baking (and eating off a spoon!). So of course I just had to include a peanut butter muffin recipe in this book. These muffins are so so good. The peanut butter brings so much flavour and richness while the yoghurt keeps the texture moist and light.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Best on the day they're made. Can be kept for 1-2 weeks in an airtight container in the fridge. Keeps for months in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

granular stevia – replace pure powder with 4-6 tablespoons granular stevia.

no stevia – use your favourite sweetener... honey, maple syrup, xylitol or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level.

sugar lovers – use 75g (3oz) sugar instead of the stevia. If you like things on the sweeter side add more. Brown sugar works really well with peanut butter.

dairy-free – coconut yoghurt or coconut cream instead of the yoghurt.

nut-free – replace peanut butter with sunbutter (and don't forget to change the name!)

different flavourings – chunks of chocolate are a nice addition as are blueberries or raspberries (to give a PB&J vibe).

extra crunchy – toss in a handful of roasted peanuts.

no yoghurt – If I don't have yoghurt I use whipping cream instead.

---muffins---



*Quick strawberry
muffins*

Quick strawberry muffins

MAKES 2

TAKES 30 minutes

6 tablespoons almond meal
(40g / 1.5oz)

3 tablespoons yoghurt (60g / 2oz)

2 tablespoons oil (30g / 1oz)

1 egg

1 tablespoon granular stevia
(15g / 0.5oz)

1/4 teaspoon baking powder

1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
(optional)

4 strawberries,
dehulled and chopped

1. Preheat oven to 180C (350F). Line 2 holes of a 1/2 cup muffin tray with papers. Or grease two small mugs, ramekins or tea cups.

2. Combine almond meal, yoghurt, oil, egg, stevia, baking powder and vanilla (if using) in a small bowl.

3. Spoon the mixture into your 2 prepared holes. Top with strawberry chunks.

4. Bake for 20 – 25 minutes or until the muffins are golden brown and feel springy when touched.

5. Cool in the tin.

Normally I prefer to weigh my ingredients when baking because its quick and so much more reliable. But occasionally its nice to just use a spoon to measure everything.

Its also nice, occasionally, to make a small batch so you don't have 'oh-so-tempting' leftovers lying around! This recipe is perfect for those days because it makes two dainty serves. They're really delicious though so I've included the quantities for a larger batch in the variations.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

I like these best on the day they're made. Can be kept for 1-2 weeks in an airtight container in the fridge. Keeps for months in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

extra strawberry! – double the strawberries and stir some in with the mixture before filling the muffin pans.

pure stevia powder – for the small batch of these muffins I use granular stevia because it's hard to measure a really small amount of the pure powder. But you could just add a tiny pinch to taste if you don't have granular stevia. Or make the bigger batch below.

no stevia – use your favourite sweetener... honey, maple syrup, xylitol or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level.

sugar lovers – use 2 tablespoons sugar instead of the stevia. If you like things on the sweeter side add more.

bigger batch – to make 8 muffins you'll need 160g (5.5oz) almond meal, 240g (8.5oz) yoghurt, 120g (4oz) oil, 4 eggs, 60g (2oz) granular stevia* OR 1/4 teaspoon pure stevia powder (see note above), 1 teaspoon baking powder, 2 teaspoons vanilla extract, 16 strawberries. Baking time will be the same.

---muffins---

Quick strawberry muffins

MORE VARIATIONS

dairy-free – coconut yoghurt or coconut cream instead of the yoghurt (or use your favourite dairy-free milk).

nut-free – replace almond meal with ground sunflower seeds or plain all-purpose flour.

different flavourings – chunks of chocolate are a nice addition as are blueberries or raspberries or other ripe seasonal fruit.

no yoghurt – if I don't have yoghurt, I use whipping cream instead.



*Chunky Pear
Cupcakes*



Chunky Pear Cupcakes

MAKES 6
TAKES 40 minutes

100g (3.5oz) unsalted butter
50g (1.75oz) coconut flour
1/8 teaspoon pure stevia powder
1 teaspoon baking powder
2 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
(optional)
1 cup milk
1 medium pear, diced

1. Preheat oven to 180C (350F). Line 6 holes of a 1/2 cup muffin tray with papers.
2. Melt butter in a small saucepan. Place coconut flour, stevia, baking powder, eggs, melted butter, vanilla (if using) and milk in a medium bowl.
3. Mix with a spoon or whisk until you have a smoothish batter. A few lumps won't be the end of the world. Stir in pear chunks.
4. Spoon mixture into your prepared muffin tray.
5. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until the muffins are deeply golden brown and feel springy when touched.
6. Cool for a few minutes in the tin, then move to a cake rack to finish cooling.

These 'cupcakes' started out life as a muffin. I was determined to have a coconut flour based muffin in this book because it won't be long before I have a boy at school and will need to send nut-free treats. While I love these little goodies, my recipe tester thought the texture wasn't muffin-like enough. She then went on to say they loved the flavour and her 10-month-old ate them all up. So I figured we needed a name change to manage expectations. These cupcakes are very moist and light which I adore but if you're after a more traditional 'cakey' muffin best to try another recipe.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

I like these best on the day they're made but after they've had a chance to cool down. Can be kept for 1-2 weeks in an airtight container in the fridge. Keeps for months in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

granular stevia – replace pure powder with 2-3 tablespoons granular stevia.

no stevia – use your favourite sweetener... honey, maple syrup, xylitol or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level.

sugar lovers – use 50g (1.75oz) sugar instead of the stevia. If you like things on the sweeter side add more.

dairy-free – coconut oil or other neutral flavoured oil instead of the butter. And your favourite plant based milk.

pear & chocolate – for more decadence add a handful of chopped chocolate chunks with the pear.

pear & pecan – add a handful of chopped pecans. They won't be nut-free but they will sure be delicious!

Chunky Pear Cupcakes

MORE VARIATIONS

apple cinnamon – replace pear with a nice sweet apple and add 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon to the batter.

different fruit – use your imagination. Berries are great or banana. Roast rhubarb is also amazing. If you don't mind the sugar, dried fruit like figs, apricots dates or prunes will also work well.

no coconut flour – try one of the other muffin recipes in the book. Although it's not too hard to track down these days, my supermarket stocks coconut flour in the health food and baking sections.



--- Fruit ---

Fruit

Vanilla Roast Pears

Stupidly Easy Banana Bread

Strawberry Ripple Cheesecake

Rosy Roast Rhubarb

Sunny Roast Peaches

Fergal's Prunes

Buttered Peaches

Strawberries with Balsamic & Mascarpone

Lemon Curd

Vanilla Roast Pears



Vanilla Roast Pears

MAKES 24 pieces
TAKES 70 minutes

6-8 pears

2-4 hunks of butter

1 vanilla bean, finely sliced or
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Quarter pears, lengthwise. Remove any seeds.
2. Layer pears in a baking dish. Top with butter and vanilla. Cover with foil and baked for 30 minutes.
3. Remove foil and stir. Return to the oven uncovered this time and bake for another 20-30 minutes or until the pears are soft and slightly browned. The less ripe your pears are the longer they will take to cook.
4. Serve warm or allow to cool and refrigerate.

Roasting fruit like this is brilliant for enhancing the natural sweetness without adding sugar. Fergal and Finbar just love these pears. I'm constantly amazed how many they can gobble in one sitting.

They make a super lovely dessert for adults too. I'm also quite partial to serving them with yoghurt and granola for breakfast. The quantities are totally a guideline - double or halve the recipe depending on how much fruit you have.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Store in an airtight container or ziplock bag in the fridge. Can be eaten cold or warmed either in the oven or in a pan with a little butter or coconut oil. Will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or so. Can be frozen for up to 12 months.

VARIATIONS

different fruit – apples, peaches, nectarines, apricots, cherries or plums are all brilliant cooked this way.

no vanilla? – just skip it or replace with a cinnamon stick.

dairy-free – replace butter with coconut oil or just skip it.

vanilla 'essence' – this is basically fake vanilla flavour. I prefer to use real vanilla beans or real vanilla extract. But if 'essence' is all you can get a little will be OK.

different flavourings – replace the vanilla with lemon zest, a cinnamon stick, a very small piece of star anise.

more 'saucy' – add 1/2 cup dessert wine to the pears before covering with foil.

*Stupidly Easy
Banana Bread*



Stupidly Easy Banana Bread

MAKES 6–8 serves

TAKES 50 minutes

3 super ripe bananas
100g (3.5oz) coconut oil, melted
3 eggs
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon cinnamon (optional)
220g (8oz) almond meal

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Line a loaf pan 24cm x 12cm (approx 9in x 5in) with baking paper.
2. Mash bananas until smoothish, then add coconut oil, eggs, baking powder, cinnamon (if using) and almond meal. Mix thoroughly.
3. Bake for 30-45 minutes or until the loaf is golden and feels springy when you touch it.
4. Cool in the pan, then slice and serve.

Adapted from my lovely neighbour Heather. I love this bread served as a cake for afternoon tea with some double cream. It's also lovely toasted for breakfast smeared with butter or ricotta. But I do want to manage your expectations – it is more of a simple 'bread' loaf rather than the sugary concoctions you often see in cafes. You need super ripe bananas to get enough sweetness. If your bananas aren't starting to blacken, see the sweeter variation below. Remember bananas are pretty carby so go easy if you're watching your blood sugar.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Best on the day of baking. Can be kept for a week or two in an airtight container in the fridge. Keeps for months in the freezer – I slice it first so I can quickly defrost in the toaster.

VARIATIONS

sweeter – add in 1/4 teaspoon pure stevia powder or a few tablespoons maple syrup, honey or sugar. Essential if your bananas aren't on the blackened / over-ripe stage.

different spices – Heather uses a combo of nutmeg and cinnamon but I didn't have any nutmeg so skipped it. Ginger or mixed spice would also be lovely.

no coconut oil – just use melted unsalted butter. Or Heather says she sometimes skips the oil.

less oil – Heather uses 35g (1.25oz) coconut oil but I prefer more to make it super moist and help lower the GI.

coconut oil too hard – just pop your jar in the oven while it preheats. Be careful not to forget about it!

nut-free – you could try replacing the almond meal with plain all-purpose flour, I'd probably increase the oil as well.

---fruit---

CARB
ALERT!

Stupidly Easy Banana Bread

MORE VARIATIONS

no fan assist on your oven? – increase the set temp to 180C (350F).

no banana – use mashed roast sweet potato or pumpkin puree (with a little extra sweetener) or roasted pears.

chocolate! – do as my recipe tester did and stir in a handful of your favourite chocolate chips or chunks.

crunchy – add a few handfuls chopped nuts such as walnuts or pecans.

Strawberry Ripple Cheesecake



Strawberry Ripple Cheesecake

MAKES 2 serves

TAKES 10 minutes

250g (9oz) ripe strawberries

250g (9oz) mascarpone

1. Keep 2 good looking strawberries aside. Remove the stems of the remaining strawberries. Place them in a small bowl and smash with a fork or your hands until you have a chunky mess.
2. Stir in the mascarpone until the strawberries are 'rippled' through it.
3. Divide between two little glasses or tea cups. Top with the reserved strawberries. Eat now or refrigerate until you're ready to serve.

It's hard to go past a good cheesecake. These little individual ones are super quick to make and best of all don't leave you with a heap of tempting leftovers. Mascarpone is a delicious Italian cream cheese. If you can't find it see the 'variations' for alternatives.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Best on the day it's made. Can be kept for a few days in an airtight container in the fridge. Don't freeze.

VARIATIONS

dairy-free / paleo – replace mascarpone with 'cashew cheese' – soak 200g raw cashews in water for at least 6 hours. Drain and whizz in a food processor with a little water until smooth and creamy. Add more water if too thick. Another alternative here would be to replace mascarpone with chilled coconut cream (discard watery part).

different fruit – lovely with raspberries or blueberries. Or for a lemon version use a commercial lemon curd instead of the berries.

no mascarpone? – replace with other soft creamy cheese such as ricotta or even Philadelphia cream cheese.

crunchy – line the base of your cups with roasted chopped nuts or your fave granola.

sweeter – if your strawberries aren't super ripe, add in a little stevia or your choice of sweetener.

*Rosy
Roast Rhubarb*



Rosy Roast Rhubarb

MAKES 4 serves

TAKES 40 minutes

2 bunches rhubarb

1/4 teaspoon pure stevia powder

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Wash rhubarb and trim stalks, discarding the leaves (which are poisonous!). Cut stalks into 5cm (2in) lengths and layer into an oven proof roasting dish.

2. Cover with foil. Bake for 20-30 minutes or until rhubarb is tender and no longer crunchy. Try not to stir and poke it too much as it will lose its shape. Serve warm or cold.

Rhubarb is one of my favourite favourite fruit. I just love the beautiful rosy syrup you get when roasting rhubarb like this. The fragrant, tart flavour is beautiful in so many desserts but especially with some [vanilla panna cotta](#) or instead of cherries on [this crumble cake](#).

I also love it with yoghurt and granola for breakkie. It's also really low in sugar so the perfect fruit for diabetics when sweetened with stevia.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Can be kept for 2 weeks or more in an airtight container in the fridge. Keeps for months in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

granular stevia – replace pure powder with 6 tablespoons granular stevia.

no stevia – use your favourite sweetener... honey, maple syrup, xylitol or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level. I used to use 100g (3.5oz) sugar.

real vanilla – replace vanilla extract with 1 vanilla bean – I just slice it on the diagonal into 1 inch pieces.

rhubarb & strawberry – halve and dehull a few handfuls of strawberries and toss in with the rhubarb for extra fragrance and pinkness.

rhubarb & orange / more saucy – drizzle over the juice of one orange before roasting.



Sunny Roast Peaches

Sunny Roast Peaches

MAKES 4–6 serves

TAKES 60 minutes

4–6 peaches

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F).
2. Rinse peaches and layer in a baking dish. Sometimes I halve them and remove the stones but usually I just bake them whole.
3. Cover with foil and bake for 50-60 minutes or until the peaches are soft and squishy. The riper your peaches are, the less time they'll take.
4. Serve warm or cold.

I only became a huge fan of peaches a few years ago when I started roasting them. It's almost magical how a little spell in the oven transforms them into super sweet sunny globes of goodness. Now they're one of my favourite Summer fruit.

Roasting fruit like this is brilliant for enhancing the natural sweetness without adding sugar. These peaches are delicious on their own as a serve of fruit (especially for small boys). They also make a super lovely dessert for adults served with double cream and a sprinkle of roast nuts for crunch.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Can be kept for 1-2 weeks in an airtight container in the fridge. Keeps for months in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

different fruit – my favourite way to cook all stone fruit (think apricots, nectarines, plums, cherries), apples and pears. I usually quarter apples and pears to remove the seeds. And sometimes I halve apricots or plums and remove the stone, if I can be bothered. I usually pit cherries first because I'm feeding them to little ones (who I must really love because it takes for-ev-er). Smaller fruit will take less time to cook.

different flavourings – feel free to add a chopped vanilla bean or some lemon zest.

more 'saucy' – leave peaches to cool with a foil cover on.

Fergal's Prunes



Fergal's Prunes

MAKES 2 serves

TAKES 10 minutes

8-12 pitted prunes

double cream
or whipped cream, to serve

1. Place prunes in a heatproof bowl. Cover with boiling water and stand for a few minutes. (But if you have a hungry baby near by, just stand for 30 seconds).

2. Drain prunes. Divide between 2 little bowls and serve topped with the cream.

I didn't used to appreciate prunes. I just associated them with keeping 'regular' and not much more. But when Fergal needed some help in that department I started buying prunes. He loved them so much I used to worry he would turn into a tiny prune.

A brilliant side effect of all of this is that I now love prunes as much as Fergal. They're delicious and have a fraction of the sugar of dates or figs.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Unsoaked prunes will keep in the pantry for months. Once soaked, refrigerate prunes in an airtight container or ziplock bag for up to 2 weeks. Keep cream in a separate container. Can be frozen for up to 12 months.

VARIATIONS

chocolate – prunes love chocolate. Either just shave over your favourite dark chocolate or melt some and drizzle it over the cream.

different accompaniments – also lovely with vanilla ice cream, double cream or whipped cream.

vegan / dairy-free – serve with coconut cream or coconut yoghurt.

different fruit – any dried fruit can be used here. Apricots are lovely as are dates or figs. Just be mindful of the sugar content especially in dates and figs.

crunchy – top with some roast sliced almonds or your favourite granola.

boozy – add a little brandy, Baileys, Frangelico or Tia Maria to the prunes after they've been soaked and drained.

paleo (gluten, grain + dairy-free) – serve prunes with coconut yoghurt or melted chocolate.



Buttered Peaches

Buttered Peaches

MAKES 2 serves

TAKES 10 minutes

*2-3 ripe peaches or other stone fruit,
sliced into wedges*

2-3 tablespoons unsalted butter

1/2 vanilla bean (optional)

*double cream
or whipped cream, to serve*

- 1.** Heat a small frying pan on a medium heat. Add butter and when it melts, add peach wedges.
- 2.** If using vanilla, scrape the seeds and add to the pan. Save the stalk for another use.
- 2.** Cook peaches, stirring every few minutes until the peaches are warm and just a little bit browned in places. About 5 minutes.
- 3.** Serve warm peaches and the pan juices topped with cream.

I used to think that fruit for dessert was a bit boring. But having a baby in the house who loves fruit, I've changed my mind. Fruit can be a really delicious dessert as long as you use great quality produce and treat it with a little love and some butter!

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Refrigerate cooked fruit in an airtight container or ziplock bag. Keep cream in a separate container. Fruit will last in the fridge for 2 weeks or so. Can be frozen for up to 12 months.

VARIATIONS

pantry – use a drained can of peaches instead. I prefer peaches packed in juice not the extra sweet sugar syrup.

different fruit – lovely with any stone fruit such as nectarines, plums or apricots. Also lovely with pears or apples (add a pinch of cinnamon).

more substantial – serve with roasted almonds or crumbled sweet biscuits (cookies) such as shortbread.

different accompaniments – creamy ricotta, sour cream, double cream, vanilla ice cream are all good.

paleo (grain, legume & dairy-free) – coconut oil instead of butter and coconut yoghurt instead of cream.

*strawberries with
Balsamic and Mascarpone*



Strawberries with Balsamic and Mascarpone

MAKES 2-4 serves

TAKES 10 minutes

1 tablespoon aged
balsamic vinegar

250g (9oz) strawberries

mascarpone
or thick cream, to serve

1. Remove the tops from the strawberries and slice lengthwise.

2. Toss with the vinegar. Serve with mascarpone or cream.

Strawberries picked fresh from the garden are thing of beauty. Unfortunately, I find that commercially grown strawberries hardly ever come close. This is where a little balsamic vinegar can make all the difference. It may sound a little weird, but it's amazing how the balsamic intensifies the flavor of less-than-perfect strawberries. It's critical that you use an aged balsamic (15+ years) as younger vinegar won't have enough sweetness and will taste weird. See the variations below if you only have supermarket balsamic available.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Marinated strawberries will keep for a few days in the fridge. They can be frozen but will be all mushy when defrosted.

VARIATIONS

sweeter – add a little stevia or sugar to the balsamic.

dairy-free/vegan – serve with whipped coconut cream instead of the mascarpone.

different berries – raspberries would be my second choice.

more wintery – replace strawberries with prunes or other dried fruit that have been covered in boiling water and allowed to stand for 10 minutes before draining.

no aged balsamic? – if you only have access to inexpensive supermarket balsamic, halve the amount and replace with extra sugar or stevia. You really need a 15+ year aged balsamic to contribute enough sweetness on its own.

carb lovers / more substantial – serve with shortbread or other plain sweet biscuits (cookies).

paleo (grain, legume & dairy-free) – replace mascarpone with coconut yoghurt.



Lemon Curd

Lemon Curd

MAKES about 1 1/2 cups

TAKES 30 minutes

125g (4.5oz) unsalted butter

3 eggs

1/4 teaspoon pure stevia powder

125g (4.5oz) lemon juice

zest of 1 lemon

1. Place butter, eggs, stevia, lemon juice and zest in a medium saucepan and place over a medium low heat.

2. Stir until butter has melted, then keep cooking and stirring until the mixture has thickened like a custard. If you like to check the temperature, about 65C (150F) is what you're aiming for. But you will be able to tell when it's thick enough. The butter will further thicken it as it cools.

3. Remove from the heat and pass through a sieve.

4. Place in a clean dry jar. Refrigerate to allow to set before using.

Lovers of all things zesty and sunny yellow won't struggle to find uses for lemon curd also known as lemon butter. It's somewhere between a lemon jam and a custard. My favourite way to use it is to mix with mascarpone to make a quick no-bake cheesecake filling.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Can be kept for 1-2 weeks in an airtight container in the fridge. Keeps for months in the freezer. I like to slice before freezing and defrost slices in the toaster (delicious with lashings of butter).

VARIATIONS

granular stevia – replace pure stevia powder with 4-6 tablespoons granular stevia

no stevia – use your favourite sweetener... honey, maple syrup, xylitol or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level. I used to use 75g (2.5oz) white sugar.

lime / orange curd – replace the lemon juice and zest with limes. Or use oranges or a mixture of citrus.

passionfruit curd – replace half the lemon juice with passion fruit pulp either with or without the seeds.

dairy-free – replace the butter with coconut oil.



--- Chocolate ---

Chocolate

Chocolate Coconut Brownies
Peanut Butter Chocolate Fudge
Pure Chocolate Mousse
Silky Smooth Chocolate Fondant Cake
Moist Chocolate & Zucchini Loaf
Quick Raw Brownies
Chocolate Butter Ganache
Easy Little Chocolate Puddings
Chocolate Peanut Butter Thins
The Great Aussie Lamington
No Bake Chocolate Pecan 'Tart'
Sweet Potato Brownies

---chocolate---

Chocolate Coconut Brownies



Chocolate Coconut Brownies

MAKES about 12 large squares

TAKES 30 minutes + cooling

150g (5oz) butter or coconut oil

150g (5oz) dark chocolate
(at least 70% cocoa solids), chopped

1/4 teaspoon pure stevia powder

6 eggs

50g (1.75oz) coconut flour

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Line a rectangular tin approx 16x26cm (6x10in) with baking paper.
2. Melt butter or coconut oil. Remove from the heat. Add chocolate and stand for a few minutes.
3. Stir and when the chocolate has melted add the stevia and eggs, stirring well. Then add the coconut flour and stir until well mixed.
4. Pour into the prepared pan and bake for 9-12 minutes or until just cooked around the edges but still a little moist in the middle. It's super important not to over bake!
5. Cool in the tin for at least an hour but preferably longer before cutting into squares.

These brownies were the first success I had baking with coconut flour. I was so excited that I could actually make a sweet treat that was also low carb. Yay! Plus they're delicious with that rich, squidgy texture all good brownies possess.

SUPER IMPORTANT: It can be easy to over bake these brownies so make sure you set your timer! It's better to err on the side of slightly under baked otherwise the texture will end up rubbery.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

While they're lovely freshly baked, this is one of those brownie recipes that improves with age. I like to (try to) leave them for 24 hours for that heavenly squidgy brownie texture. I think they're much better when they've had a bit of time so the moisture from the less cooked middle redistributes out to the edges. Can be kept for 1-2 weeks in an airtight container in the fridge. Keeps for months in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

granular stevia – replace pure powder with 4-6 tablespoons granular stevia.

no stevia – use your favourite sweetener... honey, maple syrup, xylitol or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level.

sugar lovers – use 100g (3.5oz) sugar instead of the stevia. If you like things on the sweeter side add more.

egg-free / vegan – I'm afraid the eggs are really critical here. Best to find another recipe.

vanilla – not essential but 2 teaspoons of vanilla extract added with the eggs can be lovely.

chunky – add a handful of chopped nuts. Pecans are my fave.

---chocolate---



Peanut Butter Chocolate Fudge

Peanut Butter Chocolate Fudge

MAKES 16–20 squares

TAKES 20 minutes + setting

200g (7oz) coconut milk

200g (7oz) dark chocolate, 70%
cocoa solids, chopped

100g (3.5oz) peanut butter

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

4 tablespoons oat bran (optional)

1. Bring coconut milk to a simmer in a medium saucepan. Meanwhile, line a loaf pan with foil or baking paper.
2. Remove from the heat and add the chocolate. Stand for a few minutes so the chocolate melts.
3. Stir in the peanut butter, vanilla and oat bran (if using). I like to leave a few chunks of peanut butter in the mixture.
4. Transfer fudge mixture to the prepared tin and refrigerate for a few hours, or until set.
5. Chop into small squares.

Fudge isn't something you'd normally associate with healthy treats. But this version is super special, with no added sugar and hidden 'fiber' in the form of oat bran.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Can be kept for months in an airtight container in the fridge. Keeps for years in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

nut-free – just skip the peanut butter.

dairy lovers – replace the coconut milk with regular whipping cream.

fiber plus – double the level of oat bran in the recipe.

gluten-free – replace oat bran with psyllium husks or chia seeds or linseeds (flax seeds).

budget – skip the vanilla extract.

super crunchy – mix in a handful of roasted peanut halves.

different nuts – use your favourite nut butter – all nuts love chocolate!

lower carb – use higher cocoa solids chocolate (90% is great). You might need to add a little sweetener but then again you may not.

---chocolate---

Pure Chocolate Mousse



Pure Chocolate Mousse

MAKES 2 serves

TAKES 20 minutes

100g (3.5oz) dark chocolate
(70% cocoa solids minimum)

1. Prepare an ice bath by placing a tray of ice cubes with water to cover them in a large mixing bowl. Place a smaller bowl inside.
2. Weigh 85g (3oz) water into a small saucepan. Break chocolate into chunks and add to the water.
3. Place over a low heat and stir for a minute or so until the chocolate is just melted. Be careful not to let it get too hot or the chocolate will split.
4. Transfer melted chocolate to the smaller bowl and whisk with a balloon whisk until you have a light moussy texture. Divide between two pretty serving glasses. Serve immediately.

One of my students, Kathryn, came up with a super difficult brief - dessert that is dairy, sugar, artificial sweetener and grain-free. And I think coconut-free as well. Anyway, I love a challenge and this pure chocolate mousse, inspired by Heston Blumenthal, ticks all the boxes. But not only that, it's absolutely delicious as well. One of those divine things that is both light and rich at the same time. And very satisfying.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Best when freshly made. You could make these and keep in a cool place for a few hours but the texture starts to go a little grainy as the chocolate cools and the fat crystals form. Don't put it in the fridge or you'll end up with a solid block.

VARIATIONS

chocolate hazelnut – serve sprinkled with finely chopped roasted hazelnuts or mix them through the mousse.

milk chocolate – don't be tempted to use milk chocolate to make the mousse – there won't be enough cocoa fat to get the mixture to whip. Instead separately whip some cream and fold the two mousses together.

chocolate swirl – as per the milk chocolate, but only partially combine the two mousses so you end up with a lovely swirled pattern.

chocolate snow – those who prefer a less bitter chocolate might appreciate a dusting of icing (powdered) sugar over the top of their mousse.

lower carb – use 90% cocoa solids chocolate. You may or may not like to add a little sweetener.

salted chocolate – serve with a few sea salt flakes sprinkled over.

---chocolate---



*Silky Smooth
Chocolate Fondant Cake*

Silky Smooth Chocolate Fondant Cake

MAKES 8–10 serves

TAKES 30 minutes

250g (8.5oz) unsalted butter

250g (8.5oz) dark chocolate
(70% cocoa solids)

6 eggs

1/4 teaspoon pure stevia powder

1 tablespoon chickpea flour
or all-purpose flour

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Line a 20cm (8in) round cake tin with baking paper. Grease sides with a little butter.

2. Melt butter in a small saucepan. Remove from heat and add chopped chocolate. Stand for a few minutes to allow the chocolate to melt.

3. When the chocolate has melted add the eggs one at a time, stirring well after each. The mixture will start to look curdled or 'split' but don't stress! Add stevia and flour and keep stirring until the mixture becomes smooth, silky and utterly gorgeous (trust me, it will feel like a miracle!). If the mixture still looks curdled, keep stirring – it can take a while. I find a wooden spoon works best.

4. Pour chocolatey goodness into your prepared pan and bake for 10 minutes or until the edges are just starting to puff up and feel a little springy. **SUPER IMPORTANT:** You want to err on the side of under baked to keep it lovely and moist and molten in the middle.

5. Cool in the pan. Slice into dainty portions (it's very rich so a little goes a long way).

Everyone needs a show-stopping super rich chocolate cake recipe in their repertoire. This cake is the business! It's the perfect thing to serve your choc-a-holic friends or anyone you really want to impress.

SUPER IMPORTANT: This cake cooks really quickly. So make sure you set your timer. I made this for our new year's eve dessert and over baked it. While my guests were very kind and said it was delicious, I was kicking myself the whole time because I knew it could have been so much better.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Can be kept for 1-2 weeks in an airtight container in the fridge. Keeps for months in the freezer. I like to slice before freezing and defrost slices in the toaster (delicious with lashings of butter).

VARIATIONS

granular stevia – replace pure stevia powder with 4-6 tablespoons granular stevia.

no stevia – use your favourite sweetener... honey, maple syrup, xylitol or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level.

sugar lovers – use 100g (3.5oz) sugar instead of the stevia. If you like things on the sweeter side add more.

dairy-free – coconut oil.

no flour – I'm afraid you really need the flour to bring the mixture together. I use chickpea flour because it's gluten-free and is the only flour I keep in the house. Don't substitute almond meal.

chunky – stir in chopped nuts before baking.

black forest – serve topped with fresh or roasted cherries and lots of cream.

pear & chocolate – top with slices of roast pear before baking.

egg-free – sorry! Eggs are critical here.

---chocolate---

Moist Chocolate and Zucchini Loaf



Moist Chocolate and Zucchini Loaf

MAKES 1 loaf
TAKES 60 minutes

150g (5oz) unsalted butter

200g (7oz) dark chocolate
(70% cocoa solids or higher)

300g (10oz) zucchini, grated

4 eggs

250g (9oz) almond meal

1/4 teaspoon pure stevia powder

2 teaspoons baking powder

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F) fan assisted. Line a loaf pan 24cm x 12cm (approx 9in x 5in) with baking paper.

2. Melt butter in a small saucepan. Remove from heat and add chopped chocolate. Stand to allow the chocolate to melt.

3. Meanwhile, grate zucchini using your food processor or a box grater. When the chocolate has melted add the butter-chocolate mixture to the grated zucchini. Add the eggs, almond meal, stevia and baking powder. Mix with a spoon until just combined.

4. Pour into your prepared pan and bake for 45-50 minutes or until the loaf feels springy when you touch it. And a skewer inserted into the middle come out without any gooey cake stuck to it.

5. Cool in the pan then slice and serve (preferably with lashings of double cream).

One of the first food blogs I ever discovered was [Chocolate & Zucchini](#) by my lovely Parisian mate Clotilde. I'm still a huge fan and I just love the idea of combining two seemingly opposite ingredients to make a cake that ticks all the right boxes.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Can be kept for 1-2 weeks in an airtight container in the fridge. Keeps for months in the freezer. I like to slice before freezing and defrost slices in the toaster (delicious with lashings of butter).

VARIATIONS

granular stevia – replace pure powder with 4-6 tablespoons granular stevia.

no stevia – use your favourite sweetener... Honey, maple syrup, xylitol or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level.

sugar lovers – use 100g (3.5oz) sugar instead of the stevia. If you like things on the sweeter side, add more.

dairy-free – coconut oil.

nut-free – replace almond meal with ground sunflower seeds. Don't use ground flax (linseeds) or chia as they will completely change the texture. You could try regular or chickpea flour – expect the baking time to be much less for flour.

different veg – carrot or parsnip can also be used. For a red velvet cake, replace zucchini with mashed roast beetroot or cooked sweet potato. All these veg will add more carbs than the zucchini.

no fan assist on your oven? – increase the set temp to 200C (400F). Check after 35 minutes just to be sure.

---chocolate---

Quick Raw Brownies



Quick Raw Brownies

MAKES 6–8 serves

TAKES 15 minutes + 30 minutes cooling

100g (3.5oz) pitted dates

100g (3.5oz) almond meal

50g (1.75oz) melted butter

20g (0.75oz) cocoa powder

1. Place dates in a heat proof bowl and cover with boiling water. Stand for 5 minutes.
2. While the dates are standing, weigh out your remaining ingredients into your food processor.
3. Drain dates and add to the food processor. Whizz for a few minutes or until you have a smooth mixture that clumps together.
4. Dump your mixture into a loaf pan lined with baking paper and use your hands to smooth out until it's the height you prefer. Don't spread the mixture over the whole base. Only use half or less.
5. Refrigerate for 30 minutes or longer. Then chop into tiny squares.

This was inspired by the lovely Sarah Britton and her fab blog 'My New Roots'. Sarah uses medjool dates but I prefer to use much cheaper pitted dates soaked in boiling water.

I need to warn you that the dates do add a lot of sugar so this is something I would only have on a very special occasion. And a very small square.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Can be kept for 1-2 weeks in an airtight container in the fridge. Keeps for months in the freezer. I like to slice before freezing and defrost slices in the toaster (delicious with lashings of butter).

VARIATIONS

blondies – skip the cocoa powder

fancy – use pitted medjool dates and skip the boiling water and soaking steps.

dairy-free/paleo – use coconut oil instead of the butter.

sugar-free – replace dates with cooked sweet potato (no need to soak). Add a little vanilla extract for extra flavouring. I haven't tried this though so you might need to add a little stevia to sweeten.

no food processor – just chop the dates as finely as possible and stir everything together by hand. You might need more butter to bring it all together.

nut-free – replace almond meal with ground sunflower seeds.

different nuts – use other ground or whole nuts such as pecans or walnuts. If using whole nuts, whizz in the food processor until you have a fine flour before using.

---chocolate---

CARB
ALERT!



*Chocolate Butter
Ganache*

Chocolate Butter Ganache

MAKES enough for the top of a
20cm (8in.) round cake.

TAKES 15 minutes + cooling

250g (9oz) unsalted butter

250g (9oz) dark chocolate

1. Heat butter in a small saucepan until just starting to simmer.
2. Break chocolate into chunks and place in a heatproof bowl.
3. Pour hot butter over the chocolate and allow to stand for a few minutes.
4. Stir until chocolate is melted and you have a lovely glossy mixture.
5. Cool until thick enough to spread on your cake.

This makes a wonderful glossy topping to a chocolate cake. But feel free to let your imagination run wild with it! You can also allow it to set and chop into individual chocolate truffles.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Can be stored for months in the fridge. Keeps for years in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

different chocolate – milk chocolate will also work here. I haven't tried white chocolate but it should be fine. You may need to refrigerate the mixture to get white chocolate to firm up due to the lower cocoa butter content.

dairy-free / vegan – replace butter with cocoa butter or coconut cream. Don't use coconut oil as it won't set properly.

milk-solids-free – use clarified butter (ghee).

traditional ganache – use cream instead of the butter.

salted chocolate ganache – use salted butter or stir in a generous pinch of sea salt flakes.

---chocolate---

*Easy Little
Chocolate Puddings*



Easy Little Chocolate Puddings

MAKES 2 serves

TAKES 25 minutes

4 tablespoons (30g / 1oz) almond
meal

3 tablespoons (45g / 1.5oz) milk

2 tablespoons (12g / 0.5) cocoa
powder

1 tiny pinch pure stevia powder

1 egg

1 teaspoon vanilla extract
(optional)

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Grease two
1 cup ramekins or oven-proof tea cups.

2. In a small bowl mix almond meal, milk, cocoa
powder, stevia, egg, vanilla (if using) and baking
powder until well combined. Taste and add more
stevia if needed. Divide mixture between your
prepared ramekins / cups.

3. Bake for 10-15 minutes or until the puddings
feel springy to touch. I like them slightly under
baked so they're squidgy in the middle. Serve
warm or at room temp.

I love these for so many reasons. First they're not going to spike your blood sugar. But more importantly they only take a few minutes to stir up AND use ingredients you probably have in your pantry - perfect for those nights when you haven't planned anything for dessert but then feel like something warm and chocolatey.

I like them with lashings of double cream but if you're OK with a sugar hit, ice cream is also good.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Best when first baked and while still warm from the oven. Can be kept for 1-2 weeks in an airtight container in the fridge. Keeps for months in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

granular stevia - replace powder with 1-2 tablespoons granular stevia.

no stevia - use your favourite sweetener... honey, maple syrup, xylitol or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level. A few tablespoons should be enough.

sugar lovers - use 3 tablespoons white or brown sugar. If you like things on the sweeter side, add more.

dairy-free - use your favourite non-dairy milk such as almond, hemp or coconut.

ginger puddings - replace the cocoa powder with 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger.

peanut butter - add a big tablespoon of peanut butter to the center of each pud before baking.

double chocolate - add a square of dark chocolate to the middle of each pud before baking.

hazelnut - replace almond meal with hazelnut meal.

---chocolate---

Easy Little Chocolate Puddings

MORE VARIATIONS

nut-free – replace the almond meal with 2 tablespoons flour and 2 tablespoons melted butter or coconut oil – and they won't be low carb any more.

more servings – feel free to double or triple. I've included the weight measurements in case you have more mouths to feed!

carb lovers / more substantial – serve with ice cream!

---chocolate---



Chocolate Peanut Butter Thins

Chocolate Peanut Butter Thins

MAKES about 12 small squares

TAKES 50 minutes

100g (3.5oz) unsalted butter

100g (3.5oz) peanut butter

1/8 teaspoon pure stevia powder

100g (3.5oz) dark chocolate

1. Melt the butter in a small saucepan or microwave. Line a loaf pan with baking or parchment paper.

2. Mix peanut butter, stevia and HALF (50g / 1.7oz) THE MELTED BUTTER in a small bowl. Spoon the mixture into your prepared pan. Try and flatten evenly. Pop in the freezer to set.

3. Meanwhile, break chocolate into small chunks and add to the remaining butter. Stand for 5 minutes to melt the chocolate.

4. When the chocolate has melted, stir to combine with the butter. Smooth the chocolate mixture over the peanut butter layer.

5. Freeze until firm – about 20 minutes.

This is my take on the classic peanut butter cups. To keep it super simple, I make mine in a loaf pan and chop into squares instead of fiddling around with tiny muffin papers.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Can be kept for 2 weeks or more in an airtight container in the fridge. Keeps for months in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

granular stevia – replace pure powder with 2-3 tablespoons granular stevia.

no stevia – use your favourite sweetener... honey, maple syrup, xylitol or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level.

different nuts – use your favourite nut butter. Almond is especially great.

salty – sprinkle over a few sea salt flakes.

sweeter – use milk chocolate.

dairy-free – use cocoa butter or coconut oil. If using coconut oil the thins will be softer and will really melt in your hands.

---chocolate---



*The Great Aussie
Lamington*

The Great Aussie Lamington

MAKES 20 serves

TAKES 3 hours

100g (3.5oz) coconut flour

2 teaspoons baking powder

1/4 teaspoon pure stevia powder

300g (10.5oz) natural (greek-style) yoghurt

3 eggs

400g (14oz) unsweetened coconut cream or milk

200g (7oz) dark chocolate

200g (7oz) desiccated coconut

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Line a loaf pan 24cm x 12cm (approx 9in x 5in) with baking paper.

2. Mix coconut flour, stevia and baking powder in a medium bowl. Make a hole in the middle and add the yoghurt, eggs and coconut cream or coconut milk. Mix to combine but don't stress if you end up with a few lumps. I usually use a hand whisk to make it easier.

3. Pour the mixture into the prepared tin. Bake for 50-60 minutes or until the cake is deeply golden brown and feels springy. And a skewer inserted in the middle comes out without any gooey cake attached.

4. Cool in the tin for a few minutes so it's not too hot to touch. Remove from tin and continue to cool on a rack to avoid sogginess.

Lamingtons are an Australian invention. They take the award for the most labour intensive cake but trust me, they're well worth it. When I first went to boarding school I'd always request a batch of lamingtons to take back with me. A good excuse to spend some time hanging out in the kitchen with my Mum.

Traditionally lamingtons are made with sugary chocolate icing but mine are even better because we're using real melted dark chocolate to coat each little cube. Soo good!

5. When the cake is completely cool, use a bread knife to chop into cubes about 2.5cm (1in). Place on a plate and pop in the freezer for 30 minutes or so. This will make it easier to coat the cakes in chocolate.

6. Melt chocolate in a small saucepan. Remove from the heat.

7. Place coconut in a shallow bowl.

8. Dip each cake cube in chocolate to coat. Roll carefully in the coconut patching up any missing chocolate holes as you go. Place on a clean plate. Repeat with remaining cubes. You may need to remelt the chocolate if it gets too thick.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

The chocolate coating helps to protect the cake so lamingtons keep quite well. Can be kept for 1-2 weeks or so in an airtight container in the fridge. Keeps for months in the freezer.

---chocolate---

The Great Aussie Lamington

VARIATIONS

granular stevia – replace pure powder with 4-6 tablespoons granular stevia.

no stevia – use your favourite sweetener... honey, maple syrup, xylitol or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level.

sugar lovers – use 50g (2oz) sugar instead of the stevia. If you like things on the sweeter side, double the sugar.

no coconut flour – because it's such a unique ingredient, I'm afraid I can't offer an alternative. Try one of the other recipes in the book!

dairy-free – use coconut yoghurt or extra coconut cream instead of the yoghurt.

short on time – make a lamington loaf. Just coat top and sides of the uncut loaf with melted chocolate and sprinkle all over with the coconut.

---chocolate---

*No-Bake Chocolate
Pecan 'Tart'*



No-Bake Chocolate Pecan 'Tart'

MAKES 6–8 serves

TAKES 20 minutes + 2 hours to set

250g (1 cup) whipping cream
(35% milk fat)

200g (7oz) dark chocolate

200g (7oz) whole pecans

1. Line a loaf tin with baking paper so the sides are covered.
2. Place cream in a small saucepan and bring to a simmer.
3. Meanwhile, roughly chop the chocolate into chunks and place in a bowl.
4. Pour hot cream over the chocolate and allow to stand for 5 minutes so it melts.
5. Stir until smooth then pour into the prepared pan. Arrange pecans on top, only using the best looking ones.
6. Refrigerate until set – about 2 hours or more.

This isn't really a tart because it doesn't have a crust. But I'm sure there won't be any complaints. You could easily line the pan with some crushed cookies mixed with a little melted butter if you wanted to be more traditional.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Will keep in the fridge for over a week (if no one knows it's there). The pecans will lose some of their crunch, but I don't find it to be a problem. Can be frozen. Actually I know someone who likes to eat little slices straight from the freezer.

VARIATIONS

short on time – chill in the freezer.

milk or white chocolate – don't be tempted to substitute in milk or white chocolate because there won't be enough cocoa butter coming from the chocolate to 'set' the pie.

dairy free – replace the cream with coconut milk OR other dairy-free milk like soy milk or almond milk. The flavour profile will change, but not necessarily in a bad way.

proper 'pie' – either pour the mixture into a pre-cooked and cooled pie crust. OR crush about 120g (4oz) of plain sweet biscuits (cookies) and mix with 30g (1oz) melted butter and spread over the base of the pan before filling with the chocolate mixture.

different nuts – feel free to use whatever nuts you have. Might be better to chop some nuts before sprinkling on top.

lower carb – use 90% cocoa solids chocolate. You may or may not want to add a little stevia.

nut-free – use shaved toasted coconut or crushed cookies instead of the pecans.

orange – add the zest of an orange with the cream.

---chocolate---



Sweet Potato Brownies

Sweet Potato Brownies

MAKES 12 squares

TAKES 40 minutes

250g (9oz) roast sweet potato

200g (7oz) dark chocolate

200g (7oz) almond meal

1/8 teaspoon pure stevia powder

4 eggs

pinch salt

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F) and line a rectangular slice pan (approx 18cm x 27cm / 7in x 10.5in).

2. Whizz cooked sweet potato, chocolate, almond meal, stevia, eggs and salt in a food processor until you have a smooth mixture.

3. Spread mixture over the base of your prepared tin. Bake for 15 minutes or until the brownies feel firm on top.

4. Cool in the tin then chop into squares.

These sweet potato brownies are still a bit carby but better than your regular sugary, flour based brownie. They're a brilliant option if you happen to have a small boy in the house who loves chocolate and sweet potato.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Can be kept for 1-2 weeks in an airtight container in the fridge.
Keeps for months in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

granular stevia – replace pure powder with 2-3 tablespoons granular stevia.

no stevia – use your favourite sweetener... honey, maple syrup, xylitol or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level.

sugar lovers – use 100g (3.5oz) sugar instead of the stevia. If you like things on the sweeter side, add more.

no food processor? – melt chocolate and mash everything together with a fork.

no roasted sweet potato? – just scrub whole sweet potato and roast for 45mins to 1 hour at 180C (350F) or until really soft.

different veg – try roast butternut squash or roast beets. You could also use raw grated carrot, zucchini or parsnip if you really want to explore the world of vegetable brownies.

less patchy – the chocolate can be a bit chunky through these brownies so if you prefer a more uniform look, melt the chocolate before adding to the food processor.

---chocolate---

CARB
ALERT!



--- Desserts ---

Desserts

Berry Mousse

No-Bake Berry Tart

Magic Lemon Creams

Crunchy Almond Crumbles

Vanilla Panna Cotta

Little Lemon Cheesecakes

Raspberry Cashew Puddings

Raw 'Blondies'

Coconut Berry Swirl

Summer Berry Puddings

Dates with Blue Cheese

Winter Walnut Pavlova

Last-Minute Peanut Butter Mousse

Easy Little Ginger Puddings

Raspberries & Cream with Quick Chocolate Sauce

Berry Mousse



Berry Mousse

MAKES 2 serves
TAKES 15 minutes

150mL (3/4 cup) whipping cream
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
125g (4.5oz) mixed berries

1. Whip cream until you have soft peaks. Add in vanilla.
2. Mash berries with a fork until you have a rough puree.
3. Fold the berries through the cream, leaving it a little unmixed or 'swirled'.
4. Divide between 2 small glasses and serve immediately or refrigerate until you're ready to eat.

This super quick dessert is great for when you feel like whipping up something sweet after your main course. Feel free to play around with different berries - either frozen or fresh. Or for more ideas see the variations section.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

I like these best on the day they're made. Can be kept for a week or so in the fridge. Don't freeze.

VARIATIONS

vegan / dairy-free / paleo – try berry sorbet instead, Whiz frozen berries in a food processor until you have a lovely 'sorbet' texture. About 300g (10oz) berries will serve 3-4. Or see the coconut idea below.

berry & coconut – chill 2 cans of coconut milk. Remove the lid and whip the solid coconut 'cream' leaving behind the watery liquid. Swirl in berry puree as above.

stone fruit mousse – remove the seeds from 4 ripe peaches or 8 apricots and puree the fruit in the food processor. Swirl through cream instead of the berries.

tangy mousse – whip only half the cream and stir in natural (Greek) yoghurt to make up the remaining half.

other flavour ideas – any ripe fruit will work if you mash or puree it first. Chocolate chunks are a nice addition as are chopped roasted nuts for a little crunch.

No-Bake
Berry Tart



No-Bake Berry Tart

MAKES 6–8 serves

TAKES 45 minutes

100g (3.5oz) unsalted butter

200g (7oz) almonds

500g (1lb) smooth ricotta

1/8 teaspoon pure stevia powder

1 vanilla bean (optional)

250g (1/2 lb) berries

1. Melt butter in a small saucepan. Line a 20cm (8in) pie dish or tart case with foil or baking (parchment) paper.

2. Whizz almonds in your food processor until it looks like bread crumbs. You want a few little chunks. Add the melted butter and whizz again until combined.

3. Scoop almond mixture into the lined pie dish and use your fingers and a spoon to spread evenly over the base and sides. Freeze for at least 20 minutes. You just want the butter to solidify to set the base.

4. While the base is chilling, mix stevia, the scraped seeds from your vanilla bean (if using) into the ricotta. Keep the vanilla bean for another use. Taste and adjust sweetness if needed.

5. When you're ready to serve, spread ricotta into your base. Pile berries into the center and let everyone admire before you cut into wedges.

This recipe came about one extremely hot summer's day when I had masses of blackberries from one of my playgroup friends. I definitely didn't want to turn on the oven but had this idea to make a blackberry tart for our dinner guests. And thus the no-bake tart was born!

You can make the tart base ahead of time and keep in the freezer for whenever you need it. Just remember to move it to the fridge 30 minutes before you want to serve so you can actually cut it. And make sure you use smooth creamy ricotta from a tub instead of the more crumbly ricotta from the deli.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Best to eat within a few hours of putting the filling in the base. It will still be edible for up to 2 weeks in the fridge but the base will soften over time.

The unfilled base will keep for up to 2 weeks in the fridge or indefinitely in the freezer. The ricotta mixture will keep for a week or so in the fridge and can be frozen.

VARIATIONS

granular stevia – replace pure powder with 2-3 tablespoons granular stevia.

no stevia – feel free to use sugar or your fave sweetener for the ricotta.

different fruit – summer berries are a fave but any seasonal fresh or cooked fruit will work here. Think roast pears, rosy rhubarb or sunny peaches.

nut-free / budget – use sunflower seeds or your favourite plain sweet cookie instead of the almonds.

different nuts – I like almonds best here but pretty much any nut will work.

dairy-free – use coconut oil for the base and make some macadamia 'ricotta' for the filling.

Magic Lemon Creams



Magic Lemon Creams

MAKES 2 serves

TAKES 6 hours

300mL (1 1/4) cups pure (heavy
whipping) cream, 35% milk fat

1/8 teaspoon pure stevia powder

3 tablespoons lemon juice

sliced almonds, toasted,
to serve (optional)

1. Place cream in a saucepan and simmer gently for 3 minutes for the cream to reduce slightly.
2. Remove from the heat and stir in the stevia and lemon juice. Divide between 2 serving containers – little glasses or tea cups (about 1/2 cup capacity).
3. Refrigerate for 6 hours or until you're ready to serve.
4. Sprinkle with a few almonds (if using) and serve with a small spoon.

This dessert is so so simple yet ultra fresh, creamy and needless to say, de-lic-ious! There's something truly magical in the way the lemon juice causes simple cream to set into a silky luscious dessert. I've made this with thickened cream and pure cream. Both are good.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Can be kept for 1-2 weeks in the fridge. Best not to freeze.

VARIATIONS

granular stevia – replace pure powder with 2-3 tablespoons granular stevia.

no stevia – use your favourite sweetener... honey, maple syrup, xylitol or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level.

sugar lovers – use 75g (3oz) sugar instead of the stevia. If you like things on the sweeter side, add more.

short on time – make a lemon mascarpone cream. Stir a little grated lemon zest into mascarpone. Serve in tiny tea cups. Or make a cheats version by stirring a commercial lemon curd (lemon butter) into whipped cream. You could also just serve cream with seasonal fruit.

different flavours – feel free to play around with the citrus. Lime is lovely and my Mum's version was a wonderful combination of lemon and passion fruit. So good.



*Crunchy Almond
Crumbles*

Crunchy Almond Crumbles

MAKES 2 serves

TAKES 45 minutes

2 cups berries or other fruit

100g (3.5oz) almond meal

20g (2 tablespoons) granular stevia

50g (2oz) grated butter

50g (2oz) sliced almonds (optional)

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Divide your fruit between 2 x 1 cup baking dishes or ramekins – if your fruit isn't bite-sized, chop it first so it will cook in the time it takes the topping to cook.
2. Combine almond meal and stevia in a bowl. Toss in the grated butter and use a fork or your fingers to rub the butter into the almond meal. Or pulse in the food processor.
3. When the mixture looks like lumpy bread crumbs, stir in the sliced almonds (if using). Scatter the mixture to cover the berries leaving it fairly loose.
4. Bake for 30 minutes or until the crumble topping is golden brown and the fruit is cooked.
5. Serve warm with cream or ice cream or both.

A good crumble is totally up there in my 'favourite dessert' stakes. Especially during the cooler months. I love the contrast between sweet, soft baked fruit, crunchy hot almond topping and cooling cream. So so good! And even better, you can bake them ahead if you're having guests and just warm in the oven before serving. Or pop them in to bake while you're eating your main course (just don't forget to set your timer!).

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Best when hot from the oven. You could prep in advance and leave in the fridge until you're ready to bake. Or even bake ahead of time and pop back into the oven to warm. Leftovers are delicious though, and will keep for 1-2 weeks in the fridge (the crumble topping will lose its crunch over time). Cooked crumbles keep for months in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

pure stevia powder – replace granular stevia with a pinch of pure powder. I prefer granular here because it's hard to measure such a tiny amount of the pure powder.

dairy-free / vegan – replace butter with coconut oil.

nut-free – replace almond meal with plain all-purpose flour or chickpea flour and skip the sliced almonds or use whole sunflower seeds.

different fruit ideas – all berries are lovely (fresh or frozen), apple, pear, peaches, cooked rhubarb (add extra stevia to the fruit), pitted cherries.

extra flavouring – add a little vanilla or cinnamon to the crumble topping.

different nuts – pecans, walnuts or macadamias.

smaller serves – the one cup dishes are a very large dessert. Feel free to divide the mixture between 4 x 1/2 cup ramekins or other oven proof dishes. Check after 20 minutes.



Vanilla Panna Cotta

Vanilla Panna Cotta

MAKES 4 serves

TAKES 2 hours

300mL (1 1/4 cups) whipping
cream

1 vanilla bean, seeds scraped

2 teaspoons gelatine powder

1/8 teaspoon pure stevia powder

1 cup milk

1. Bring cream, vanilla bean and seeds to a simmer in a small saucepan. Remove from the heat.
2. Start stirring the cream vigorously with a whisk and sprinkle gelatine of the top of the cream while you stir. Keep stirring for a minute. Don't worry there will be little lumps of gelatine. Stand without stirring for 5 minutes for the vanilla flavour to infuse.
4. Stir in stevia and cold milk. Strain the mixture to remove the vanilla bean and any gelatine lumps.
5. Pour into 4 pretty tea cups. Refrigerate until set. Will take an hour or a bit longer.

I used to have a bit of a phobia about cooking with gelatine. Mostly it was because I've had some disasters in my time - everything from hard and rubbery to completely non-set. When one of my fellow food bloggers posted she was making panna cotta for a lunch of 100 people, I left her a comment saying how brave I thought she was. It also inspired me to include a panna cotta recipe in this book because I love them so much. Don't worry, I've tested and re-tested this one and I promise you'll get that wonderful Goldilocks panna cotta 'wobble'.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Can be kept for 2 weeks or more in an airtight container in the fridge - even longer if you can be bothered to sterilize your jar! Do not freeze.

VARIATIONS

granular stevia - replace pure powder with 2-3 tablespoons granular stevia. Add it at the same time as the gelatine so it dissolves properly.

no stevia - use your favourite sweetener... honey, maple syrup, xylitol or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level. I used to use 60g (2oz) white sugar.

no vanilla bean - use 1-2 teaspoons vanilla powder or vanilla extract instead.

sour cream - replace cream with sour cream.

mascarpone - replace half the milk with mascarpone or other cream cheese.

leaf gelatine - use 1 sheet titanium strength gelatine instead. Soak in cold water until soft, squeeze to remove excess moisture and then stir into the hot cream.

vegetarian / vegan - use agar instead of the gelatine (see the pack to figure out how much to use).

dairy-free - use coconut cream and your favourite dairy-free milk.

serving suggestion - lovely with fresh or cooked fruit.



Little Lemon Cheesecakes

Little Lemon Cheesecakes

MAKES 2 serves

TAKES 15 minutes

2 shortbread
or other plain sweet cookie

125g (4 1/2oz) mascarpone or
other cream cheese

4 tablespoons lemon curd

1. Place shortbread / cookies in a plastic bag and bash with a rolling pin or something heavy until they are coarsely crumbled.
2. Divide between two small tea cups or pretty glasses.
3. Combine mascarpone and lemon curd in a bowl. Taste, and add a little more lemon curd if it needs more kick. Or add a little more mascarpone if you'd like it to be creamier.
4. Divide lemon cream between the tea cups and refrigerate until you're ready to eat.

Growing up, cheesecake was one of my favourite desserts - and truthfully it still is. When I don't have the time or inclination to bake a whole cheesecake, these quick little 'cheats' versions always hit the spot in a fraction of the time (and without the tempting leftovers!).

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

These will happily keep in the fridge for a few days. The biscuit base will soften over time, but to my mind that's not a bad thing. Can be frozen.

VARIATIONS

gluten-free - replace the shortbread with your favourite GF cookie or sweet biscuit.

lemon & raspberry - serve with a small handful of fresh raspberries on top.

lemon & ginger - replace short bread with ginger nut cookies. If you're after a full-on ginger experience, stir a teaspoon of finely grated fresh ginger in with the lemon curd.

lime cheesecakes - if you can get your hands on some lime curd, give it a go.

no mascarpone - use smooth ricotta or softened Philadelphia cream cheese and be prepared to add a little extra lemon curd.

sugar-free / low carb - use sugar-free cookies or granola and lemon curd.

Raspberry Cashew Puddings



Raspberry Cashew Puddings

MAKES 2 serves

TAKES 10 minutes

125g (5oz) raspberries

100g (3.5oz) cashew butter

1. Keep a few good looking raspberries aside. The place the rest in a small bowl and smash with a fork or your hands until you have a chunky mess.
2. Stir in the cashew butter until the raspberries are 'rippled' through it.
3. Divide between two little glasses and top with the reserved berries. Eat now or refrigerate until you're ready to serve.

When I had a month eating dairy-free, cashew butter and almond butter were my lifesavers when I was in the mood for something creamy that didn't taste like coconut. Be warned, these puddings can be addictive!

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

I like these best on the day they're made. Can be kept for a few days in an airtight container in the fridge. Keeps for months in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

almond – replace cashew with almond butter.

nut-free – replace cashew butter with creamy cheese like ricotta or mascarpone.

different fruit – any other berries, bananas or mangoes are all good.

sweeter – if your raspberries aren't super sweet, add a pinch of stevia, sugar or your favourite sweetener.



Raw 'Blondies'

Raw 'Blondies'

MAKES 6–8 serves

TAKES 15 minutes + 15 minutes cooling

100g (3.5oz) pitted dates

150g (3.5oz) almond meal

50g (1.75oz) melted butter
or coconut oil

1 teaspoon vanilla extract
(optional)

2 tablespoons psyllium
or oat bran (optional)

1. Place dates in a heat proof bowl and cover with boiling water. Stand for 5 minutes.
2. While the dates are standing, weigh out your remaining ingredients into your food processor.
3. Drain dates and add to the food processor. Whizz for a few minutes or until you have a smooth mixture that clumps together.
4. Dump your mixture into a loaf pan lined with baking paper and use your hands to smooth out until it's the height you prefer. Don't spread the mixture over the whole base. Only use half or less.
5. Pop in the freezer for 15 minutes or in the refrigerator for 30 minutes or longer. Then chop into tiny squares.

I really tossed up whether to include this recipe in the book. While the ingredient list may look healthy, they do contain a significant amount of sugar from the dates. They are super delicious, though so if you're in the mood for a real treat, this is the recipe for you! Plus as a bonus you don't even need to turn the oven on!

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Will keep happily in the fridge for a few weeks. And in the freezer for months.

VARIATIONS

chocolate brownies – add 2-3 tablespoons cocoa powder to the mix.

different nuts – feel free to use other nuts or nut meals. Pecans are particularly good.

short on time – pop in the freezer to firm up. Will take about 10 minutes.

medjool dates – no need to soak, just be sure to remove the pits.

dairy-free / vegan – use the coconut oil option.

more decadent – cover with a layer of melted dark chocolate.

low-carb – I'm afraid you really need the dates to bind everything together. Sorry!



Coconut Berry Swirl

Coconut Berry Swirl

MAKES 2 serves

TAKES 10 minutes

2 handfuls berries

2 large scoops coconut yoghurt

1. Mash berries in a small bowl with a fork.
2. Scoop yoghurt into two bowls, then swirl your berry mash through the coconut.

Berries have to be the best when it comes to quick, low-carb desserts that taste amazing. I love to mash them and swirl through cream or coconut yoghurt as I've used here. Both fresh and frozen berries work well.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

I like these best on the day they're made. Can be kept for 1 week in an airtight container in the fridge. Keeps for months in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

different berries – I used mulberries in the photo but any berry can be used. Raspberries are my favourite here. For firmer berries like strawberries you might like to puree in the food processor.

no swirl – if you can't be bothered with the mashing and swirling, just serve berries on top of the yoghurt.

no coconut yoghurt – health food stores should be able to source commercial coconut yoghurt for you. Or try making your own.

dairy-lovers – replace coconut yoghurt with natural Greek yoghurt, double cream, whipped cream or mascarpone.

more decadent – replace coconut yoghurt with vanilla ice cream.

crunchy – top with some roast sliced almonds.

sweeter – if your berries aren't super ripe, add a pinch of stevia, a teaspoon of sugar or your favourite sweetener.



Summer Berry Puddings



Summer Berry Puddings

MAKES 2 serves

TAKES 10 minutes

100g (3.5oz) berries
+ extra to serve

1 tablespoon granular
stevia (optional)

2 little almond breads

thick cream, to serve

1. Mash berries together with stevia (if using) until you have a rough puree. Taste and adjust sweetness if needed.
2. Break each almond bread into about 4 chunks.
3. Squish almond bread chunks into the berry mixture until they are lovely and pink. Divide bread between 2 small glasses, tea cups or ramekins.
4. Scatter over extra berries and drizzle over any remaining berry-sugar mixture. Serve with cream.

Summer puddings are traditionally made with soft white bread and lots of sugar. This version takes it to a new level with berry stained almond bread. Of course if you don't have time to make your own bread, you could use whatever bread you have on hand. And frozen berries work really well because you're going to mash them anyway.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Keeps for 1-2 weeks in the fridge or indefinitely in the freezer. Just allow to defrost before serving.

VARIATIONS

pure stevia powder – I've used granular stevia here because I only want to add a touch of sweetness and it's easy to overdo it with pure stevia. But you could add to taste if you prefer.

no stevia – you may not need extra sweetness if your berries are at their best. But if you do, add some sugar or your fave sweetener.

dairy-free/vegan – serve with whipped coconut cream: chill a can of coconut milk then spoon off the solid 'cream' from the top and whip as you would regular cream.

different berries – I've used raspberries in the photo but feel free to use a mixture of different berries.

larger batch – I often double or triple the batch.

nut-free / no almond bread – use whatever bread you like. 2 small slices is all you need. Remove any hard crusts before proceeding.

Dates with Blue Cheese



Dates with Blue Cheese

MAKES 2–4 serves
TAKES 10 minutes

4 fresh Medjool dates

4 tablespoons creamy blue cheese

1. Cut dates down one side and remove stone.
2. Smash a little blue cheese in to fill the hole.
3. Refrigerate until you're ready to serve.

Medjool dates are one of my all-time favourite sweet treats. But I only have them in the house on very special occasions. They may seem healthy but beware, they taste super sweet for a reason! One date will have the same impact on your blood sugar as eating a whole large punnet of strawberries.

When I do indulge, my favourite way to serve them is teamed with a creamy salty blue cheese. So good!

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

These will happily keep in the fridge for a few days. I think they're nicer when they've been allowed to come up to room temperature for little while, rather than eating straight from the fridge.

VARIATIONS

goats cheese – use a creamy goats cheese instead of the blue.

dairy-free/paleo – try filling the dates with almond or other nut butter.



Winter Walnut Pavlova

winter walnut pavlova

MAKES 8–10 serves

TAKES 80 minutes

6 egg whites

pinch salt

150g (5oz) granular stevia

1 teaspoon vanilla extract
(optional)

200g (7oz) whole walnuts

250mL (1 cup) sour cream

125mL (1/2 cup) greek yoghurt

1. Preheat oven to 180C (350F) and grease and line a 24cm spring form pan.

2. Using a stand mixer, beat egg whites with salt until firm peaks form. Gradually rain in the granular stevia and add the vanilla (if using). Beat until the mixture is glossy. The stevia won't dissolve in the same way as sugar would.

3. Gently fold nuts through the meringue mixture and spoon into prepared tin, smoothing the top.

4. Bake for 50 – 60 minutes or until top is golden brown and the pav has started to shrink away from the sides of the tin. It will still feel soft but will harden a little as it cools. Cool in tin.

5. Stir yoghurt and sour cream until just mixed. Serve slices of pav with cream mixture passed separately.

Growing up, [my mum's pavlova](#) was one of my favourite desserts. This 'Winter' version is based on a fig and walnut pavlova by Australian chef, Maggie Beer. It combines the light airy gorgeousness of a good pav with a satisfying crunch from the walnut. So good!

The only warning I have is that the granular stevia doesn't dissolve in the same way as sugar so the end result has an extra crunch from the stevia crystals. Of my recipe testers, the ones that used sugar gave this rave reviews but the stevia tester wasn't so impressed. If I didn't have diabetes, I'd totally be making it with brown sugar!

The sour cream yoghurt is another of Maggie's ideas. It's brilliantly refreshing and can be used anywhere you'd normally serve cream.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

This is best on the day it is made because you don't have the sugar to bind up all the moisture. If you do have leftovers they will still be edible after a week or so in the fridge but the texture will soften over time.

VARIATIONS

no stevia / sugar-lovers – replace stevia with 250g (9oz) white or brown sugar. Don't try pure stevia powder with this one.

fig & walnut – chop 250g (9oz) dried figs. Cover with boiling water and stand for 5 minutes. Drain and add with the walnuts. Sugar alert!

prune & almond – use prunes instead of the figs above.

pistachio & apricot – use dried apricots instead of the figs above.

winter walnut pavlova



MORE VARIATIONS

different nuts – almonds, pistachio, pecans (with a little maple syrup), cashews.

different flavourings – vanilla extract, chocolate chunks, ground ginger, cinnamon, pumpkin spice.

pear & chocolate – serve walnut pav with slices of roast pears and some melted chocolate drizzled over.

summery – use almonds instead of the walnuts. Serve with summer berries and the yoghurt sour cream.

less chunky – chop your walnuts into quarters.

Last-minute Peanut Butter Mousse



Last-minute Peanut Butter Mousse

MAKES 1 serve

TAKES 5 minutes

2 tablespoons double cream

1 tablespoon crunchy peanut butter

1 tablespoon golden linseeds
(flax seeds)

1. Place cream in a tiny cup or ramekin. Spoon on peanut butter and linseeds.

2. Stir and dig in!

You know those nights when you decide after dinner that you really need something else to eat? But you haven't organized anything? Well, my friend, I'm going to share with you my favourite little last-minute indulgence.

Mostly it's something I whip up for myself, but occasionally I share it with company and grandly call it my Peanut Butter Mousse. But it's also great as a post-run snack.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Can be kept for a week or so in the fridge. Don't freeze.

VARIATIONS

no double cream? – use whatever cream you have. Mascarpone is also good or even ricotta.

dairy-free – use coconut or cashew cream. Coconut yoghurt will also work. Or try 1 tablespoon coconut oil.

chocolate! – drizzle with melted chocolate or just add a small handful of chopped chocolate.

less fiber – skip the linseeds or replace with other seeds or nuts. Or just use more peanut butter.

fruity / sweeter – add a handful of berries. Or if you don't mind the sugar add a chopped medjool date. Or drizzle with a little honey or maple syrup.

different seeds – use whatever you have, chia seeds are good but you could also use sunflower seeds or any chopped nut. It's all about the crunch!

regular linseeds – I like golden ones because they look prettier but regular are fine!

Easy Little Ginger Puddings



Easy Little Ginger Puddings

MAKES 2 serves

TAKES 30 minutes

8 tablespoons (60g / 2oz)
almond meal

3 tablespoons (45g / 1.5oz) milk

1-2 tablespoons granular stevia
OR tiny pinch pure stevia powder

1-2 tablespoons grated fresh ginger

1 egg

1/4 teaspoon molasses (optional)

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Grease two x 1 cup ramekins or oven-proof tea cups.

2. In a small bowl mix almond meal, milk, stevia, ginger, egg, molasses (if using) and baking powder until well combined. Taste and add more stevia and more ginger if needed. Divide mixture between your prepared ramekins / cups. Cover each ramekin with foil.

3. Bake for 15 minutes with the cover on. Remove covers and bake for another 5-10 minutes or until the puddings feel springy to touch. I like them slightly under baked so they're squidgy in the middle. Serve warm or at room temp. I love them with a good dollop of cream.

These puddings are perfect for those nights when you haven't planned anything for dessert but then feel like something warm and comforting. You can mix them up in less time than it takes for your oven to preheat. And then you'll be tucking in around 20 minutes later - just enough time to make space after your main course.

The older I get the more I love the flavour of ginger. Especially in baked desserts like these. Most people will probably be happy with the more subtle 1 tablespoon of ginger, but if you're a ginger lover like me, go straight for 2 tablespoons (or even more!).

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Can be kept for a week or so in the fridge. Can be frozen. I like to pop back in the oven to warm before serving.

VARIATIONS

no stevia – use your favourite sweetener... Honey, maple syrup, xylitol or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level. A few tablespoons should be enough.

sugar lovers – use 3 tablespoons white or brown sugar. If you like things on the sweeter side, add more.

dairy-free – use your favourite non-dairy milk such as almond, hemp or coconut.

peanut butter – add a big tablespoon of peanut butter to the center of each pud before baking.

ginger & chocolate – add a square of dark chocolate to the middle of each pud before baking.

hazelnut – replace almond meal with hazelnut meal.

more servings – Feel free to double or triple. I've included the weight measurements in case you have more mouths to feed!

---desserts---



*Raspberries & Cream
with Quick Chocolate Sauce*



Raspberries + Cream with Quick Chocolate Sauce

MAKES 2 serves

TAKES 10 minutes

50g (2oz) dark chocolate,
finely chopped

2 tablespoons boiling water

1 punnet raspberries (125g / 4oz)

4-6 tablespoons whipped or
double cream

1. For the sauce, place chocolate in a small bowl. Pour over boiling water and stand for a few minutes.
2. Divide half the raspberries between two glasses or tea cups. Top with cream and remaining raspberries.
3. Stir chocolate until the sauce is smooth and glossy (if there are lumps you can leave it a little chunky or zap it in the microwave for a few seconds). Drizzle sauce over the fruit and cream.

This quick chocolate sauce is a life saver on those days where you haven't planned dessert but then feel like a little 'somethin' somethin' after dinner.

It's super easy, just takes a minute to whip up and is the best way to 'dress up' my favourite Low Carb go-to dessert of fruit and cream.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Best assembled just before eating.

VARIATIONS

dairy-free – use coconut yoghurt or whipped coconut cream.

different fruit – feel free to use any berries, cherries, peaches or plums. Roast pears are heavenly with the sauce.

crunchy – sprinkle over roast almonds or hazelnuts, roast shaved coconut or chocolate granola.

lower-carb – use a chocolate with higher cocoa solids. My favourite is Lindt 90%. Be careful as some dark chocolates are 50% sugar – so read the label.

carb-lovers – replace cream with vanilla ice cream.

frozen fruit – will be a little mushier but still delicious!



--- Breakfast ---

Breakfast

Crunchy Peanut Butter Granola

Chocolatey Coconut Granola

Coconut Pancakes

Pecan 'Porridge'

Overnight Seeds

Feta & Veggie Breakfast Muffins

---breakfast---

Crunchy Peanut Butter Granola



Crunchy Peanut Butter Granola

MAKES 1 large tray

TAKES 45 minutes

50g (2oz) butter or coconut oil

200g (7oz) peanut butter

250g (9oz) coconut flakes

500g (1lb) roasted peanuts

200g (7oz) flaked almonds

1. Preheat your oven to 150C (300F). Melt butter or coconut oil in a small saucepan. Remove from the heat and stir in the peanut butter.

2. Place coconut flakes, peanuts and almonds in a large mixing bowl. Drizzle over the peanut butter mixture. Toss until the everything is coated in the peanut butter goodness.

3. Line a large baking tray with baking paper. Spread over the nut mixture into an even layer.

4. Bake for 15-30 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes until the granola is golden brown or slightly darker. Cool on the tray before storing in an airtight container in the pantry.

In our house we go through at least a jar of peanut butter a week. So it's a huge understatement to say that we LOVE it.

This is one of those rare cases where I find smooth peanut butter works slightly better than crunchy. Although if you've only got crunchy in the house, it will be good too.

The peanut butter seems to slow down the browning process without slowing down the roasted flavours. So it can get over-roasted quite quickly. I tend to pull it out before the colour is as brown as I would normally let it get to be on the safe side.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Keeps for months in an airtight container in the pantry. Can be frozen indefinitely.

VARIATIONS

vegan / dairy-free – use coconut oil.

traditional granola / budget – if you're OK with carbs and gluten, replace some of the coconut with rolled oats.

chocolate granola – try the [recipe over here](#).

different nuts – feel free to replace some or all of the peanuts with other chopped nuts.

no coconut – I use coconut flakes because they're inexpensive compared to other nuts and lighten the texture but you could just use more flaked almonds or other nuts if you aren't into coconut.

sweeter – I like to keep it on the more savoury side but feel free to add a little stevia, honey or maple syrup to the melted butter mixture.

snacky – toss in sea salt flakes and serve with drinks.

---breakfast---

Chocolately Coconut Granola



Chocolately Coconut Granola

MAKES 1 large tray

TAKES 45 minutes

75g (3oz) butter or coconut oil

pinch pure stevia powder

25g (1oz) cocoa powder

150g (5oz) coconut flakes

250g (9oz) chopped nuts

1. Preheat your oven to 150C (300F).
2. Melt butter or coconut oil in a small saucepan. Add stevia and cocoa powder. Stir.
3. Combine coconut and nuts in a bowl. Stir in the cocoa syrup mixture until the flakes are just coated.
4. Spread mixture on a baking tray. Bake for 25-30 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes or so. Stop when the coconut is well browned (which can be difficult to tell through the cocoa) or everything tastes roasted and yummy.
5. Cool and transfer to an airtight container. Will keep for a few months at room temperature.

If the thought of chocolate for breakfast gets you excited, I highly recommend starting with this granola. It's seriously delicious served on top of home made [natural yoghurt](#) or [coconut yoghurt](#). In case you're wondering, I have chia seed bran in the bottom of the glass in the photo above.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Keeps for months in an airtight container in the pantry. Can be frozen indefinitely.

VARIATIONS

granular stevia – use 1-2 tablespoons.

no stevia – use your favourite sweetener... honey, maple syrup or white sugar! Just add and taste until you're happy with the sweetness level. 2-3 tablespoons should do the trick.

optional additives – vanilla extract (1 teaspoon), cinnamon (1 teaspoon), chia seeds (2 tablespoons) and cocoa nibs (2 tablespoons) are all lovely additions. So feel free to add in any or all of these. But honestly I prefer this simple 5 ingredient version.

different nuts – I used brazil nuts and pecans but feel free to use any nut you like.

vegan – make sure you use coconut oil instead of the butter.

nut-free – if you're catering for nut allergies, you could replace the nuts with extra coconut (just double the amount of coconut and skip the nuts) or use a combo of coconut and seeds such as pumpkin seeds, linseeds (flax seeds) and sunflower seeds – whatever you feel like.

salty – add sea salt flakes for a sweet / salty trail mix.

---breakfast---

Coconut Pancakes



Coconut Pancakes

MAKES 1 serve
TAKES 20 minutes

20g (3/4oz) coconut flour
30g (1oz) coconut oil, melted
+ extra to cook
2 eggs
80g (1/3cup) milk
fruit + cream, to serve

1. Combine coconut flour, oil, eggs and milk in a jug or bowl. Whisk until smoothish.
2. Melt a little more coconut oil in a small frying pan on a medium high heat. Add about 1/3 of your batter and cook for a few minutes until the mixture is starting to bubble and looks cooked around the edges.
3. Carefully flip with a spatula and cook on the other side for another 30 seconds or so. Just enough to brown it.
4. Remove the pancake and place on a warm plate while you make the remaining two pancakes.
5. Serve with cream and fruit.

Inspired by [Eleanor Ozich's](#) cookbook, My Petite Kitchen. This is a recipe where the light fluffiness of coconut flour really comes into its own. Feel free to serve with your fave pancake accompaniments.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Best when hot from the pan. Leftovers can be refrigerated for a few weeks. Just reheat in a pan with a little oil. Not as good as fresh but still edible! Can be frozen.

VARIATIONS

no coconut flour – make my paleo pancakes instead using 2 eggs and 4 tablespoons almond meal per person and skipping the milk and melted coconut oil.

no coconut oil – butter!

savoury pancakes – use salted butter instead of oil and serve with savoury accompaniments. I love baby spinach and mayo.

---breakfast---



Pecan 'Porridge'

Pecan 'Porridge'

MAKES 1 serve

TAKES 10 minutes

1/2 cup whole pecans (60g / 2oz)

1/4 cup milk

1 egg

extra pecans & cream, to serve

- 1.** Whizz pecans in a food processor or spice grinder until finely ground. I like to leave a few chunks for texture.
- 2.** Place pecans, milk and egg in a small saucepan. Cook on a medium heat, stirring frequently until thickened to a good oatmeal / porridge consistency. Be careful not to over cook as the egg will go all scrambled – I tend to err on the runnier side remembering it will still thicken after you take it off the heat.
- 3.** Scoop into a bowl and serve topped with extra pecans and cream.

Porridge is the Australian name for oatmeal and it used to be one of my favourite Winter breakfasts. For a long time I reserved it as a Saturday morning treat because it wasn't great for my blood sugar. Then recently I had the brain wave to try low carb ingredients to make a porridge-style bowl of comfort. I'm so glad I did. This nut based version is just as soothingly warming and blood sugar friendly. Yay!

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Best when freshly made. Can be stored in the fridge for 1-2 weeks if needed but not ideal!

VARIATIONS

different nuts – pecans are my favourite for their sweet creamy flavour, but feel free to use whatever nuts you have.

seedy – feel free to play around with the whole and ground seeds. Sesame seeds, chia seeds, linseeds (flaxseeds), sunflower seeds and/or pumpkin seeds (pepitas) all make lovely additions.

spiced – add a pinch of cinnamon, nutmeg or pumpkin spice. A little vanilla extract is also great.

sweeter – I like it with just the sweetness from the milk but if you need more, add a pinch of stevia or serve with your favourite sweetener (maple syrup would be my pick!)

dairy-free – use your favourite dairy-free milk.

---breakfast---

Overnight seeds



Overnight seeds

MAKES 1 serve

TAKES 5 minutes + soaking at least 1 hour

1/4 cup linseeds (flaxseeds)
or chia seeds

1/4 cup other seeds or nuts

1/2 cup milk

2 tablespoons peanut butter
(optional)

yoghurt & berries, to serve

1. Combine seeds and nut and milk in a small bowl or jar. Add peanut butter if using. Refrigerate for at least an hour or overnight or even a few days.

2. Top with yoghurt and berries and eat with a teaspoon.

Back in my grain eating days, one of my favourite work-day breakfasts was bircher muesli or 'overnight oats'. Basically you just soak rolled oats and grated apple in milk or water overnight and in the morning add some yoghurt and you're good to go. Recently I've been getting seriously into linseeds (flaxseeds) and had the inspiration to use them for a similar breakfast. Soo good! In fact I'm enjoying my 'overnight seeds' even more than the old oaty version because of the nutty complex flavours and the more puddingy texture. And you don't really need to soak them overnight. An hour should do. I often mix up a batch an pop it in the fridge while I go for my Saturday morning run and have them when I get back.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Keeps for a few days in the fridge. Will continue to thicken over time so you might need to thin it out with a little extra milk. Can be frozen.

VARIATIONS

no linseeds or chia – you really need one or both of these to soak up the milk and thicken, other seeds and nuts won't do this.

dairy-free – use your favourite nut milk, coconut milk or soy milk.

nut-free – use all seeds. Pumpkin seeds (pepitas), sesame seeds and sunflower seeds are all delicious.

extra creamy – serve with double cream instead of the yoghurt (this is what I often do).

sweeter – add some grated or chopped apple or pear to soak with the seeds.

crunchy – top with your favourite granola before serving.

extra indulgent – serve with more peanut butter on top! (another of my favourite tricks).

higher fiber – add a little psyllium or oat bran.

oaty – if you don't mind the carbs, use steel cut oats instead of the linseeds / chia.

--- breakfast ---

A top-down view of a woven basket lined with a light-colored fabric featuring blue and white striped borders. The basket is filled with several round, golden-brown breakfast muffins. Each muffin is baked in a white, fluted paper liner and is topped with a layer of melted cheese and finely chopped green vegetables, likely zucchini. The muffins are arranged in a cluster, with some overlapping. The basket sits on a dark, rustic wooden surface. In the bottom right corner, there is a faint, light-colored watermark that reads "The Kitchen".

*Feta and Veggie
Breakfast Muffins*

Feta and Veggie Breakfast Muffins

MAKES 6

TAKES 40 minutes

50g (1.75oz) coconut flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

1/4 teaspoon salt

2 eggs

50g (1.75oz) neutral flavoured oil

1 cup milk

1 medium zucchini
(250g / 9oz), grated

100g (3.5oz) feta,
crumbled or diced

1. Preheat oven to 180C (350F). Line 6 holes of a 1/2 cup muffin tray with papers.

2. Place coconut flour, baking powder, salt, eggs, oil and milk in a medium bowl. Mix with a spoon until just combined. Add zucchini and feta and stir to combine.

3. Spoon mixture into your prepared muffin tray dividing between the 6 papers.

4. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until the muffins are deeply golden brown and feel springy when touched.

5. Cool for a few minutes in the tin, then move to a cake rack to finish cooling. Or eat warm!

These are brilliant if you're looking for a do-ahead brunch, a portable breakfast or lunch box option that's more exciting than sandwiches. Or if you happen to have small boys who aren't so interested in eating vegetables apart from potato. The muffins in the photo are feta and zucchini but there are endless options!

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

I like these best on the day they're made but after they've had a chance to cool down. Can be kept for 1-2 weeks in an airtight container in the fridge. Keeps for months in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

dairy-free – use your favourite dairy-free milk. And skip the cheese or replace with olives or sun dried tomatoes.

different veg – grated carrot, parsnip, sweet potato, beets, broccoli, cauliflower.

different cheese – grated parmesan, cheddar, ricotta, goats cheese are all great.

different flavourings – add a handful of pitted olives, sun dried tomatoes, basil, thyme, parsley, canned artichoke hearts or anything you'd serve on a pizza.

no coconut flour – you really need it for these I'm afraid! Although it's not too hard to track down these days... my supermarket stocks coconut flour in the health food and baking sections.

buttery – use melted butter instead of the oil.

more fiber – stir in a few tablespoons linseeds (flax seeds), chia seeds or oat bran.

---breakfast---



-Savoury and Breads-

Savoury and Breads

Little Almond Breads

Life-Changing Cauliflower Seed Loaf

Cheesy Carrot Loaf

Cauliflower 'Pizza'

Seed Crackers

Coconut Flat Bread

Broccoli Sandwich Bread

Cream Cheese Tortillas

Almond Burger Buns

'Paleo' Coconut Bread

Turmeric & Togarashi Cashews

Smoked Paprika & Rosemary Almonds

Cheesy Tart with Almond Crust

Melt-in-the-Mouth Savoury Cheesecake

Rosemary Almond 'Sourdough'

---savoury and breads---



Little Almond Breads

Little Almond Breads

MAKES 9

TAKES 25 minutes

200g (7oz) almond meal

2 tablespoons psyllium
or oat bran (optional)

1 teaspoon baking powder

1/4 teaspoon salt

2 eggs (or 3 egg whites)

100g (3.5oz) cream
or melted butter

1. Preheat your oven to 200C (400F). Line a tray with baking paper.
2. Mix almond meal, psyllium / oat bran (if using), baking powder and salt in a medium bowl. Add eggs, cream (or butter) and stir until just combined.
3. Divide mixture into 9 and form each into a little ball. I find using wet hands helps stop it being too messy. Place balls on your prepared tray and flatten roughly with your fingers until each is about the thickness of a slice of toast.
4. Bake 'breads' for 10-15 minutes or until lovely and golden brown.
5. When the 'breads' are cooked, cool on a rack.

For a long time I resisted the idea of finding a low carb bread because I thought it would be incredibly difficult to get something to be as tasty as a slice of tangy sourdough. But having three bread-loving carbaholics in the house got me experimenting with healthier alternatives.

These 'breads' have earned a tick of approval from my Irishman who loves peanut butter toast for breakfast - and he's a very tough customer to impress!

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Keeps for 1-2 weeks in the fridge or indefinitely in the freezer. Just warm in the toaster before serving.

VARIATIONS

dairy-free / paleo - use coconut yoghurt, coconut cream or your favourite dairy-free milk instead of the cream / butter.

higher fiber - add more psyllium or oat bran. You could also add ground linseeds (flax seeds) or chia seeds - or whole seeds for that matter.

larger batch - I often double the batch to make more for freezing.

---savoury and breads---

*Life-Changing
Cauliflower Seed Loaf*



Life-Changing Cauliflower Seed Loaf

MAKES 1 loaf

TAKES 80 minutes

500g (1lb) cauliflower
(1/2 large cauli)

150g (5oz) almond meal

100g (3.5oz) linseeds (flaxseeds)

100g (3.5oz) sunflower seeds

100g (3.5oz) almonds

2 teaspoons baking powder

1/2 teaspoon salt

4 eggs

150g (5oz) extra virgin olive oil

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Line a loaf pan 24cm x 12cm (approx 9.5in x 5in) with baking paper.

2. Whizz cauliflower in your food processor until finely chopped and looking like rice. Add almond meal, linseeds, sunflower seeds, baking powder, salt, eggs and oil to the food processor bowl. Stir to combine.

3. Spoon the mixture into the loaf pan. Smooth the top with a spoon.

4. Bake for 60 minutes or until lovely and golden brown and the loaf feels springy and firm to touch.

5. Remove from the oven and leave for a few minutes before removing the tin and cooling on a rack to stop the bottom going soggy.

Inspired by Sarah Brittons '[Life-Changing Loaf of Bread](#)'. I was so disappointed when I read the ingredients and it was mostly rolled oats. Not low-carb. Bummer. Then I had the brain wave to try a cauliflower and almond base for my dream seed and nut loaf. Et voila! Not only life-changing but also packed with veggies.

My only warning is if you want to toast this, do it under the grill (broiler) rather than making a mess of your toaster. It's also lovely pan fried in a little butter to crisp up the outside.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Keeps for 1-2 weeks in the fridge or indefinitely in the freezer (I slice it before freezing so I can defrost under the grill or in a pan).

VARIATIONS

nut-free / budget – replace almond meal with finely ground sunflower seeds (I use a little coffee grinder) or ground linseeds. Will take longer to bake. Skip the almonds or use other seeds instead.

different seeds / nuts – feel free to use whatever combo of seeds or nuts you have.

no seeds – you can skip the seeds and almonds if you prefer a less chunky loaf.

higher fiber – add a few tablespoons psyllium or oat bran. You could also add extra ground linseeds (flax seeds) or chia seeds – or whole seeds for that matter.

olive loaf – toss in a handful of pitted olives before baking.

chunky feta – replace the almonds and sunflower seeds with 200g (7oz) diced feta.

herby – add a tablespoon of chopped rosemary, thyme or sage.

no food processor – grate cauli using a box grater or finely chop by hand.

different veg – try grated zucchini, carrot, beets, sweet potato (carb alert!), parsnip (carb alert!) or broccoli.

---savoury and breads---



Cheesy Carrot Loaf

Cheesey Carrot Loaf

MAKES 8–10 slices

TAKES 60 minutes

400g (14oz) carrots

100g (3.5oz) parmesan cheese

200g (7oz) almond meal

2 tablespoons psyllium husks
(optional)

1 teaspoon baking powder

1/4 teaspoon salt

100g (3.5oz) olive oil

3 eggs

sesame seeds to decorate (optional)

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Line a loaf pan 24cm x 12cm (approx 9in x 5in) with baking paper.

2. Grate carrots using your food processor or a box grater. Grate parmesan as well.

3. Add almond meal, psyllium (if using), baking powder, salt, oil and eggs to the food processor bowl or a mixing bowl. Stir using a spoon until just combined.

4. Scoop mixture into the prepared tin and level off with a spoon. Sprinkle with sesame seeds if using.

5. Bake for 45-55 minutes, or until the top is golden and feels firm to the touch and a skewer inserted in the middle comes out without any gooey bits attached. Cool in the tin.

I'm always on the lookout for easy-to-eat breakfast ideas for my boys. Both love toast and while I'm happy for them to have a good slice of sourdough a few times a week, I don't want to fall into the habit of toast for breakfast every day. After seeing them devour my favourite carrot cake, I was inspired to try a savoury loaf version. Talk about a winner! It's got all the great protein from the eggs and almond meal, a decent dose of veggies AND you can slice and toast it straight from the fridge or freezer. Plus there's plenty of cheese so my boys love it.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Keeps really well. Still edible for about 2 weeks in the fridge. Keeps for months in the freezer, I slice before freezing so I can defrost in the toaster for a quick healthy breakfast.

VARIATIONS

nut-free / budget – my first choice would be ground sunflower seeds. Or use regular flour and reduce the baking time to about 30 minutes. I'm also thinking oat flour would be delicious.

no psyllium – we're just using it to add some fiber so you can skip it. Or use another fiber source like ground or whole linseeds (flax seeds) or chia seeds. Oat bran would work too.

lower carb – replace carrot with zucchini, cauliflower or broccoli.

different veg – try parsnip, sweet potato or butternut squash. Beets would also work but better to use pre-cooked pureed beet instead of grating them raw. I also plan to try celeriac (celery root) during the winter.

different cheese – parmesan is my favourite but any hard melting cheese will work. For little bursts of salty intensity, use crumbled feta instead.

chunky – add little chunks of pecans, walnuts, macadamias or almonds.

dairy-free – replace parmesan with an extra 50g oil and 50g almond meal.

---savoury and breads---

Cauliflower 'Pizza'



Cauliflower 'Pizza'

MAKES 1 large pizza — enough for 2

TAKES 60 minutes

500g (1lb) cauliflower,
about 1/2 large

100g (3.5oz) grated parmesan
cheese

1 tablespoon psyllium husks
(optional)

2 eggs

100g (3.5oz) almond meal

your favourite pizza toppings

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F).
2. Whizz your cauliflower using your food processor until it looks a bit like fine couscous. Or chop as finely as possible.
3. Add parmesan, psyllium (if using), eggs, almond meal and a really generous pinch of salt. Stir until combined.
4. Line a baking tray with foil or baking paper. Tip the cauli mixture onto the lined tray then using your hands smooth into a pizza shaped circle about 28cm (11in) in diameter. I like to make a 'crust' by shaping the edges to be taller than the middle.
5. Bake for 30-40 minutes or until the pizza is deeply browned and feels springy when touched.
6. Increase the heat to to 200C (400F), add your toppings and bake further 5-10 minutes or until you're happy.

I was tempted to call this a tart rather than set the expectations that pizza involves. But really it is closer to being a pizza than a tart. Either way it's delicious. And I love that it's low-carb so I don't have to limit myself to only 1-2 modest slices.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Best when warm from the oven. Will keep in the fridge for a week or so but the cauliflower flavour gets stronger with time. Can be frozen. You could cook the bases ahead and either fridge or freeze then add the toppings and finish the baking just before serving.

VARIATIONS

psyllium alternatives – psyllium is a form of fiber. The pizza is perfectly fine without but you could use oat bran, ground chia seeds or ground flaxseeds if you like.

dairy-free – replace parmesan with extra almond meal. If you have some nutritional yeast lying around, a tablespoon or so wouldn't hurt.

nut-free – replace almond meal with bread crumbs or extra parmesan.

martian 'green pizza' – replace cauliflower with broccoli.

do ahead – you can bake the base ahead of time and then just continue from step 6. Will keep in the fridge for a week or so or in the freezer for months. Defrost before baking.

smaller pizzas – feel free to make into whatever size (or shape) you like. Smaller pizzas won't need quite as long, so check after 20 minutes. I often make 2 pizzas so we can vary the toppings.

other veg – also thinking it would work well with grated zucchini or broccoli instead of the cauli. And if you don't mind the carbs, grated sweet potato would be lovely.

---savoury and breads---



seed Crackers

Seed Crackers

MAKES about 20
TAKES 80 minutes

50g (1.75oz) ground sunflower seeds

50g (1.75oz) ground linseeds (flax seeds)

1/2 teaspoon fine salt

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

150g (5.25oz) water

50g (1.75oz) whole linseeds (flax seeds)

100g (3.5oz) sunflower seeds whole

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Line a baking tray with baking paper.

2. Place ground sunflower seeds, ground linseeds, salt, oil, water, whole linseeds and whole sunflower seeds in a medium bowl. Stir until well mixed. It will look really runny but that's all part of the grand plan!

3. Spread the mixture into a rectangular shape on the prepared tray getting it as thin as you can, but not stressing about it too much.

4. Bake for 30 minutes then remove from the oven. Being careful of the heat, either cut or break into individual crackers (you choose the size). I like to use a pizza cutter for this job.

5. Spread the cookies out on the tray so they're not touching each other. Bake for another 15-25 minutes or until well browned.

6. Cool on the tray for a few minutes then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. Taste and if they're not crispy enough pop back in the oven for 10 minutes or so.

I LOVE these crackers! I can't tell you how wonderful it is to have something low-carb to eat with your favourite dip or cheese. They're also brilliant to have on their own when you're in the mood for a crunchy, salty snack and don't want to reach for the potato crisps. Even my 3-year-old loves them (although given a choice he'll go for the potato products every time!).

They are on the fragile side though, so best not to expose them to rough treatment. I've used unsalted and unroasted seeds. Both regular and golden linseeds (flax seeds) will work.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Best on the day of baking and the first few days after that. Keep in an airtight container in the pantry for a few weeks but will soften with time. If this happens you can give them a new lease on life by popping back in the oven for 10 minutes to crisp up again and cooling on a rack. Keeps for months in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

different seeds – feel free to play around with the whole seeds. Sesame seeds, chia seeds and/or pumpkin seeds (pepitas) all make lovely additions.

no ground sunflower or linseeds (flaxseeds) – I grind my own using an electric coffee grinder. You can buy pre-ground. Otherwise replace one or both the ground seeds with almond meal (almond flour). I've tried both and to be honest if I can't be bothered getting the grinder out I just go with the commercially ground almond meal. In the picture above the paler ones were made with almond meal and the others using the ground seeds.

extra salty – sprinkle with sea salt flakes before baking.

---savoury and breads---

Coconut Flat Bread



Coconut Flat Bread

MAKES 4

TAKES 40 minutes

45g (1.5oz) coconut flour

1/4 teaspoon salt

1 tablespoon psyllium husks

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 egg

250mL (1 cups) boiling water

1. Preheat your oven to 200C (400F). Line a large tray with baking paper and grease with a little oil.
2. Mix coconut flour, salt and psyllium in a medium bowl. Add olive oil, egg and water. Stir until just combined.
3. Stand for 5 minutes to allow the mixture to cool and for the water to be absorbed by the psyllium and coconut flour.
4. Divide mixture into 4 and form each into an oval about 20cm (8in) long, using your hands to flatten to about 5mm (1/4 inch) thick. I find using wet hands helps stop it being too messy.
5. Bake 'breads' for 15 minutes. Turn and bake for another 5-10 minutes or until brown. The longer you bake the crispier your flat breads will be.

Do you love scooping up your favourite curry with some roti or naan bread? Me too! But for the longest time I gave up the habit because I couldn't justify the extra carbs. Then along came the idea to use coconut flour to make flat breads. Now I'm back to my old curry scooping ways! You can also use these instead of tortillas or anywhere you'd use pita bread. Super versatile.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Keeps for 1-2 weeks in the fridge or indefinitely in the freezer. Just warm in the the oven or in a pan with a little oil before serving.

VARIATIONS

no coconut flour – coconut flour is a very unique ingredient. I've been meaning to try a flat bread with ground flax seeds but haven't got there yet I'm afraid!

no psyllium – I'm afraid you really need psyllium for this one.

larger batch – I often double the batch to make more for freezing.

---savoury and breads---



Broccoli sandwich Bread

Broccoli Sandwich Bread

MAKES 6–8 slices

TAKES about 40 minutes

500g (1lb) broccoli, 2 small

4 eggs

100g (3.5oz) almond meal

1/4 teaspoon salt

1. Preheat your oven to 200C (400F).
2. Whizz your broccoli using your food processor until it looks a bit like fine couscous. Or chop as finely as possible.
3. Add eggs, almond meal and salt to the food processor bowl. Stir with a spoon until combined.
4. Line a baking tray with baking (parchment) paper. Tip the broccoli mixture onto the lined tray then using your hands smooth into a rectangle about 1cm (1/3in) thick.
5. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until the bread is slightly browned and feels firm and springy when touched.
6. Cool on the tray for a few minutes then transfer to a wire rack. Cut in half crosswise and then into 3-4 lengthwise to make 6-8 slices (or cut to your preferred size).

When I'm in the mood for a sandwich or a slice of toast, this is my go-to recipe, inspired by David and Luise at [Green Kitchen Stories](#). I love how something that feels and tastes quite 'bread-y' is actually a serve of vegetables. I slice and freeze so I can just defrost in the toaster as needed.

This broccoli version does look very green, which I love but I've found my boys are much happier eating the white, cauliflower version instead. What is it with kids and green food?

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Will keep in the fridge for a week or so. I like to keep it in the freezer and just warm slices in the toaster as needed.

VARIATIONS

different quantities – the 500g (1lb) broccoli is a guideline but if you only have 400g (14oz) or up to 600g (21oz) it will be fine.

higher fiber – add 1-2 tablespoons psyllium, oat bran, ground chia seeds or ground flaxseeds (linseeds). I've also made it with whole linseeds.

nut-free – replace almond meal with bread crumbs, ground linseeds (flax seeds) or ground sunflower seeds. Each of these will soak up different amounts of moisture so you'll need to be prepared for different baking times. When I made it with ground sunflower seeds the texture was wetter and it took 30 minutes.

different vegetables – cauliflower works really well. You could also replace up to half the broccoli / cauliflower with grated raw veg like carrot, beets, sweet potato, parsnip or zucchini. I wouldn't use all root veg though.

other flavours – I like to keep this simple so my sandwich flavours come through but you could play around with some grated parmesan, garlic or chopped herbs.

---savoury and breads---

A stack of several round, golden-brown tortillas is presented on a light-colored, speckled ceramic plate. The tortillas are layered, showing a soft, slightly puffed texture. The top tortilla has a prominent golden-brown crust, while the layers below are a lighter, pale yellow color. The plate is set on a dark, speckled countertop. The text "Cream Cheese Tortillas" is written in a white, cursive font across the top right portion of the stack.

Cream Cheese Tortillas

Cream Cheese Tortillas

MAKES 8

TAKES 20 minutes

250g (8oz) cream cheese, softened

1 tablespoon psyllium husks

1 tablespoon coconut flour

3 eggs

1. Preheat your oven to 200C (400F). Line a 2 large trays with baking paper.
2. Using your food processor or a stick blender, mix cream cheese, psyllium, coconut flour and egg until smooth and creamy.
3. Spoon mixture onto your prepared trays to make 8 circles. Use the spoon to spread the mixture as thinly as you can without having any holes in it (about 13cm / 5in) diameter for each circle.
4. Bake tortillas for 10 minutes or until they feel puffy and springy (not wet) when you touch them with your fingers. Cool on the tray or serve warm.

Beware! These tortillas are very low carb BUT they're also very addictive. It can be easy to polish them all off (and in the process a whole packet of cream cheese) in one sitting.

That being said, their light creamy texture is perfect for wrapping anything you'd normally reserve for a tortilla. They also make a great substitute for pita bread. They're also a brilliant way to use up excess egg whites if you happen to have a mayonnaise-making addiction like me.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Keeps for 1-2 weeks in the fridge or indefinitely in the freezer. Just warm in the the oven to freshen up before serving.

VARIATIONS

egg whites – if you need to use up some egg whites just replace whole eggs with 200g (7oz) egg whites.

no coconut flour – use extra psyllium or ground flax seeds.

no psyllium – use extra coconut flour, ground linseeds (flaxseeds) or ground chia seeds instead.

smaller batch – feel free to halve the batch (1/2 tablespoon = 1.5 teaspoons).

dairy-free / egg-free – sorry! you really need cream cheese and eggs for this one.

---savoury and breads---

Almond Burger Buns



Almond Burger Buns

MAKES 4

TAKES 80 minutes

100g (3.5oz) almond meal

25g (1oz) psyllium

2 teaspoons baking powder

1/2 teaspoon salt

3 egg whites* (120g / 4oz)

1 cup boiling water

2 teaspoons apple cider vinegar

sesame seeds to sprinkle (optional)

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Line a tray with baking paper.

2. Mix almond meal, psyllium, baking powder and salt in a medium bowl. Add egg whites, boiling water and vinegar. Stir until just combined. Stand for 5 minutes to allow the mixture to cool and the psyllium to absorb the water.

3. Divide mixture into 4 and form each into a little disc about the diameter of a burger bun. I find using wet hands helps stop it being too messy. Place discs on your prepared tray. Sprinkle with sesame seeds (if using).

4. Bake buns for 55-60 minutes or until well browned and risen. To double check they should sound hollow, like a loaf of baked bread when you tap on the bottoms.

5. When the buns are cooked cool on a rack to stop the bottoms going soggy.

These burger buns are the real deal. They're now my go-to whenever I'm in the mood for a low carb sandwich or, of course, a burger!

Don't be tempted to try them without the psyllium - it's really the critical ingredient for getting the light soft, burger bun texture (it also adds lots of fiber!)

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Keeps for 1 week in the fridge or indefinitely in the freezer. Just warm in the toaster or your oven before serving.

VARIATIONS

*** no egg whites** - you can use 2 whole eggs instead (the buns texture will be slightly heavier but still delicious!)

nut-free / budget - replace almond meal with finely ground sunflower seeds (I use a little coffee grinder) - expect a longer baking time.

larger batch - I often double the batch to make more for freezing. Cut in half cross wise before freezing so you can easily defrost in the toaster.

no apple cider vinegar - you can skip it, or use a wine vinegar - something that tastes good but not balsamic!

no psyllium - don't be tempted to try them without the psyllium - it's really the critical ingredient for getting the light soft, burger bun texture (it also adds lots of fiber!)

---savoury and breads---

*'Paleo'
Coconut Bread*



'Paleo' Coconut Bread

MAKES 1 loaf
TAKES 60 minutes

165g (6oz) coconut flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
250g (9oz) unsalted butter, melted
12 eggs, lightly beaten

1. Preheat oven to 180C (350F). Line a loaf pan approx 24cm x 12cm (9in x 5in) with baking paper.
2. In a large bowl, combine coconut flour, baking powder and 1 teaspoon salt. Make a 'well' in the middle of the flour.
3. Add eggs and butter in the well. Whisk to combine, but don't stress if there are a few lumps.
4. Transfer the mixture to your prepared pan. Smooth the top.
5. Bake for 45 – 50 minutes or until the loaf is well browned and a skewer inserted in the middle comes out clean.
6. Remove from the pan and cool on a rack before eating.

If you're expecting this bread to be just like your favourite sourdough, I'm afraid you are going to be disappointed. To be honest, this is my least favourite bread in this book. But I wanted to include a completely nut-free bread recipe and this definitely ticks that box!

Don't be alarmed by the number of eggs. Coconut flour is much lower in protein than wheat flour, so the eggs are needed to give enough protein in our loaf. Plus eggs are awesome.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Keeps for 1-2 weeks in the fridge or indefinitely in the freezer (slice before freezing for easier defrosting). Just warm in the toaster before serving.

VARIATIONS

dairy-free – replace butter with 1 cup light flavoured olive oil or other mild flavoured oil.

less 'eggy' – use 6 whole eggs and 1.5 cups water.

sourdough-ish – use 6 eggs + 350g (12oz) natural or Greek style yoghurt – won't be paleo any more but still delicious!

more fiber – add a few tablespoons psyllium or ground linseeds (flaxseeds).

flavoured bread – feel free to add a few handfuls of your favourite flavourings like rosemary, roast cubed potato, seeds, nuts, roast garlic, caramelized onion.

fruit loaf – stir in a few handfuls of dried fruit. I love figs or apricots – but these will add sugar! Almonds are also good.

can't find coconut flour? – I'm afraid you'll need to find another bread recipe!

salted butter – skip the extra teaspoon of salt.

---savoury and breads---

Turmeric & Togarashi Cashews



Turmeric & Togarashi Cashews

MAKES 2 cups

TAKES 20 minutes

300g (2 cups) roasted cashews

2 tablespoons shichimi togarashi*

1 tablespoon ground turmeric

1 tablespoon sesame oil

1/4 teaspoon salt

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). In a medium bowl toss cashews, togarashi, turmeric, oil and salt until well mixed.

2. Spread cashew mixture on a baking tray (I line mine with baking paper for easier clean up).

3. Bake for 5 minutes. Check and stir. If cashews are golden, remove from the heat. If you like a darker roast leave in for another 5 minutes or so.

4. Cool. Store in an airtight container. Will keep in the pantry for weeks to months (depending on how fresh your cashews were to begin with).

This snack comes with a warning (!). The turmeric looks pretty but it does like to stain things. Especially clothes. So don't do as my Irishman did and wipe your fingers on your jeans.

The other warning is that they're super delicious - addictively so. Don't be surprised if they disappear much faster than you'd think. Although with all that turmeric you can be happy they're doing good for more than just your taste buds. They also make a great edible gift.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Keeps for 3-4 weeks in an airtight container in the pantry or indefinitely in the freezer. If the nuts start to lose their crunch, you can freshen them up by popping back in the oven on a tray for 5 minutes or so.

VARIATIONS

raw cashews - I usually buy pre-roasted but if you have raw cashews, just roast in the oven until lightly golden before tossing in the spice mix and roasting further as per the recipe.

no shichimi togarashi - it's a Japanese spice mix with sesame seeds, different chilli powders and occasionally some chopped nori (seaweed). It's super delicious and if you can be bothered tracking some down, you won't have any problems finding uses for it. It's brilliant on avocado or soft cheese (especially labneh) or poached eggs. If you don't have any, just use sesame seeds and a little chilli powder or crumbled dried chillies and if you like, toss in some chopped nori but it's not essential.

different nuts - almonds, macadamias or brazil nuts would be the best substitutes or use a mixture.

no sesame oil - it adds a lovely roasted flavour but any oil you'd normally cook with will work.

black pepper - is meant to help with the anti-inflammatory properties of turmeric so feel free to add freshly ground pepper to your roast nuts.

no turmeric - most commercial 'curry' powders have lots of turmeric so you could use a curry powder instead.

lower-carb - cashews have more carbs than most nuts so if you're really watching your carbs use almonds or macadamias.

---savoury and breads---

CARB
ALERT!

A large quantity of almonds is scattered across a dark, textured surface, likely a baking sheet. The almonds are a warm, golden-brown color, suggesting they have been roasted or smoked. They are distributed in a somewhat circular pattern, with a denser cluster in the center and more sparse arrangements towards the edges. The background is a dark, mottled grey with some lighter spots, giving it a rustic, industrial feel.

*Smoked Paprika
and Rosemary Almonds*

Smoked Paprika and Rosemary Almonds

MAKES 500g (1lb)

TAKES 20 minutes

1 egg white

1-2 sprigs rosemary chopped

1/4 teaspoon salt

500g (1lb) raw almonds

1 heaped teaspoon smoked paprika

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). In a medium bowl, whisk egg white until frothy using a hand whisk or stick blender – no need to get your stand mixer out for this job.
2. Add rosemary, salt, almonds and smoked paprika. Toss until well combined. The fat from the nuts will deflate most of the bubbles from the egg white so don't expect it to look meringuey.
3. Spread almond mixture on a baking tray (I line mine with baking paper for easier clean up).
4. Bake for 10 minutes. Check and stir. If almonds taste toasted, remove from the heat. If you like a darker roast, leave in for another 5 minutes or so.
5. Cool. Store in an airtight container in the pantry.

If you've ever roasted nuts and been disappointed that the flavourings stay at the bottom of the bowl (instead of on the nuts), then this is the recipe for you! Basically the secret is to use egg white to bind the flavourings onto the nuts. It also helps the nuts stick together into crunchy clusters. So delish!

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Keeps for 3-4 weeks in an airtight container in the pantry or indefinitely in the freezer. If the nuts start to lose their crunch, you can freshen them up by popping back in the oven on a tray for 5 minutes or so.

VARIATIONS

no smoked paprika – use regular paprika.

different nuts – almonds, macadamias or brazil nuts would be the best substitutes or use a mixture.

egg-free – the egg is the magic which keeps the flavourings stuck to the nuts but if you need to be egg-free, replace the egg white with 2 tablespoons olive oil.

---savoury and breads---



*Cheesy Tart with
an Almond Crust*

Cheesey Tart with an Almond Crust

MAKES 6–8 serves

TAKES 2 hours

150g (5oz) parmesan cheese

250g (9oz) almond meal

125g (4.5oz) butter

2 tablespoons psyllium husks

600mL (2 1/2 cups) whipping
cream

8 eggs

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F).
2. Grate parmesan using your food processor or a grater. Place 50g (2oz) grated cheese (NOT ALL OF IT! SAVE SOME FOR THE FILLING), almond meal and butter in your food processor. Pulse until the mixture looks like coarse bread crumbs. Add 2 tablespoons water and pulse a few more times. You don't want to over mix.
3. Press the mixture into a ball with your hands. Roll pastry out between two sheets of baking paper until 5mm thick (1/3in). Line a 22cm (8.5in) x 5cm (2in) DEEP tart tin or spring form pan with the pastry. Patch any holes and trim the excess pastry from around the edge.
4. Place lined tart on a baking tray and bake for 25-30 minutes or until the pastry is well browned. The longer you cook here, the crunchier it will be.

One of the things I've really missed over the years of going gluten-free is a good savoury tart. So I challenged myself to come up with a low-carb crust for this book. So so glad I did.

There's something really therapeutic about making pastry. It's so nice to have these brilliant do-ahead lunches / dinners back in my repertoire. Plus the leftovers! Oh the leftovers!

NOTE: I'm using a 5cm (2in) deep fluted tin rather than a regular shallow tart tin. If you don't have one, the best substitute is a spring form pan.

5. Meanwhile mix cream and eggs in a large bowl or jug. When the pastry is cooked, carefully pour the egg mixture into the shell. Sprinkle over REMAINING CHEESE.
6. Reduce temperature to 150C (300F). Bake for 50-60 minutes or until the filling is puffy and feels springy. It will look lovely and brown. If the filling wobbles when you touch it, keep cooking!
7. Allow to cool for a few minutes then serve hot or at room temperature.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Lovely when still warm from the oven but it's also great to have a slice cold from the fridge. Leftovers can be kept for 2 weeks or more in an airtight container in the fridge. Keeps for months in the freezer.

---savoury and breads---

Cheesey Tart with an Almond Crust

VARIATIONS

nut-free / budget – use regular flour. I've also made it with chickpea flour (besan) and it was excellent. But I prefer almond meal because it's lower carb.

different flavours – roast eggplant is really good, grilled red peppers, roast mushrooms, roast diced root veg like sweet potato, wilted greens, smoked salmon, smoked trout, chopped chives, thyme.

carnivore – top with salami or prosciutto before serving.

no psyllium – this helps dry out and crisp up the crust. You could replace with extra almond meal or some oat bran or ground flax seed.

different cheese – replace parmesan with any other good melting cheese like cheddar, gruyere or emmental.

less cheesey – just skip the cheese.

dairy-free – use olive oil instead of butter. And your favourite dairy-free milk instead of the cream.

crunchier tart – after the tart shell has cooked for 25 minutes, brush with egg white and return to the oven for another 5 minutes. This helps prevent moisture transfer from the filling to the base but is a bit of a pain so I don't normally bother.

larger tart – for a 24cm (9in) tin you'll need: 180g (6.5oz) parmesan, 300g (10oz) almond meal, 150g (5oz) butter, 2.5 tablespoons psyllium, 750mL (3 cups) cream, 10 eggs.



Melt-in-the-mouth
Savoury Cheesecake

Melt-in-the-mouth Savoury Cheesecake

MAKES enough for 4 as a light meal

TAKES 60 minutes

3 small zucchinis (500g / 1lb)

small bunch mint, leaves picked

250g (9oz) cream cheese
(Philadelphia), softened

200g (7oz) feta

3 eggs

1. Preheat your oven to 200C (400F). Slice zucchini into rounds and pop in a roasting tray. Drizzle with a little oil but don't add salt because you'll be getting lots from the feta.

2. Roast for 20 minutes or until zucchini has softened and started to brown. Remove from the oven and toss in the mint.

3. Meanwhile, place cream cheese, feta and eggs in a food processor and whizz until well combined. There will still be a few tiny lumps from the feta. Grease a 20cm (8in) oven proof frying pan or spring form pan. Spoon the cheesy mixture into the pan and smooth the surface with a spoon. Press the cooked zucchini into the top.

4. Bake cheesecake for 15 minutes. Turn and cook for another 5-10 minutes or until browned around the edges and puffed up a little. Serve warm.

I love this cheesecake so so much. I've served it multiple times for brunch but it's also fab as a simple vegetarian weeknight meal. I like it best when still warm from the oven but am totally happy having cold leftovers for lunch the next day.

If it's not zucchini season where you are, see the 'variations' for alternative topping ideas. And if you're short of time you can easily roast the zucchini at the same time you cook the cheesecake and then serve it on top.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

I like it best when still warm from the oven. Leftovers can be kept for 2 weeks or more in an airtight container in the fridge. Keeps for months in the freezer.

VARIATIONS

short on time – bake zucchini at the same time as the cheesecake and serve on top. Or skip the zucchini and just serve with a side salad for greenery. Or try a big dollop of pesto just before serving.

different veg – roast eggplant is really good, grilled red peppers, roast mushrooms, roast diced root veg like sweet potato, wilted greens.

carnivore – top with salami or prosciutto as well as or instead of the zucchini.

no food processor – just mash the cheeses and eggs together with a fork and go for a more chunky, rustic style.

different cheese – replace feta with goats cheese or ricotta.

more substantial – serve with a side of bacon and/or hot buttered toast. For a more middle eastern vibe serve with warm pita bread.

---savoury and breads---



Rosemary Almond 'Sourdough'

Rosemary Almond 'Sourdough'

MAKES 1 loaf

TAKES 60 minutes

300g (10.5oz) almond meal

100g (3.5oz) ground linseeds
(flaxseeds)

3 teaspoons baking powder

1/2 teaspoon salt

6 eggs

150g (5oz) extra virgin olive oil

3-4 tablespoons apple cider vinegar

2 sprigs rosemary (optional)

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Line a loaf pan 24cm x 12cm (approx 9.5in x 5in) with baking paper.

2. Mix almond meal, ground linseed, baking powder and salt in a medium bowl. Add eggs, oil, and vinegar. Chop one sprig of rosemary (if using) and add to the mix. Stir until just combined.

3. Spoon the mixture into the loaf pan. Smooth the top with a spoon and decorate with the other sprig of rosemary (if using).

4. Bake for 30 – 40 minutes or until lovely and golden brown.

5. Remove from the oven and leave for a few minutes before removing the tin and cooling on a rack to stop the bottom going soggy.

One of the things I miss most about being gluten-free is good quality sourdough bread slathered with creamy Irish butter. I do treat myself occasionally but since creating this almond 'sourdough', I find it hits the spot almost as much as the real thing. Even my Irishman is a fan.

Of course this isn't a real sourdough, because there isn't any fermentation, we're just using vinegar to get that refreshing tangy flavour.

STORAGE & SHELF LIFE

Keeps for 1-2 weeks in the fridge or indefinitely in the freezer (I slice it before freezing so I can defrost in the toaster).

VARIATIONS

nut-free / budget – replace almond meal with finely ground sunflower seeds (I use a little coffee grinder). Will take longer to bake.

no ground linseeds (flax) – I use a coffee grinder to grind my own. You could use ground chia seeds or psyllium husks instead.

higher fiber – add a few tablespoons psyllium or oat bran. You could also add extra ground linseeds (flax seeds) or chia seeds – or whole seeds for that matter.

seed bread – stir in a few handfuls whole seeds such as sunflower, linseeds (flax seeds), pumpkin seeds or sesame seeds.

potato bread – dice a large potato and roast until soft, mash and cool and stir through bread before baking.

olive loaf – toss in a handful of pitted olives before baking.

chunky almond – stir in a handful of whole almonds.

no apple cider vinegar – use lemon juice or any other wine vinegar. Or just skip the vinegar – it's only included for the flavour.

different herbs – try thyme or sage instead.

---savoury and breads---



-- My Low-Carb Philosophy --

My Low Carb Food Philosophy

Why I Don't Count Carbs - and what I do instead
Carb Alert?!

A Friendly 'Warning'

Are Natural Sweeteners Healthy?

Recipe Index by Dietary Requirement

---my low carb food philosophy---

Why I Don't Count Carbs (and what I do instead)

NOTE: If counting carbs or calories works for you. If you're happy with your health and food habits, then I'm totally not suggesting you need to change. Skip on to the next page!

But if you aren't happy with your situation, you might like to try my approach. Or at the very least gain an understanding of why I don't count carbs or calories. And why I haven't included nutritional information in this book.

-- Why I Don't -- Count Carbs

1. COUNTING TAKES THE JOY OUT OF EATING.

This is the biggest reason for me. Food, especially sharing it with loved ones, is one of the great pleasures that should enrich our lives, not require a spreadsheet and an app.

2. COUNTING DOESN'T GUARANTEE YOU'RE GETTING THE NUTRIENTS YOU NEED.

As with most of life, getting the quantity right doesn't mean the quality is also where it should be. Optimum nutrition is super complex, especially if you start trying to micro-manage your intake of each nutrient. No fun.

3. IT TAKES SO MUCH TIME.

Entering everything you eat into an app is time consuming. Since time is our only truly non-renewable resource, I'd rather spend it cooking or reading or gardening or sleeping!

--- What I Do --- Instead

1. FOCUS ON REAL FOOD.

As Michael Pollan puts it in his brilliant book, 'In Defense of Food', we are designed to eat food. We're not designed to eat nutrients and not the highly-processed food-like-stuff that lines our supermarket shelves.

--- my low carb food philosophy ---

2. STICK TO LOW-CARB INGREDIENTS.

If I didn't have diabetes, I wouldn't be as strict with my use of low-carb ingredients. But my blood sugar control isn't where it should be, so rather than worry about calculating and tracking my carb intake, I focus on using ingredients I know are fine from a carb perspective.

Occasionally I will treat myself to some roast beets, a slice of proper sourdough bread or a scoop of salted caramel ice cream but these are rare. The less carbs I eat, the less I crave.

There are a handful of recipes using higher-carb real food ingredients in this book. Things like dates and sweet potato. They've each been marked with a 'carb alert' icon so you'll know to tread lightly with these goodies.

3. MONITOR MY BLOOD SUGAR.

Again if I didn't have diabetes, I wouldn't bother. I test my fasting blood sugar every morning. It's my way of checking in to know I'm on track. Sometimes the results are surprisingly high, and other times they're lower than expected. I don't obsess but just use it as a data point.

I also have my HbA1C tested every 6 months. So far that feels like enough tracking.

Carb Alert!

Full disclosure, there are some recipes in this book that do contain some carb-heavy ingredients.

And even some sugar...

What!?

I debated whether to include these recipes for a long time and even asked some of my readers for their thoughts.

In the end I decided to include them because

- a.** they're super delicious
- b.** they're lowER carb than most conventional sweet treats.

And I know sometimes I don't mind having a few more carbs in my desserts. Especially when I'm baking for family and friends who don't have the same dietary focus.

To make it easy to spot these 'carb creep' treats I've included a little icon on the more carby recipes in the book.

So when you see:



You know to proceed with caution and fully enjoy the indulgence if you decide to make one of these treats.



a Friendly 'Warning'

This sounds a bit silly when I write it down, but I did have some fantasies around writing my baking book.

You see, I was hoping to write that because everything was so low-carb while using real food ingredients, that I didn't gain weight while writing this book.

But the thing is I did struggle with my waistline.

I only gained a kilo (2lb) so not exactly a big problem.

But it didn't feel great.

Doing all that baking and testing and tasting (you can't *not* taste right?) wasn't as easy as I'd hoped.

The good news is as soon as I finished all the photography and went back to baking once a week, my waistline went back to normal.

I just wanted to share this story as a cautionary tale...

Even if these treats are low-carb / sugar-free / unprocessed, it can be easy to have too much.

And too much is still too much.

The end.

Are 'Natural' Sweeteners Healthy?

There aren't many things that make me angry.

I do get a bit worked up when a certain 3-year-old puts my shoes in the toilet. But you know what pisses me off even more?

It's when I read blogs and cookbooks that use 'natural' sweeteners like maple syrup, honey, dates or agave and imply that these are a better choice than regular white sugar.

I know it's tempting to fall into this trap. I've been there myself.

But since having gestational diabetes and monitoring my blood sugar levels, I've been forced to change my view on all sweeteners. Even using fruit to 'sweeten' baked goods.

And like any recent convert, now whenever I see a reference to 'natural sweeteners', it really drives me crazy.

There are two reasons...

1. IT'S JUST PLAIN WRONG.

Sugar is sugar.

Even if there are slightly more minerals in honey and maple syrup and more fiber in dates, your body essentially treats natural sugars the same way... The glucose part spikes your blood sugar levels and caused all the insulin related chaos. And the fructose goes into your liver to be stored directly as fat. Yes fat.

It's a bit like low nicotine cigarettes, sure they're slightly better but they still give you cancer.

2. IT GIVES YOU A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY.

It's human nature right? Oh this cake is made using healthy 'natural' sweeteners. That means I'm fine to have another slice.

I wish I could remember where I read a study about this phenomenon. From memory researchers compared the amount of cake eaten by two groups of people. Group A were told the cake contained a certain amount of calories per slice. And group B were told it contained twice as many calories.

They were then invited to eat as much cake as they liked.

You know where this is heading right?

The people in group A who thought the cake was healthier ate significantly more cake. More!

-- What sweeteners-- do I use?

Before my gestational diabetes and subsequent diabetes diagnosis, I didn't mind using honey and maple syrup as a treat.

But now that I'm watching my blood sugar, I stick to stevia.

My favourite is [pure stevia powder](#) which is expensive but a tiny amount goes a long long way. We're talking 1/4 teaspoon to sweeten a whole cake. I still have the same 100g jar I bought when I wanted to experiment and it's still half full. Even after developing, testing and double testing all the recipes in this book.

I also keep granular stevia like Natvia on hand for when I just need a tiny bit of sweetness like in a cup of chai or am making a small batch of muffins. But I limit it because it contains erythritol as well as stevia and I suspect the erythritol isn't great for our gut microflora.

Rant over.

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by Dietary Requirement

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Super Moist Carrot Cake
Stupidly Easy Banana Bread
Rosy Roast Rhubarb
Sunny Roast Peaches
Chocolate Coconut Brownies
Peanut Butter Chocolate Fudge
Pure Chocolate Mousse
Quick Raw Brownies

Sweet Potato Brownies
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Crunchy Peanut Butter Granola
Chocolatey Coconut Granola
Life-Changing Cauliflower Seed Loaf
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Smoked Paprika & Rosemary Almonds
Rosemary Almond 'Sourdough'

---GLUTEN-FREE---

All recipes are gluten-free

---EGG-FREE---

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Rosy Roast Rhubarb
Sunny Roast Peaches
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---KIDS---

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Berry Mousse

No-Bake Berry Tart
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by Dietary Requirement

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Broccoli Sandwich Bread
Almond Burger Buns
'Paleo' Coconut Bread
Turmeric & Togarashi Cashews
Smoked Paprika & Rosemary Almonds
Rosemary Almond 'Sourdough'



-- Baking Ingredients --

Baking Ingredients

An Important Note About Stevia

All About Baking Ingredients

Recipe Index by Ingredient

---ingredients---

an Important Note about stevia

Before you put on your apron and fire up your oven we need to have a little chat about stevia and sweeteners.

The majority of the recipes in this book use stevia because it's my favourite low-carb blood sugar-friendly option for replacing sugar.

I like stevia because it comes from the stevia plant and is generally considered to be 'natural'. And when it's used sparingly, I like the taste.

But there is a downside.

It can be confusing because there are 4 different types of stevia on the market and they act in different ways.

So lets look at them all to make sure you know what I mean when I call for stevia in the recipes in this eCookbook.

---The 4 Types--- of stevia

1. PURE STEVIA POWDER

This is what I generally use because it has the cleanest flavour and no additives.

It looks like icing (powdered / confectioners) sugar. It's expensive but a tiny amount goes a long long way. We're talking 1/4 teaspoon to sweeten a whole cake.

I've had the same 100g (3oz) jar since I started using stevia powder and it's still half full after me testing all the recipes in this book multiple times.

2. GRANULAR STEVIA

Looks like regular white sugar. It's a blend of erythritol (a sugar alcohol) and stevia. Common brands include Natvia and Truvia.

Usually 1/8 teaspoon pure stevia powder = 3-4 tablespoons granular stevia.

I do occasionally use granular stevia, mainly when I want a small amount of sweetness and measuring out the tiny amount of pure stevia powder isn't practical.

But I limit my intake because I'm not sure if erythritol is harmful for our gut microbes. I also find erythritol doesn't dissolve in the same way as sugar does so it can give a gritty texture which I don't like.

3. FRESH OR DRIED STEVIA LEAVES

These come from a real stevia plant! I haven't baked with them but they will behave similar to the pure stevia powder. Just add to taste.

4. LIQUID STEVIA

I haven't used this. But add to taste.

---Please Note---

If you don't like stevia, it's OK! I've included options for using a variety of sweeteners in the 'variations' for each recipe. I've got you covered.

---about stevia and low-carb sweeteners---

All About Baking Ingredients

---Flours---

ALMOND MEAL

I love, love baking with almond meal, also called almond flour. It gives baked goods a lovely moist texture and sweet slightly nutty flavour. It's gluten-free and low-carb so ticks all the right health boxes as well.

The only downside is that it's very expensive. While writing this book I started buying in bulk (like 9kg / 18lb) and keeping it in my spare fridge which makes it much more affordable. There's also the nut allergen problem for schools etc.

You can get blanched (skins off) and natural (skins on) almond meal. Generally I buy blanched because it looks more like regular flour for my boys.

However, I accidentally ordered natural last time so many of the photos in this book were taken with my natural meal. I quite like the more wholesome look. The skins provide some fiber so natural wins on that front.

I generally buy insecticide-free almond meal and almonds rather than organic because I can't justify the extra cost.

Best substitutes: Other nut meal, finely ground sunflower seeds, plain all-purpose flour. Just start with a 1:1 substitution (by weight) and adjust as you go.

COCONUT FLOUR

There's no doubt that coconut flour is a strange beast. My first attempts at baking with it were very discouraging. I'd pretty much given up on it. But having diabetes and looking for low-carb flours that weren't nut-based just left coconut flour.

I persisted for this book to give you some nut-free options. They'll also help when Fergal starts school. Plus a friend gave me a 1kg (2lb) bag of coconut flour which I didn't want to waste.

While coconut flour absorbs crazy amounts of liquid, it can give an unpleasant mealy, dry texture. I've found a solution though. Making sure your recipe includes lots of fat keeps the mouth feel moist and lovely.

Best substitute: None. Coconut flour is a unique beast.

---ingredients---

CHICKPEA FLOUR

Also called 'besan', this is my go-to when I need a replacement for regular flour. Mostly it works 1:1 by weight.

I've had success with making puff pastry, [empanada dough](#) and some bread. It can be used to thicken sauces or for a batter to make onion rings. Yum onion rings!

The only problem is that while it is gluten-free and lower carb than wheat flour, it's still quite carby. It still spikes my blood sugar (damn onion rings). So I only use it occasionally.

Best substitutes: Any plain all-purpose flour or flour substitute.

GROUND LINSEEDS (FLAX SEEDS)

Linseeds are awesome nutritionally because they're packed with fiber, good fats AND they're super low carb. I generally buy golden linseeds because they look better but you can use regular ones interchangeably.

It's super important to buy organic. My Dad had a friend who was a linseed farmer and apparently they're a really tricky crop to grow. So they're often treated with loads of pesticides.

I grind my own as needed using a dedicated 'spice / coffee' grinder. Don't worry, I have a separate serious grinder for my morning java beans.

Best substitutes: Ground chia seeds. Sometimes almond meal will also work.

GROUND SUNFLOWER SEEDS

I've been experimenting with using ground sunflower seeds as a nut-free alternative to almond meal. As with linseeds I buy whole seeds and grind as needed.

In theory it should work. But in practice I find the ground sunflower meal to be wetter and need longer baking times than almond meal.

Best substitutes: Almond meal, ground linseeds.

CANNED BEANS

It might surprise you how fabulously cannellini beans and black beans perform in sweet baking. I use organic, BPA-free cans more because I care about the can being safe than needing my beans to be organic.

I always wash my beans thoroughly because the 'gas' inducing oligosaccharides are water soluble and tend to leach into the canning liquid.

While much lower carb than regular flour, these do contribute some carbohydrate. If you need to watch your blood sugar, choose small serves or skip these recipes. I've labelled them with a 'carb alert' so you don't forget.

Best substitutes: White beans can substitute for black but not the other way around. In theory chickpeas should work in both cases. Home cooked beans are also great (1 can = 240g (8oz) cooked beans).

---Fats+ Oils---

BUTTER

There are few things better than butter! Our favourite is 'Kerrygold' from Ireland.

I tend to use salted butter for savoury cooking and unsalted for sweet. Normally it doesn't matter too much, so don't stress if you don't have the right type. EXCEPT if you try and make the lemon curd or my lemon delicious cake. Salt + lemon + sweet = weird taste.

Best substitute: Coconut oil or light olive oil.

COCONUT OIL

I generally use virgin coconut oil when I'm happy to have that sweet, coconutty flavour and a refined coconut cooking oil when I don't want to taste coconut. Because it's saturated, coconut oil is very stable so a great oil for cooking. It's also full of short chain fatty acids which are linked to brain health.

Best substitute: Butter or light olive oil.

OLIVE OIL

Again, I keep two different types of olive oil as well. This isn't sounding very simple, is it?

I use light olive oil for any recipes calling for 'neutral flavoured oil'. And extra virgin olive oil for savoury baking when I'm happy for the peppery flavour.

Best substitute: Any neutral-flavoured oil.

---sweeteners---

STEVIA

I use both pure stevia powder and occasionally granular stevia as my go-to sweeteners these days. For more details see [An Important Note About Stevia](#).

Best substitutes: Depends on your preference! One of the best parts about using pure stevia powder is the only function it provides is to add sweetness, so you can easily substitute your favourite sweetener based on taste.

HONEY

I love the flavour of real honey. But honey is pretty much the same as white sugar from a blood sugar perspective. So I treat it with care. There's only one recipe in this book using a small amount of honey for flavour and stevia for the bulk of the sweetening.

Best substitutes: Maple syrup or just skip it.

MAPLE SYRUP

Another gorgeous flavour I only indulge on very rare occasions. Like honey, maple syrup has the same impact on your blood sugar as sugar.

I have seen recipes calling for Maple Syrup 'Extract' which I assume is a concentrated form. Unfortunately I haven't been able to find anyone selling it in Australia but would love to experiment with using a tiny amount of maple extract with stevia for low-carb maple treats.

Best substitute: Honey or just skip it.

MOLASSES

I used to love baking with brown sugar. Those lovely caramelly flavours were the thing I really missed when I started baking with stevia. Until I had the idea to add a little molasses. Brown sugar is just white sugar that has been painted 'brown' with molasses. Hey presto!

Mine is blackstrap molasses which I think just means it comes from sugar cane. Am sure any molasses will give you a similar result.

Molasses is about 60% sugar which I don't mind because it's only a few teaspoons here and there but if you want to be 100% sugar-free you'll need to skip it.

Best substitutes: Just skip it or use brown sugar (carb alert!).

SUGAR

OK, I have some sugar in my pantry. I keep it for guests who like it in their tea or coffee. Apart from a batch of plum jam this summer, I can't remember the last time I used sugar in my cooking. I'm so happy with the results I get with pure stevia powder, I don't even feel tempted to switch back to sugar.

---ingredients---

That being said, sugar does have a lot going for it. It's inexpensive, it's super delicious and it binds up moisture so makes food last longer (which I why I used it in my jam).

While it's more addictive than heroin (in lab studies with mice), I don't think sugar entirely deserves all the negative press at the moment. While it certainly isn't a health food, I also don't believe it's the only factor responsible for the obesity epidemic. Surely white flour, factory farming and food processing have contributed something?

Many of the recipes in this book began life using sugar so if you are OK with the white stuff, then follow the 'sugar-lovers' variations. Many of my recipe testers did!

Best substitute: Granular stevia is the easiest. Usually if a recipes calls for sugar you can use half the amount of granular stevia without any problems.

DATES

While dates are super high in sugar (like 70%+), there are a few recipes in this book using dates to sweeten because they're just so damn tasty. But they come with a 'carb alert'.

There are two types of dates – cheap pitted dates and fresh Medjool dates (with pits in).

I use cheap pitted dates because (a.) they're more economical and (b.) Medjool dates are addictive. If I have Medjool dates in the house I will eat them all, so it's safer not to buy them. Plus there's no need to remove the pits from pitted dates.

Medjool dates are higher moisture so if you're using them you'll need to skip the soaking (and don't forget to remove the stones)!

Best substitutes: Other dried fruit like figs, apricots or prunes.

OTHER SWEETENERS

I avoid sweeteners apart from stevia because they tend to either contain sugar (like honey, maple syrup, coconut sugar, dates or agave) OR they're man-made.

I would consider using xylitol occasionally because it's from a natural source but have preferred to stick to stevia for simplicity. And I'm not sure how safe sugar alcohols like xylitol (and the erythritol found in granular stevia) are for our gut microbes.

---Eggs---

I have my own chickens but often they don't lay enough. So I make sure I buy free range eggs from small local producers.

I prefer pastured eggs because the have more omega-3s. But for me the most important part is to make sure the chickens are happy.

Egg sizes vary considerably. I use large eggs (which weigh about 59g or 2oz).

For most recipes, though it won't be a deal breaker if your eggs are slightly smaller or larger.

For recipes calling for egg whites and egg yolks, I've included in the variations whether you can substitute whole eggs.

I make a lot of mayo and am always looking for ways to use up egg whites. I generally freeze my whites in ziplock bags and write on the outside the number of whites contained.

But if you forget to label, like I do occasionally:
1 egg white = 40g (1.4oz)
1 egg yolk = 20g (0.7oz)

Best substitutes: While there are plenty of options, I've chosen to just stick to real eggs for this book. Mainly because I had enough to manage by removing the sugar from everything. Plus eggs are one of the best sources of protein out there and are soo nutritious. If you can't eat eggs, please email me (jules@thestonesoup.com) and ask for a refund. Seriously.

--- Dairy --- and Dairy substitutes

YOGHURT

After almond meal, natural yoghurt is my next most favourite baking ingredient because it adds a fresh tangy flavour and keeps everything moist. I make my own yoghurt but you can use any commercial yoghurt as long as it doesn't have added sugar or flavour.

When I do need to buy yoghurt I choose unsweetened full fat Greek-style.

I avoid yoghurts made with powdered milk solids because the spray drying process oxidizes any cholesterol present in the milk. And while dietary cholesterol doesn't bother me, when it's oxidized that's another matter. You also get that unpleasant spray dried flavour.

Best substitutes: Coconut yoghurt, sour cream or whipping cream.

COCONUT YOGHURT

The best dairy-free yoghurt option. There are plenty of good ones on the market these days.

I have a recipe for coconut yoghurt on my blog but it's not the best one out there. Next time I try, I'll be using this recipe without the sweetener.

Best substitutes: Greek yoghurt, sour cream or unsweetened coconut cream.

MILK

I buy unhomogenized full cream milk from a small local(ish) dairy. It's not certified organic but I'm confident the owners of this small business care about their cows and their customers. Plus it tastes amazing!

Feel free to use your favourite milk.

Best substitutes: Almond milk or coconut milk.

CREAM

One of my favourite treats is double cream which is pure cream, about 50% fat. When I was living in California it was practically impossible to find. Man did I miss it.

Generally I just dollop on double cream when I'm serving. If you don't have access, regular whipping cream (35% milk fat) is fine.

When I whip cream to serve with desserts, I aim for 'semi-whipped' because I like the texture better. Instead of whipping until super thick, I stop as soon as the cream is thick enough to spoon. I prefer a hand balloon whisk because I like the little workout and I find it easier to avoid over whipping.

The way whipping works is to beat air into the fat globules so you need a minimum fat content to get the cream to whip. Temperature is also important so make sure your cream is nice and cold from the fridge.

Mostly if I use cream in cooking it's whipping cream. I buy both thickened and pure whipping cream depending on what has the longest shelf life and use them interchangeably. The thickened stuff contains the same amount of milk fat but has been thickened using gelatine or a vegetable gum.

As with my milk, I don't necessarily buy organic but try to source from small producers who care about their herd and their customers.

Best substitutes: Unsweetened coconut cream, yoghurt.

CREAM CHEESE

It is highly processed but I do love me some Philadelphia Cream Cheese. It's hard to imagine a cheesecake without it. If you're a fellow fan, you should check out my cream cheese tortillas for an addictive savoury treat.

Best substitutes: Other cream cheese.

RICOTTA

Ricotta is an Italian cheese made from the whey of other cheese making. There are two types. Firm ricotta, usually sold in delis, and smooth ricotta, sold in tubs at the supermarket. I use both from time to time but for the recipes in this book I've used the smooth, creamy stuff in tubs.

If the only ricotta you can find is dry and crumbly, see the substitutes below for other options.

It's one of the easiest cheeses to make at home. To have a go, here's [my ricotta recipe](#). You just need milk and lemon juice.

You can also get low fat ricotta but you can probably guess my thoughts on that.

Best substitutes: Cream cheese, mascarpone, whipped cream.

MASCARPONE

Mascarpone is another Italian cream cheese that is similar to smooth ricotta. It has a slightly salty, creamy flavour which I love.

Interestingly there were a few recipe testers who weren't fans or their children didn't like it. The good news is there are plenty of easy substitutes.

Best substitutes: Smooth ricotta, double cream, whipped cream, coconut yoghurt, coconut cream.

COCONUT CREAM

Of all the ingredients, this one caused the most problems for my recipe testers. I buy organic coconut cream in BPA-free cans. More because I want to avoid toxic plastics from the cans than I really want organic coconut products.

It's unsweetened. The ingredients are just coconut, water and a thickener. And it's about 21% fat.

If you're not sure about your coconut cream, please email me (jules@thestonesoup.com) to double check. I don't want you to have a baking disaster!

To whip coconut cream, chill your can in the fridge for a few hours. When it's cold, open and scoop the solid cream into a bowl, discard the watery part (or use in smoothies or drink it). Then whip the cream until light and fluffy. As with regular cream, successful whipping involves incorporating air into the fat globules and it's important for the fat to be cold.

Best substitutes: Unsweetened Coconut milk.

COCONUT MILK

Again you want unsweetened. Generally coconut milk is the same as coconut cream but with more water added to each can (for the same price per can!). So I only use coconut cream and water it down myself if I don't want as much fat (which generally doesn't happen. I love fat!)

Best substitutes: Unsweetened Coconut Cream.

-- Nuts + seeds --

GENERAL NUTS

At any one time my pantry will have a multitude of nuts. At the moment there are pine nuts, pecans, walnuts, hazelnuts, peanuts, cashews and almonds (sliced flakes and whole).

I also buy macadamias (expensive but super-low carb) and brazil nuts.

I always choose unsalted, so I can control how much salt is added. With the exception of peanuts and cashews, I buy unroasted nuts.

I like having roasted peanuts around because they're one of my Irishman's favourite snacks (and much better for him than potato chips). And I keep roasted cashews so I have one roasted nut ready and waiting. Both are dry roasted so I know they haven't been exposed to dodgy vegetable oil.

Because we go through our nuts pretty quickly, I keep them in the pantry. If you're worried about not eating them before they go rancid, store in the fridge or freezer. The cooler the temperature, the slower the rancidity reactions develop.

If I do have some nuts with a little rancidity, I pop them in the oven for 5 minutes (180C / 350F) which freshens them up. But if it's really bad, I throw them out because rancid (oxidised) oils promote inflammation in our bodies.

In terms of roasting, I hate to think how many batches of pine nuts (in particular) I've burnt over the years. Now my favourite method to is to spread the nuts on a baking sheet and roast at 180C (350F) for 10 minutes. Setting my timer! If they're not done, I stir and keep checking every 5 minutes.

To be honest, I often just use raw nuts because I'm in a hurry, even though I generally prefer the more intense flavours of roasted nuts.

Best substitutes: Other nuts. I group pecans, walnuts and hazelnuts together and all the rest in another group. Mostly I substitute within each group so use pecans, walnut and hazelnuts interchangeably. Seeds are great when you have nut-allergy situation. Toasted bread crumbs can also work when you just want textural interest.

SEEDS

Since writing this book, my seed collection has been expanding. My favourites are sunflower seeds, golden linseeds (flax seeds) and sesame seeds. I always buy organic linseeds but am not so picky with sunflower or sesame.

Occasionally I buy pepitas (pumpkin seeds), but I don't love them. Sometimes I also buy chia seeds but find them over-priced and nutritionally not much different to linseeds.

I keep whole seeds in the pantry and grind my own using my 'spice' grinder (actually a dedicated coffee grinder that I use more for seeds than spices). Whole seeds are more stable than ground.

Best substitutes: Other seeds, nuts.

COCONUT

OK, I know it's not really a nut. I like using the biggest flakes of coconut I can find for my granolas because it adds lovely lightness and bulk without relying on carby rolled oats. They look like pencil shavings and are called 'chipped coconut' in my health food store.

The other coconut I use is finely chopped desiccated coconut which I only buy on the odd occasion that I make a batch of lamingtons.

Best substitutes: Sliced 'flaked' almonds (for large chips) OR ground nuts (for the desiccated).

PEANUT BUTTER

OMG if I was only allowed one treat ingredient it would be a toss up between dark chocolate and peanut butter. As you may have guessed from the number of peanut butter recipes in this book!

I keep both crunchy and smooth in the house. Generally they can be used interchangeably, you'll just get a different texture with the crunchy.

Many commercial peanut butters contain sugar and added (dodgy) vegetable oils. Check your label to make sure the only ingredients are peanuts and salt.

My peanut butter is roasted which I think gives better flavour. They also use high oleic peanuts which contain more stable oils than regular peanuts. There can be problems with mould growth and aflatoxins (known carcinogens) in peanuts(!) So make sure your supplier has impeccable quality standards.

Best substitutes: Other nut butters, sunbutter or tahini.

OTHER NUT BUTTERS

Occasionally I buy a jar of almond or cashew butter or ABC (almond, brazil nut, cashew) butter. But they're so much more expensive and my boys prefer peanut butter so they're not pantry essentials around here.

Best substitutes: Tahini or peanut butter.

TAHINI

Don't use unhulled tahini unless you love bitter flavours with your baked goods. One of my recipe testers had a massive flavour fail with the tahini cookies because she used unhulled tahini.

I only buy hulled tahini because I prefer the flavour. And I tend to buy organic but it's because I like the label – not very scientific of me ☐

Best substitutes: Almond or cashew butter. Sometimes peanut butter will also work.

--Fiber sources--

PSYLLIUM HUSKS

Psyllium is some sort of crazy high fiber plant that originated in India. It's super high in soluble fiber and was a key ingredient in a cholesterol lowering breakfast cereal marketed by Kellogg when I worked for them.

It's not grain based, so is paleo friendly and naturally gluten-free. It's my go-to ingredient when I want to add a little fiber and don't want to use linseeds (flax seeds).

I've only ever seen the husks which look like fine bread crumbs. Apparently you can get psyllium powder as well. I've read that 1 teaspoon psyllium powder = 1 tablespoon of the husks if you need to convert.

Best substitutes: Psyllium powder, chia seed bran, ground linseeds (flax seeds) but check the recipe, in some cases you really need psyllium for its special moisture absorbing properties.

OAT BRAN

Depending on who you talk to, oats are either inherently gluten-containing or likely to be cross contaminated with wheat. Confused? Me too.

While it's possible to buy gluten-free oats, I wouldn't risk it if I were coeliac. But it's up to you to experiment.

These days I prefer psyllium when I want to add fiber but there is an older recipe in the book that calls for oat bran so I thought I'd included a description.

Best substitutes: Psyllium, linseeds (flax seeds).

CHIA SEED BRAN

Mentioning this here because I used to buy it until I decided I preferred the simplicity (and economics) of just keeping psyllium husks in the house. None of the recipes in this book require chia seed bran.

Best substitutes: Psyllium husks, ground linseeds (flax seeds).

See also: Chia Seeds, Linseeds (Flaxseeds)

--Flavourings--

CHOCOLATE

Always buy the best you can afford. I tend to use Lindt 70% cocoa solids dark chocolate for cooking. And their 90% cocoa solids for snacking!

The higher the cocoa solids, the less sugar and the more cocoa butter you're getting (which is much more expensive than sugar). So higher cocoa solids chocolate is a much better deal.

The only thing I find with 90% cocoa solids chocolate is that it is more prone to 'splitting' which is why I generally go for 70% when cooking. I hate when chocolate splits.

When I worked for Australia's largest biscuit (cookie) manufacturer, we made our own chocolate. I loved learning about the process and (of course) just hanging out in the chocolate room. The smell was a-mazing. It gave me a huge appreciation for the complexities of making chocolate and how important the conching process is.

If you're wondering, conching is where the chocolate is mixed in huge machines for hours and hours (in some cases 12 hours or more) to develop the flavour.

I hate when I see sugar-free chocolate recipes using coconut oil and cocoa powder. They're completely missing out on the texture and flavour you get from a well made chocolate. And don't get me started on 'raw' chocolate.

Best substitutes: There's no substitute for real chocolate!

COCOA POWDER

While I've experimented with 'raw' cocoa powder, my favourite cocoa is good quality dutch-process because of its beautiful colour and intense chocolatey flavour.

Even if there are a gazillion more anti-oxidants in the raw stuff I'd rather focus on flavour. (And get my antioxidants from red wine!)

Best substitutes: You can sometimes use melted dark chocolate instead, but generally only cocoa powder will work.

FRUIT

I love using fresh and cooked fruit to add flavour, sweetness and prettiness when I'm baking. My faves are berries, apples, pears, rhubarb and stone fruit because these are the lowest sugar / carb options. Although there are a few recipes here using high carb tropical fruits like mango and banana, I've marked them with a 'carb alert'.

Generally frozen fruit can be substituted for fresh, just expect the baking times to be slightly longer unless you defrost before using.

If freezing your own fruit to make ice cream or to store it, best to peel, remove any stones and chop into bite sized pieces before freezing. This way it takes up less space and you'll be moments away from delicious sorbet or ice cream.

Best substitutes: Other flavourings or fruit.

VEGETABLES

Mentioning this here because I used to buy it. Carrot cake has always been one of my favourite cakes. It's so awesome to be having a sweet treat AND getting a serve of vegetables at the same time. Plus there's the bonus of the moist texture vegetables bring. These days I'm mindful of the carbs in carrots so tend to favour zucchini for sweet baking.

But there are also recipes using sweet potato (marked with a carb alert). And I've included some winning savoury recipes using cauliflower and broccoli.

I generally use my food processor to grate raw veg before baking. Or I use it to finely chop things like broccoli or cauli. If you don't have a food processor, a box grater will do the job and give you more of a workout. Bonus!

And I never peel veg. Just rinse or scrub and you're good to go.

Best substitutes: Broccoli and cauli can be used interchangeably. Carrot and zucchini are also good subs for each other. Roast sweet potato can swap with roast butternut or other Winter squash or pumpkin.

VANILLA

I adore the subtle sweetness of vanilla. It's one of my favourite favourite flavours. It's wonderful for low-carb baking because vanilla enhances sweet flavours without adding extra sugar.

I use whole vanilla beans which I buy in bulk from my favourite spice supplier. Sometimes I just slice up the whole bean and toss it in, like my [Vanilla Roast Pears](#) and then discard before serving.

Other times I slice the beans lengthwise and use my knife to scrape out the seeds. I then use the seeds like in my [No-Bake Berry Tart](#) and add the bean part to my home made vanilla extract stash.

I also sometimes scrape the seeds and then infuse both the seeds and bean in a liquid (like the cream for my [Panna Cotta](#)). The seeds stay in the dessert and I remove the bean and wash and dry it before adding to my vanilla extract.

Vanilla extract is really easy to make. Just get a glass bottle tall enough to hold lots of vanilla beans, fill it with vodka (cheap stuff is fine) and then add vanilla beans as you accumulate them. Keep for a few months in your pantry before you start using. It will smell lovely and like vanilla when it's ready. I then keep adding beans and topping up with a little vodka from time to time.

Commercial vanilla extracts are fine. Generally the more you pay, the nicer the flavour.

I avoid vanilla 'essence' which is code for artificial vanilla flavour. But if your budget is tight, a little artificial vanilla isn't going to cause much harm. It's a relatively simple molecule to synthesise and has been around forever so should be safe.

Best substitutes: Vanilla powder, vanilla bean paste.

CINNAMON

While I love the flavour of cinnamon spiced baked treats, my Irishman isn't a fan so I don't use it as often as I'd like to. Generally I use ground cinnamon but occasionally, like when roasting or poaching apples I'll use a whole cinnamon quill.

Best to buy small quantities from a specialist spice shop for maximum flavour and freshness.

Best substitutes: Skip it or use pumpkin spice or mixed spice.

SMOKED PAPRIKA

This would be my desert island spice. I just love the sweet smoky flavour of Spanish smoked sweet paprika. I've heard it called 'the ghost of chorizo' and it adds a lovely smoky complexity to savoury dishes.

In this book it's just used in my smoked paprika & rosemary roast almonds. But if you do buy some you won't struggle to use it. Wonderful with tomatoes, poultry or meats or anywhere you want some smoke!

I also occasionally buy hot smoked paprika but now I'm cooking for little ones, I tend to use the milder version. Worth paying extra to get the real Spanish stuff.

Best substitutes: Regular or Hungarian paprika. It won't have the same smokiness though.

SHICHIMI TOGARASHI

Another spice just used once in this book but don't let that put you off. This Japanese spice blend adds zing wherever it goes. It's fab in the roast cashew recipe but my favourite way to use it is to sprinkle liberally over my avocado on toast (using my broccoli bread). Also wonderful on poached eggs. For more ideas on how to use it, see this blog post.

You'll need to go to a specialist spice store or Japanese grocery to get it. I've found the quality varies widely so prefer to get mine from my favourite spice supplier.

Best substitutes: You could try making your own by mixing some chilli powder with sesame seeds and a little orange zest. But chilli powder or flakes on their own with a little sea salt will do. It just won't have the fragrance and depth of flavour.

HERBS

From memory, the only herb used in this book is rosemary. It's one of my favourite flavours for savoury cooking.

It's super easy to grow but if you don't have green thumbs, keep an eye out when you're walking around your neighborhood. Every where I've lived there's usually been a healthy rosemary bush spilling over onto the street. Just asking for some 'pruning'.

Rosemary keeps for months in a plastic bag in the fridge. You can also freeze. It will be a little wilted when defrosted but still fragrant and useful.

If you have an abundance of rosemary, I've recently been getting heavily into rosemary tea which is meant to be excellent for the liver (just the thing for reformed wine makers like me!). Just infuse a sprig in a medium tea pot.

Best substitutes: Thyme or lemon thyme. Sage can also work.

--Leavening-- Agents

There are a number of different ways to 'leaven' or lighten the texture of baked goods. Whisking egg whites and folding in the airy foam is one. Creaming butter and sugar (or stevia) is another way to physically incorporate air and make light, fluffy cakes.

And then there are chemical 'leavening agents'. These sound much scarier than they actually are. Chemical leaveners are my preferred method because it's much easier to add a teaspoon of baking powder than whisk a bowl of egg whites!

BAKING POWDER

Is a blend of different leavening agents combined with an acid so you end up with a neutral pH and more importantly, no 'soapy' taste if you use too much.

I buy an aluminium-free one from Bob's Red Mill.

Baking powder loses its power over time, so make sure yours is still within the best before date. It's also important to keep it in a sealed container because moisture will reduce its effectiveness.

Best substitutes: Bicarb / Baking Soda generally use 1:1.

BICARB SODA OR BAKING SODA

This contains just one leavening agent, sodium bicarbonate. While it is an excellent raising agent, it needs to be used in moderation because large amount will raise the pH of your food and leave a distinctive 'soapy' taste. When I used to work for a cookie company I remember tasting a few accidents with too much bicarb that were really disgusting.

I generally only use it for cleaning.

Best substitutes: Baking powder.

STILL NOT SURE ABOUT A PARTICULAR INGREDIENT?

If you're not sure about your ingredients, **please email me (jules@thestonesoup.com)** to double check. I've tried to make these recipes suitable for a global audience, and my recipe testers were amazing for helping with that.

But I'm sure there are still a few things that might not be 100% clear to everyone. I don't want you to have a baking disaster so please get in touch first!

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Little Almond Breads
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Cheesy Carrot Loaf
Cauliflower 'Pizza'
Broccoli Sandwich Bread
Almond Burger Buns
Cheesy Tart with Almond Crust
Rosemary Almond 'Sourdough'



-- Baking Equipment --

Baking Equipment

Baking Equipment 101

How to convert recipes to suit your equipment

Recipe Index by Equipment

---equipment---

Baking Equipment 101

I'm a huge believer that you don't need loads of fancy equipment to be a fabulous cook. The same holds true for baking. So I encourage you to start with what you have, rather than feeling like you need to go out and invest in loads of new stuff.

If you are limited in your equipment, I've included a [recipe index by equipment type](#) so you can easily find something that works.

Now let's look at each equipment type in detail so we're both on the same page...

SCALES

My biggest recommendation for baking equipment is to invest in a set of digital scales. They aren't expensive and make your baking a million times more reliable (and more tasty)!

It's much quicker and easier to weigh ingredients than scooping into cups. Plus there's less to clean up.

If you're not convinced and want to stick with your cups and spoons, please email me (jules@thestonesoup.com) and ask for a refund. I'll be truly happy to return your money if you aren't going to love (and use) this book.

All my baking recipes are written by weight so they aren't going to work well for someone using cups (unless you want to spend hours with online converters).

MEASURING SPOONS

For smaller quantities of ingredients, where it doesn't make sense to weigh, I use a set of measuring spoons. This is especially useful for those recipes only needing 1/8th teaspoon pure stevia powder.

I have read that Australian tablespoons are different and contain 4 teaspoons, compared with American tablespoons (3 teaspoons) but have never actually seen a set of these 'unicorn' Australian spoons. I've double checked and my tablespoon is definitely a 3 teaspoon type.

OVEN

I've baked in so many kitchens with so many ovens over the years. Each has had their unique quirks so I encourage you to get to know your oven.

Mine is electric and I always use the Fan Assist setting because it gives more even baking due to a more even heat distribution. That being said, my oven certainly isn't perfect and I always get more browning at the back than the front.

My rule of thumb is to use 180C (350F) for baking cakes and sweet things and 200C (400F) for savoury. Now that I've written that, I'm sure there are savoury recipes in this book where I've used 180C (350F)!

If your oven doesn't have a fan you can either increase the set temperature by 20C (50F) or just expect the baking time to be on the longer side. When I cook with an old oven that doesn't have fan assist, I tend to vary the baking time rather than remembering to use a different set temperature but it's up to you.

CAKE TINS / PANS

While I have inherited a lovely collection of cake tins from my mum and have accumulated many under my own steam, there are only a handful of tins I use on a regular basis.

About 90% of the recipes in this book can be made with the following:

1. Loaf Pan 24x12cm (9x5in)
2. Spring Form Pan 20cm (8in)
3. Muffin Tray (12 x 1/2 cup)
4. Baking Tray (cookie sheet)

And these ones are used for only 1-2 recipes each:

1. Spring Form Pan 23cm (9in)
2. Rectangular Brownie Tin 16x26cm (6x10in)
3. DEEP Tart Tin with removable base 22cm (8.5in) x 5cm (2in)
4. Pie Dish (ceramic) 20cm (8in)

If you're not sure, best to measure your pan so you know how big they are. I have a small tape measure I keep in the kitchen for this reason! To check how big your muffin tray is, measure out 1/2 cup water and use it to fill one of the holes. Too easy!

MIXING BOWLS

I have two mixing bowls I use for baking. One is enamel and the other ceramic. They both double as my every day salad bowls. You just need something large enough to comfortably hold the mixture. I've been known to use a soup bowl for small batches of cookies.

COOLING RACK

It's important to allow your bakery treats to cool properly, especially if you don't want them to have soggy bottoms (no one likes soggy bottoms!).

Generally I leave things to cool on the tray / in the tin for a few minutes. Then when I'm not going to burn myself, I transfer them out onto a cooling rack so the steam can escape. If cooling is critical, I've mentioned it in the recipe directions.

FOOD PROCESSOR

While most of the recipes in this book can be made without one, I do love my food processor. I use it for grating vegetables like carrot and zucchini, grating cheese or finely chopping broccoli or cauliflower. A box grater will work for these jobs, however, if you don't want to invest.

I also use my food processor for pureeing black beans or cannellini beans for the two recipes using those unusual baking ingredients! A stick blender (also called an immersion blender) can be used to puree.

When I've already got my food processor out, for example to grate zucchini for my zucchini cake, I weigh the remaining ingredients directly into the food processor bowl and mix using a wooden spoon. It's a little awkward but saves dirtying a mixing bowl.

STAND MIXER (OR A WIRE WHISK)

Contrary to what some people think, you don't need a fancy Kitchen Aid stand mixer to be a great baker. While a stand mixer does make life easier for whisking egg whites and creaming butter and sugar, both these can be done with a simple wire whisk (also called a balloon whisk) and some muscles.

I have my grandmother's 'Mix Master' which I use for whisking egg whites when I want to make a pavlova. For everything else I use my food processor or a hand whisk.

DISPOSABLES

I HATE when baked goods stick, so I use a lot of baking paper (also called baking parchment or parchment paper). I always line the base and sides of my loaf pan, the base of my springform pans and I line my muffin tray with papers.

Foil is something I use to cover while baking, when I want to avoid the food drying out or over browning.

And I love love love getting organized with ziplock bags. Especially for freezing things. I do try to wash and reuse them so I'm not creating too much waste!

I also keep a marking pen in the kitchen so I label things for the freezer.

BAMBOO SKEWERS

I use thin skewers to test cakes for doneness. And for cooking the occasional kebab.

COFFEE / SPICE GRINDER

While I have a big high-tech coffee grinder for looking after my morning beans, I also have a little machine that started out life as my spice grinder. These days I use it mostly for grinding my own seeds (especially linseeds / flax seeds) and nuts.

It's also handy on the odd occasion I want to grind granular stevia to make an icing sugar (also called powdered or confectioners sugar) substitute.

TIMER

Maybe I should have put my timer in first place on the equipment list. I would be hopelessly lost without it!

I used to rely on my phone timer but often had sticky fingers that weren't very phone-friendly. So I invested in a simple digital kitchen timer that's super easy to set. Now I'm far less likely to get side tracked and forget about what's in the oven.

Plus Fergal does this little timer dance whenever it goes off which always makes me smile.

A NOTE ABOUT QUALITY

One of the secrets to loving your time in the kitchen is to use good quality equipment. So I encourage you to buy the best quality you can afford. Think of it as starting a baking legacy.

I still have my grandmother's stand mixer and some of my Mum's cake tins. These bring me joy and make me feel closer to my family whenever I bake with them.

How to Convert Recipes to Suit Your Equipment

Thought you'd never use that geometry you learned in school?

Well now's your chance!

Being able to increase or decrease recipes makes life a lot easier if you don't have a certain pan or are cooking for more (or less!) people.

The secret is to keep the surface area the same size, so the depth of the mixture in the pan is about the same. Of course you don't have to be so fussy about it, but I really enjoy a little bit of kitchen math from time to time.

EXAMPLE: CONVERTING LOAF PAN TO 20CM (8IN) ROUND PAN

1. calculate the surface area of the loaf pan

For example say the recipe calls for a loaf tin 24x12cm (9x5in).

The surface area just equals length x width (breadth) = 24 x 12cm (9 x 5in) = 288cm² (45in²)

2. calculate the surface area of the round pan

For example say we want to use a round tin that is 20cm (8in) diameter (across)

The surface area equals pi (3.14) x radius squared = 3.14 x half the diameter x half the diameter = 3.14 x 10 x 10cm (3.14 x 4 x 4in) = 314cm² (50in²)

3. Work out the difference between the two.

$$= 288 / 314\text{cm}^2 (45 / 50\text{in}^2) = 0.9$$

So they're very similar (the closer the number is to 1. the more similar the pans).

4. Increase or decrease the ingredients accordingly.

For this example I'd keep the ingredients the same and expect the baking time to be slightly shorter in the round pan because it is slightly larger so the cake won't be as deep.

EXAMPLE:

CONVERTING A 20CM (8IN) ROUND PAN TO A 23CM (9IN) ROUND PAN

1. calculate the surface area of the 20cm (8in) pan

The surface area equals π (3.14) x radius squared = $3.14 \times \text{half the diameter} \times \text{half the diameter}$ = $3.14 \times 10 \times 10\text{cm}$ ($3.14 \times 4 \times 4\text{in}$) = 314cm^2 (50in^2)

2. calculate the surface area of the 23cm (9in) Round Pan

For example say we want to use a round tin that is 20cm (8in) diameter (across)

The surface area equals π (3.14) x radius squared = $3.14 \times \text{half the diameter} \times \text{half the diameter}$ = $3.14 \times 11.5 \times 11.5\text{cm}$ ($3.14 \times 4.5 \times 4.5\text{in}$) = 415cm^2 (63.5in^2)

3. Work out the difference between the two.

$23\text{cm (9in) Pan} / 20\text{cm (8in) Pan}$
= $415 / 314\text{cm}^2$ ($63.5 / 50\text{in}^2$) = 1.3

So the larger pan is about 30% larger. Or 1/3rd larger.

4. Increase or decrease the ingredients accordingly.

So for our example we'd increase each ingredient by 1/3rd (multiply by 1.3)

NOTE:

For things like eggs, that are tricky to split, I usually just round up or down to the nearest whole egg. But if you're a bit nervous, just crack an egg and lightly mix it. Then use half or whatever you need and save the rest to add to an omelet or scrambled eggs.

Too easy!

Recipe Index by Equipment

---BAKING TRAY---

Vanilla Roast Pears
Rosy Roast Rhubarb
Sunny Roast Peaches
Cauliflower 'Pizza'
Seed Crackers
Coconut Flat Bread
Broccoli Sandwich Bread
Cream Cheese Tortillas
Almond Burger Buns
Turmeric & Togarashi Cashews
Smoked Paprika & Rosemary Almonds

---BOWL AND SPOON---

Salted Chocolate Chip Cookies
Ginger Tahini Cookies
Peanut Butter Cookies

Coconut Cloud Cookies
Honey & Almond Zucchini Cake
Super Moist Carrot Cake
Blueberry Yoghurt Cake
Coconut Sponge Cake
Strawberry Almond Shortcakes
Christmas Morning Muffins
Crunchy Peanut Butter Muffins
Quick Strawberry Muffins
Chunky Pear Cupcakes
Stupidly Easy Banana Bread
Strawberry Ripple Cheesecake
Chocolate Coconut Brownies
Peanut Butter Chocolate Fudge
Pure Chocolate Mousse
Silky Smooth Chocolate Fondant Cake
Easy Little Chocolate Puddings

Chocolate Peanut Butter Thins
The Great Aussie Lamington
No Bake Chocolate Pecan 'Tart'
Raspberry Cashew Puddings
Last-Minute Peanut Butter Mousse
Coconut Pancakes
Overnight Seeds
Little Almond Breads
Seed Crackers
Coconut Flat Bread
Almond Burger Buns
'Paleo' Coconut Bread
Rosemary Almond 'Sourdough'

---STAND MIXER---

Winter Walnut Pavlova

---TART TIN---

No-Bake Berry Tart
Cheesy Tart with Almond Crust

Recipe Index by Equipment

---COOKIE SHEET---

Salted Chocolate Chip Cookies
Ginger Tahini Cookies
Peanut Butter Cookies
Coconut Cloud Cookies
Date & Nut 'Linda' Cookies
Strawberry Almond Shortcakes
Crunchy Peanut Butter Granola
Chocolatey Coconut Granola
Little Almond Breads

---FOOD PROCESSOR---

Raspberry 'Gelato'
Peanut Butter Ice Cream
Refreshing Fruit Sorbet
Coconut Sorbet
Date & Nut 'Linda' Cookies
Honey & Almond Zucchini Cake

Super Moist Carrot Cake
Lemon Delicious Cake
Chocolate Peanut Butter Cheesecake
Cherry & Ricotta Crumble Cake
Chocolate Cream Cheese Muffins
Moist Chocolate & Zucchini Loaf
Quick Raw Brownies
Sweet Potato Brownies
No-Bake Berry Tart
Raw 'Blondies'
Feta & Veggie Breakfast Muffins
Life-Changing Cauliflower Seed Loaf
Cheesy Carrot Loaf
Cauliflower 'Pizza'
Broccoli Sandwich Bread
Cream Cheese Tortillas
Melt-in-the-Mouth Savoury Cheesecake

---FREEZER---

Raspberry 'Gelato'
Peanut Butter Ice Cream
Refreshing Fruit Sorbet
Coconut Sorbet
Coffee Granita

---LOAF PAN---

Honey & Almond Zucchini Cake
Lemon Delicious Cake
Stupidly Easy Banana Bread
Moist Chocolate & Zucchini Loaf
Chocolate Peanut Butter Thins
Quick Raw Brownies
The Great Aussie Lamington
No Bake Chocolate Pecan 'Tart'
Raw 'Blondies'
Life-Changing Cauliflower Seed Loaf
Cheesy Carrot Loaf
'Paleo' Coconut Bread
Rosemary Almond 'Sourdough'

Recipe Index by Equipment

---MUFFIN TRAY---

Chocolate Cream Cheese Muffins
Christmas Morning Muffins
Crunchy Peanut Butter Muffins
Quick Strawberry Muffins
Chunky Pear Cupcakes
Feta & Veggie Breakfast Muffins

---NO BAKE---

Raspberry 'Gelato'
Peanut Butter Ice Cream
Refreshing Fruit Sorbet
Coconut Sorbet
Fergal's Prunes
Buttered Peaches
Strawberries with Balsamic & Mascarpone
Lemon Curd

Peanut Butter Chocolate Fudge
Pure Chocolate Mousse
Quick Raw Brownies
Chocolate Butter Ganache
Chocolate Peanut Butter Thins
No Bake Chocolate Pecan 'Tart'
Berry Mousse
No-Bake Berry Tart
Magic Lemon Creams
Vanilla Panna Cotta
Little Lemon Cheesecakes
Raspberry Cashew Puddings
Raw 'Blondies'
Coconut Berry Swirl
Summer Berry Puddings
Dates with Blue Cheese
Last-Minute Peanut Butter Mousse

Coconut Pancakes
Pecan 'Porridge'
Overnight Seeds

--RECTANGULAR BROWNIE TIN--

Chocolate Coconut Brownies
Sweet Potato Brownies

---SPRINGFORM PAN---

Super Moist Carrot Cake
Chocolate Peanut Butter Cheesecake
Blueberry Yoghurt Cake
Cherry & Ricotta Crumble Cake
Coconut Sponge Cake
Silky Smooth Chocolate Fondant Cake
Winter Walnut Pavlova
Melt-in-the-Mouth Savoury Cheesecake



-- Baking Techniques --

Baking Techniques

An important note about measurements

- (why I weigh ingredients)

Baking Techniques

The Art of Creative Baking

---techniques---

An Important Note about Measurements

One of the very best things I did while writing this book, was enlisting a small army of Stonesoup readers to help test the recipes.

Having lived (and baked) in England, France, California and Australia, I thought I had a decent grasp on global baking terminology but I learned so much from the feedback of all those generous volunteers from around the world. Thank you!

One tester, in particular, caught my eye...
“As an American baker who tends to measure things in cup measures it’s tricky for me to know how to convert to ounces (8 ounces in a cup doesn’t seem like an accurate measurement for certain ingredients, like peanut butter). I suppose giving measurements in cups rather than ounces might help people like me but I think I should just get a scale.”

---techniques---

My answer, of course, is YES! Please invest in a set of scales.

And here’s why...

---5 Reasons--- I Weigh my Ingredients

1. WEIGHT IS MUCH MORE ACCURATE.

For baking it’s super important to get your measurements right. Using cups (volume) can be really variable depending on how tightly you pack the ingredients in. This can lead to variable baking results (and more chance of failures. No!). Baking is tricky enough as it is, so I prefer to remove this potential cause of problems.

2. CUPS CAN BE CONFUSING.

There’s the problem of metric cups being different sizes to imperial (American) cups. A cup isn’t just a cup.

3. QUICKER AND EASIER.

Just pop your container on the scales, hit the zero button and add your chosen ingredient. Soo much easier than messing around with scoops and cups and leveling off.

4. LESS MESS.

No need to get all your cups dirty. Just weigh directly into your bowl / saucepan / food processor.

5. NO NEED TO CONVERT!

My scales can weigh in either grams or ounces which is sooo brilliant. I love using recipes from around the world and now I don’t need to convert. I just change my scale to use the appropriate units.

-- Which Scales? --

You don't need to spend a fortune. Just go for digital scales that are easy to 'zero' and a design that's easy to wipe clean.

If you use recipes from different countries, good to check that it can use both grams and ounces.

STILL PREFER CUPS & SPOONS?

If you're not convinced and want to stick with your cups and spoons, please email me (jules@thestonesoup.com) and ask for a refund. I'll be truly happy to return your money if you aren't going to love (and use) this book.

All my baking recipes are written by weight so they aren't going to work well for someone using cups (unless you want to spend hours with online converters).

Baking Techniques

If you're someone who isn't a confident baker, this chapter will give you the basic how, why and 'watch out' for the common baking steps. Remember baking is a skill that anyone and everyone can learn. You just need to get into the kitchen and be prepared to have some fun!

---Oven--- Preheating

WHY

Because ovens need to be hot to bake!

HOW

Turn oven on to the stated temperature in the recipe. Unless the recipe states otherwise, use the fan-forced (or fan assist)

setting and place one shelf in the middle of the oven. If your oven doesn't have a fan assisted setting, the rule of thumb is to increase the temperature from the recipe by 20C (or 50F).

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

Gas ovens tend to be less efficient than electric. So if you're cooking with gas, be prepared for everything to take a little longer.

All ovens are different, so be patient and learn to know whether your oven tends to cook fast or slow and be prepared to adjust the cooking time accordingly.

The back of most ovens tends to be hotter than the front and top hotter than bottom, even in fan assisted ovens. So be prepared to rotate things to get even baking.

Lots of books tell you to invest in an oven thermometer to check your temperature, but I've found they're difficult to get to work properly because you have to open the oven to look at them and it can be difficult to find a good place to put them. If they work for you, great, but if you haven't tried, I wouldn't bother.

---Preparing--- Your Pan / Tin

WHY

To avoid your precious treat from sticking to the tray / pan. There's nothing worse than a cake falling apart as you try to get it out of the tin!

HOW

For flat trays just spread with a layer of baking paper (parchment paper). Or invest in a silicon mat (also called silpat) – although I prefer baking paper!

For loaf pans there are two options.

1. Trace the shape of your pan onto a layer of baking (parchment) paper. Cut out the shape. Then rub the base and sides of your pan with butter, line with the paper and rub the paper with butter as well.

2. Turn the loaf pan upside down. Tear off enough baking paper to line the base and sides. Use your hands to cover the outside to mold the paper to the loaf shape. Turn the loaf pan right way up and fit the ‘molded’ paper inside. I then use clothes pegs to hold the paper out of the way before I fill the pan. This is my preferred method because it means I don’t need to mess around with scissors. And there’s no cake sticking to the sides of the pan.

For spring form pans, lining isn’t critical because you know you’re going to be able to remove the sides. But I still like to place a layer over the base of the pan then place the sides on top and lock them into shape.

For tart tins with a removable base, there generally isn’t a need to line.

For muffins and cup cakes, use prepurchased papers OR cut squares of baking paper and use these to line your muffin holes

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

I’ve found that cheap parchment / baking / greaseproof paper is fine most of the time. Especially when you are greasing it with butter.

Sometimes the sides will stick. Just carefully separate with a small knife, being careful not to cut into the cake more than necessary.

If you run out of paper, al foil makes a good stand in, although it generally doesn’t look as good in photographs!

--- Measuring --- Ingredients

WHY

Baking tends to be a little more scientific than general cooking and it’s important to keep the ratios of ingredients about the same as the recipe intended to get the desired results.

That being said, some things are more flexible than others so don’t feel you need to be weighing to the EXACT figure every time.

HOW

By far the quickest and most accurate method is to invest in a set of digital scales. That way you just pop your bowl or saucepan on, zero the scale, weigh out the ingredient and then you’re good to go. So much easier than fiddling around with cups and spoons.

For liquid ingredients, I give measurements by weight (g or oz) because metric cups are different to US cups and it gets too confusing. When I worked in the food industry, we just weighed everything. So much easier.

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

I’ve given measurements in both metric and US. Choose one set and stick to it – there can be slight differences and if you measure the coconut flour in grams and the liquid ingredients in ounces you may run into troubles.

--- Whisking --- Egg Whites

WHY

It’s all about getting air into your creation to make it light and fluffy.

HOW

The old fashioned way is to beat egg whites in a clean dry bowl until you have a white foam. It doesn't take as long as you think and can be quite therapeutic.

The modern way, with a stand mixer fitter with a wire whisk. Just pop the egg white in the bowl and turn on to the highest setting. Scrape the sides down every now and then to get even mixing. Much quicker and less labour intensive.

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

Cleanliness! Oil from a dirty bowl or whisk or from a little droplet of egg yolk can prevent the white from foaming. If this happens just throw everything out. Clean thoroughly and start again. You could use the egg white for scrambled eggs if you prefer not to waste good food.

Soft peaks. This is when you have a nice foamy white mixture with no runny egg white in the bottom of the bowl. Will almost hold it's shape if you scoop up some mixture with a spoon and try and drop it. The mixture looks glossy.

Firm peaks. When the mixture is slightly more solid than soft peaks. Easily holds it shape if you scoop up some mixture with a spoon and try and drop it. The mixture is less glossy and a little more matt.

A pinch of salt. Can help the protein in the whites foam.

Cream of tartar. A pinch can help stabilize your egg white foam. I tend not to bother though. Using a copper bowl can also stabilize but if you're using your egg whites straight away there's no need to go that cheffy.

Over mixing. I've read and heard from pastry chefs that it is possible to over mix egg whites, I think they start to separate out again. But to be honest this hasn't ever happened to me.

--- Melting --- Chocolate

WHY

Because melted chocolate is divine!

HOW

Bash your chocolate into small chunks, ideally no more than 1cm (1/2in) squares.

Microwave – place in a microwave proof bowl and zap on a medium heat stirring ever 30 seconds or so until chocolate is glossy and smooth.

Stove top. The easiest method is to heat your butter or cream (if the recipe needs it) then pour these over your broken chocolate. Stand for a few minutes then gently stir.

Stove top – just chocolate. If you need to just melt some chocolate on its own. Place in a saucepan then carefully put over a low heat for about 30 seconds. Remove from the heat and stand for a few minutes. Stir, If it isn't melting keep putting back over a low heat for 15 seconds at a time. And repeating the standing and stirring. High temperatures will cause your chocolate to split so you need to be super careful.

Stove top – double boiler. The alternative stove top method means more washing up but is less risky. Place a about 1cm (1/2in) water in the base of a medium saucepan. Bring to the boil. Remove from the heat. Place chopped chocolate in a heat proof bowl and place the bowl on top of the saucepan. Stand for a few minutes then stir. If the chocolate hasn't melted, leave it a little longer or add more heat. It's important the base of the bowl doesn't actually touch the hot water. You just want the gentle heat of the steam to caress the bottom of the bowl.

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

Heat. Excess heat is the number 1 reason chocolate splits. It takes less than you think. So be careful.

Splitting. If your chocolate starts to split it will look like it's curdling and you can see oil (cocoa butter) separating out. If this happens cool the mixture down asap by transferring to a clean cold bowl. And quickly stirring in some (a few tablespoons) cold milk or cream. If you're going to be adding eggs, don't worry the eggs will re-emulsify the chocolate and all will be good. If you're not adding eggs and the milk hasn't helped, try adding an egg yolk anyway.

Moisture. For some crazy reason, small amounts of water or steam can cause chocolate to split. But large amounts like in the cream seem to be fine. Who knew?

--- Preparing --- Nut or seed meal

WHY

Sometime it's hard to find ground almond or other nut meal. And sometimes it's cheaper to grind your own.

HOW

Pop the nuts in your food processor and process until you're happy they're fine enough. Something like coarse sand is about as good as you'll get. My preferred method for smaller quantities is to use a coffee / spice grinder.

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

Over grinding – the heat from the food processor will draw out the oil from the nuts and you'll end up with nut butter. May not be a bad thing.

Under grinding – Your finished dish will have a gritty texture.

--- Rubbing --- Butter into Almond meal

WHY

Part of the secret to getting light crisp pastry, is to get your butter to coat as many almond meal particles as possible.

HOW

Either pulse in the food processor or use the tips of your fingers to literally pick up little pinches of butter and almond meal and rub them together. You can stop when the mixture looks like coarse bread crumbs.

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

You don't want the butter to be melted into the pastry. So start with cold butter and keep everything as cool as possible. No over mixing and no hot hands!

--- Mixing ---

WHY

If you're going to get cake mixture to lick at the end. You need to mix things!

HOW

Mostly a spoon in a bowl is fine. I like wooden spoons because they feel more rustic.

If the recipe calls for 'folding' then that means super gentle mixing.

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

Over mixing. If the recipe has flour, the more you mix, the more you'll develop the protein (gluten) which means the tougher your texture will be. This isn't a problem for the recipes in this book! A bonus side effect of gluten-free baking.

Lumps. Mostly you don't want lumps because they'll stay in the finished product. However, some things don't matter in the lump department and seem to work themselves out.

--- Baking ---

WHY

Because sometimes eating too much raw cake mix will make you sick!

HOW

Pop in the oven.

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

See preheating your oven above.

Unless the recipes says otherwise – choose the middle shelf.

If something is starting to brown too quickly or look burnt but the middle isn't cooked, cover it with foil to retard the browning.

For delicate things like a sponge cake, opening the oven door before the protein has set will cause the cake to sink in the middle. Most things aren't so pretentious but remember every time you open the oven door, you're losing heat so it's going to take longer for your things to bake.

--- Testing --- for Doneness

WHY

So you know when it's time to eat!

HOW

First look at the colour. If it isn't dark enough keep cooking.

Second, have a feel – be careful it's hot! For cakes and things you want it to feel spongy and slightly firm. If it sinks easily in the middle or feels gooey it's not ready. For brownies as long as the top middle seems to have a crust, I'd say it is done. You want your brownies to be a little under baked to give that wonderful squidgy texture.

Third if you're still not sure, stab it with a skewer, or a small knife in the middle (because this is the last place to cook – the edges can be fine but the middle may not be!). Pull out the instrument and have a look. If there is lots of gooey cake batter sticking to your skewer, it's probably not cooked. If it looks relatively clean, then you're good to go.

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

see details above.

--- Cooling ---

WHY

Even after you take things out of the oven, they're still cooking while they're hot.

HOW

Either cool in the pan on a cake rack.

Or remove from the tin and cool on a cake rack.

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

If you don't have a cake rack, try to use something that will allow the air to circulate underneath the tin/cake. This stops it sweating and cools faster.

If you think something is over baked, you want to remove it from the tin so it cools more quickly.

--- Techniques ---

---storing---

WHY

Because sometimes it's not a good idea to eat everything in one sitting. Trust me.

HOW

Generally, covered in the fridge is best.

Freezing is usually OK, except for cream or custard. See the storage details for each recipe.

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

Moisture transfer. The first thing that happens as cakes and cookies age is that moisture transfers from where there is lots of it (like in a custard filling) to where there is little of it (like a pastry shell) so mostly keeping things unfilled until the last minute is best.

Mold growth. Because these recipes don't have the sugar to bind excess moisture and act as a preservative, you will notice small surface molds growing when they're getting to the end of their shelf life. If there's only a tiny amount of mold I tend to still eat them, however I don't feed anything suspect to my boys.

The Art of Creative Baking

There's a bit of a misconception that baking is all about measurement and precision. That there's little room for creativity and 'winging it'.

Over my years working in the food industry and more importantly, baking at home, I've found it just as easy to be creative with my baking as it is to 'free-style' my savoury cooking.

MY HOPE FOR YOU IS THAT THIS BOOK INSPIRES AND ENCOURAGES YOU TO BECOME A CREATIVE BAKER.

I want you to empower you to make delicious treats, regardless of your dietary restrictions.

This is why I include so many variations with each of my recipes. There are always twists and tweaks you can make to mix things up or overcome the dreaded 'missing ingredient' situation.

So don't be afraid!

To help you on your journey here are my 3 steps for getting creative with your baking.

---mastering---
the Art of
Creative Baking

1. BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND.

It's super important to know where you're heading before you start baking. I always take the time to imagine what I'm going to make. Until I have a clear picture in my mind, I don't start cooking.

2. LEARN THE CLASSIC FLAVOUR COMBINATIONS.

Years ago I went to a lecture by the pastry chef of New York restaurant, wd~50. What surprised me most was his confession that he avoids 'out-there' flavour combinations. There's a reason that the classics are classic. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Wise words.

---techniques---

---the Classic--- Flavour Combinations

Here are a few of my favourite combos to get you thinking:

- * peanut butter & chocolate
- * peanut butter & blueberries
- * lime & coconut
- * apple & cinnamon
- * strawberries & balsamic vinegar
- * peaches & cream
- * chocolate & mint
- * chocolate & orange
- * pear & pecan
- * honey & almond
- * maple syrup & pecans
- * salted caramel
- * cookies & cream
- * raspberry & chocolate
- * chocolate & chocolate!

3. KEEP IT SIMPLE.

Apart from burning things, I find my biggest baking failures occur when I get carried away and add too many elements. There's nothing worse than a muddled mess.

about the author



The author of this eCookbook is Jules Clancy.

I'm first and foremost a food lover who adores her veggies. The type of girl who plans her holidays around restaurant reservations.

I'm equally happy spending 6 hours dining at the best restaurant in the world as I am sitting on stools in a Brooklyn alleyway wolfing down Texas-style BBQ brisket.

I also love cooking and simplicity. So I am constantly on the lookout for ways to make my cooking less complicated and time-consuming without sacrificing flavour or wholesomeness.

I have degrees in both food and wine science but I'm not a nerd, really. In January 2010, I packed in my day job as a chocolate biscuit designer to become a full time blogger over at Stonesoup.

When I'm not cooking, writing about food or taking photographs [of food], I can be found hanging out with my husband, 'the Irishman' and our sons Fergal and Finbar. Or indulging my passions for growing my own veggies, cookbooks, long walks in the country, red wine, red shoes and blue cheese.

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Big Thankyous

First I need to thank my mum for giving me a love of creating magic in the kitchen and teaching me how to bake. I'm afraid I'm still working on the 'good cooks don't lick their fingers' part. Sorry mum!

For Caroline, my amazing assistant and right hand girl, thank you for saving me from drowning in my email inbox. You've done a fabulous job transferring all the recipes and content into the finished book. It looks fab!

Also huge thanks to Caroline for coordinating all our recipe testing crew. In the middle of writing a book I would never had the time or patience to manage such a task. It made a huge difference.

You are a star!

Which brings me to my recipe testers. Even though I've lived and cooked in many corners of the world, writing for a global audience can be tough. Especially when it comes to baking.

I learned so much from your feedback and the 'Sunday Baking Sessions' is a much better book because of your input. I really appreciate you trusting me with your time and ingredients!

For Susan my beautiful attention-to-detail editor thank you for rescuing this book from my many spelling and grammar mistakes. And for the record I wrote these thank yous after Susan had completed her feedback so any errors are totally my fault!

A huge thank you to my dear friends Suzie and Linda for loaning me their gorgeous plates, props and all the little things that made these photos much prettier than they would have been without you!

For my lovely neighbour Dominica, thank you for keeping me well supplied with eggs when my own chooks weren't delivering the goods.

And my boys! Thank you wee Fergalino and Finbarello for providing many more afternoon

tea occasions to use up my baking experiments. Thank you also Fergal for cracking all those eggs and licking all those bowls. And hanging out with me for our Sunday Baking Sessions. I couldn't have done it without you.

Lastly for GB, my Irishman, thank you for being my biggest love and, at times, my biggest critic. I knew I was onto something with my crazy low-carb / sugar-free baking experiments when you started asking for seconds. You gave me hope that I could actually find the elusive balance between healthy and yummy. Looking forward to sharing a table (and bottle of wine) with you for years and years and years.

Jules
xoxo

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Wamboin, Australia

---big thankyous---

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I'D LOVE TO HEAR WHAT YOU THINK OF 'THE SUNDAY BAKING SESSIONS'. WHICH RECIPES DO YOU LIKE BEST? WOULD YOU RECOMMEND THIS BOOK TO A FRIEND? AND WHY OR WHY NOT? JUST SHOOT ME AN EMAIL jules@thestonesoup.com

Thank you!