

GI News—December 2009



- Lower the GI of your baking with pea flour
- New GI values for chocolate mud cake, pavlova, Christmas cake, Christmas mince pies and rum balls
- A sensationally delicious and healthy festive feast from the GI News Kitchen
- Low GI prunes forge ahead as the most super of the super fruits

We all know that Christmas and the new year can be perilous for the waistline. This issue of *GI News* helps you slip into damage control mode to help you successfully navigate your way through December's festivities as you relax as the year winds down. For starters, dietitian Amanda Clark has come up with a quick guide to party favourites to help you indulge a little without going overboard. Here's what you get for 100 calories: 1 sliver-sized piece Christmas cake, 1 Lindt Lindor Ball, 14 cashews, 60 g smoked salmon, 1 small packet (20 g/³/₄ oz) potato crisps, 1 small party pie or party sausage roll or mini spring roll, 150 ml (5 fl oz) red or white wine or champagne, 60 ml (2 fl oz) port or 45 ml (1½ fl oz) spirits, 275 ml (9 fl oz) can light beer or 1 cup soft drink or ¾ cup juice.

Good eating, good health and good reading.

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Food for Thought

The veggies have it – again

Healthy eating is one of the best gifts a mother-to-be can give her growing baby says dietitian Kaye Foster-Powell in her *Low GI Family Cookbook*. 'We shape our children's health and wellbeing from the moment they are conceived. What a woman eats when she is pregnant influences her baby's health in many ways. The nourishment her baby receives in the womb shapes how its body grows. The flavours of the foods she eats can play a part in her child's later food preferences, and her baby's birth weight can predict the risk of chronic conditions such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease later in life.'

A new study published in *Pediatric Diabetes* (<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/122600085>) reinforces the healthy eating message revealing the results of a Swedish study that suggest that pregnant women who eat vegetables every day seem to have children who are less likely to develop type 1 diabetes.

'This is the first study to show a link between vegetable intake during pregnancy and the risk of the child subsequently developing type 1 diabetes, but more studies of various kinds will be needed before we can say anything definitive,' says lead author and clinical nutritionist Hilde Brekke from the Sahlgrenska Academy.

The researchers analysed blood samples from 5724 five year-olds in the study. In type 1 diabetes, certain cells in the pancreas gradually get worse at producing insulin, leading to insulin deficiency. Children at risk of developing type 1 diabetes have antibodies in their blood which attack these insulin-producing cells.

Of the children tested, 3% (191 children) had either elevated levels of these antibodies or had fully developed type 1 diabetes at the age of five. These risk markers were up to twice as common in children whose mothers rarely ate vegetables during pregnancy. The risk was lowest among children whose mothers stated that they ate vegetables every day.

Applying the term 'vegetables' to all vegetables except for root vegetables, the researchers looked at the mothers' (self reported) daily consumption of veggies. The most frequently consumed vegetables in Sweden between 1996–99, when the data was originally collected, were tomatoes, cabbage, onions, lettuce and cucumbers.

'We cannot say with certainty on the basis of this study that it's the vegetables themselves that have this protective effect, but other factors related to vegetable intake, such as the mother's standard of education, do not seem to explain the link,' says Brekke. 'Nor can this protection be explained by other measured dietary factors or other known risk factors.'

For a delicious way to up your veggie intake, tuck into Johanna Burani's 'Baked Belgian Endive' recipe (see GI News Kitchen in this issue).

News Briefs

Chinese herbs show promise for diabetes prevention

A recent *Cochrane review*

(<http://mrw.interscience.wiley.com/cochrane/clsysrev/articles/CD006690>)

examined 16 randomised controlled trials of 15 different Chinese herbal medicines traditionally used for blood glucose control. 'Chinese herbal medicines have been used for this purpose for a long time, so there is plenty of anecdotal evidence for their safety and effectiveness, but we were interested to find out whether scientific research could provide a basis for recommending these alternative treatments,' says lead researcher, Suzanne Grant of the Centre for Complementary Medicine Research at the University of Western Sydney in Australia.

The researchers considered data from 16 clinical trials including 1,391 people who received 15 different herbal formulations. They found that the herbs generally helped lower 'and normalise' blood glucose levels in people with 'pre-diabetes'. According to their findings, combining herbal medicines with lifestyle changes is twice as effective as lifestyle changes alone at normalising blood glucose levels. Trials included in the review lasted from one month to two years. No adverse effects were reported in any of the trials.

'Our results suggest that some Chinese herbal medicines can help to prevent diabetes, but we really need more research before we can confidently say that these treatments work,' says Grant. 'The real value of the study is as guidance for further trials. We need to see more trials that make comparisons with placebos and other types of drugs, and better reporting on the outcomes of these trials.'

'If people with pre-diabetes do want to try an herbal product,' says Grant, 'they should first consult their doctor and, ideally, take any herbs under a guidance of a health provider qualified in herbal medicine.' In traditional Chinese medicine, herbs are recommended based on individuals' unique situations, and not as a one-size-fits-all prescription. As far as safety, the review found no serious side effects attributed to the herbal products. However, Grant noted, like all medicines, herbs have the potential for unexpected side effects or interactions with other drugs.

Lower GI of your baking with whole pea flour

We are often asked for tips to help people lower the GI of their baking from cakes to cookies and muffins, slices and winter warming puddings. A new study published in

the *Journal of Food Science* suggests that that using whole yellow pea flour instead of wheat flour will certainly help.

PhD candidate Christopher Marinangeli, MSc, RD, of the University of Manitoba and colleagues baked banana bread and biscotti using either whole yellow pea flour or whole wheat flour as the primary ingredient. Subsequent GI testing in 19 healthy volunteers found that the whole pea flour banana bread and biscotti produced a lower glycemic response that was similar to plain boiled whole yellow peas. The whole yellow pea biscotti produced a lower glycemic response than biscotti containing whole wheat flour. The volunteers found the flavour of the banana bread and biscotti made with whole yellow pea flour acceptable.

‘We add Xanthan gum to all recipes because it creates a better texture to the final product since the pea flour lacks gluten, says Christopher Marinangeli whose team made this tiramisu using whole yellow pea flour. We are currently testing the tiramisu recipe in the GI News Kitchen and will publish it early in the new year. Meanwhile, here’s the biscotti recipe used in the study. If you use the new low GI sugar (Logicane) says GI Symbol’s Dr Alan Barclay, you will lower the GI of your baking even more!

Whole pea flour chocolate and hazelnut biscotti

3 eggs

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

280 g whole yellow pea flour

3 teaspoons xanthan gum

1 cup (200 g) white sugar

100 g hazelnuts, toasted, skins removed and chopped

85 g semi sweet chocolate chips

1 teaspoon instant coffee

¼ teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon cinnamon

¼ teaspoon cloves

Preheat oven to 150°C (350°F) and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

- In a small bowl whisk together the eggs and vanilla extract. Set aside.
- In the bowl of your electric mixer (or with a hand mixer) beat the flour, xanthan gum, sugar, baking powder, salt, spices, and espresso powder until combined.

Gradually add the egg mixture and beat until a dough forms, adding the chopped nuts and chocolate chips about halfway through. With floured hands divide the dough in half.

- On a lightly floured surface roll each half of dough into a log about 25 cm (10 in) long and 5 cm (2 in) wide. Transfer logs to the prepared baking sheet, spacing about 7.5 cm (3 in) apart, and bake for about 35–40 minutes, or until firm to the touch (logs will spread during baking). Remove from oven and let cool on a wire rack for about 10 minutes.
- On a cutting board, with a serrated knife, cut each log crosswise, on the diagonal, into 2 cm (3/4 in) slices. Arrange the slices on the baking sheet and bake 10 minutes, turn slices over, and bake another 10 minutes or until firm to the touch. Remove from oven and let cool. Store in an airtight container.

We know that pea flour is unlikely to be in a supermarket aisle near you right now. Chris suggests checking Asian/Indian food stores for it. Otherwise substitute with chickpea flour (besan).

For more information, contact the University of Manitoba's Richardson Center for Functional Foods and Nutraceuticals, 196 Innovation Drive, Winnipeg MB, R3T 2N2 Canada. peter_jones@umanitoba.ca

Foodwatch with Catherine Saxelby

The once humble prune forges ahead as the most super of the super fruits

Christmas is just around the corner and it's a time when we turn to fruit cake, fruit and nut slices, nuts, dried fruit ... which makes me think of prunes.

One of the loveliest of all dried fruits, prunes are one of my favourite snacks and ingredients. There's something so appealing about their flavour, it's one that teams with pork and lamb as well as homely compotes to serve with custard or creamy rice. And they're the ideal snack when you crave something sweet but don't want lollies or chocolate. And they are really dried plums, usually from D'Agen or Moyer varieties, and are one of the more nutritious dried fruits and deserve to be included in your meals.

Laxative reputation: Prunes have long had a reputation as a gentle laxative and

digestive aid. Obviously they're high in fibre – a serve of prunes gives you 4 grams of fibre, as much as from two slices of wholemeal bread.

However their laxative effect is not just due to their fibre. Prune juice, which has little fibre, is equally as effective. Nutritionists believe it's due to a combination of three unusual prune components – high levels of sorbitol (a natural sweetener found also in pears and apples), dihydroxyphenyl isatin and chlorogenic acid. All three have an ability to stimulate intestinal movement.

Fibre can help keep hunger pangs at bay. Most of the fibre we eat isn't absorbed, so it doesn't contribute kilojoules/calories which is why high-fibre foods feature so prominently in weight loss diets. Plus, 6 prunes have just 400 kJ or 95 calories!

Good for nutrition: A serve of 5 or 6 unpitted prunes (around 50 g or nearly 2 oz) makes a quick healthy nibble. They have virtually no fat and 22 g carbohydrate (of which 16 g are sugars which accounts for their natural sweetness). They have a low GI of 40 so they'll stick with you for longer and help you manage your blood glucose levels. You also get a healthy dose of beta-carotene, which is converted to vitamin A in the body, plus a number of minerals notably potassium and boron, plus a little iron.

Weight for weight, prunes have more potassium than bananas. Studies have shown potassium helps prevent hypertension (high blood pressure) and stroke. Their high potassium content also protects the heart and kidneys from damage by too much salt. The average diet in countries like Australia, NZ, the UK and the US and Canada has too much sodium and not enough potassium.

Prunes score high for antioxidants too – at least equal to that of well known antioxidant-rich blueberries. Antioxidants help to slow the oxidative damage to our bodies and may slow the aging process

Seems I'm not the only person to love them. Last year, according to the Australian Prune Industry Association, Australians spent more than \$30 million on prunes and consumed a staggering 3500 tonnes of them.

To find out more about the power of prunes and for some great recipes to make the most of them in your day visit *Aus Prunes* (<http://www.ausprunes.org.au/>) or *Sunsweet* (<http://www.sunsweet.com/>)

BBQ prunes with poached oysters

This recipe from Aus Prunes is the perfect finger food for a festive feast – you can whip them up in just 15 minutes. And if you are calorie counting at this time of year, 1 serving has 48 calories 200 kilojoules.

Makes 12

12 small fresh oysters

Juice ½ lemon

1½ cups chicken stock

12 large pitted prunes

6 slices prosciutto, fat trimmed and cut in half lengthwise

Spray oil

Sprigs rosemary

Drizzle the oysters lightly with lemon juice. Heat the chicken stock until simmering. Poach oysters gently for 1½–2 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon, drain and cool. Place a poached oyster in the centre of each prune. Roll a slice of prosciutto around each prune and secure with a tooth pick. Spray lightly with oil and sprinkle with a few rosemary leaves. Place prepared prunes on hot BBQ with a few sprigs of rosemary and cook for 3–5 minutes.

Each piece

Energy: 200 kJ/ 48 cal; Protein 4 g; Fat 1.5 g (includes 0.5 g saturated fat and 14 mg cholesterol); Carbs 4 g; Fibre 1 g

Catherine Saxelby is an accredited dietitian and nutritionist and runs the Foodwatch Nutrition Centre. For more information and delicious recipes the whole family will love, visit foodwatch.com.au.

In the GI News Kitchen

American dietitian and author of *Good Carbs, Bad Carbs*, **Johanna Burani**, shares favourite recipes with a low or moderate GI from her Italian kitchen. For more information, check out Johanna's website (<http://www.eatgoodcarbs.com/>). The photographs are by Sergio Burani. His food, travel and wine photography website is photosbysergio.com.

Baked Belgian Endives

Italians love 'indivia'. Vegetable greens, raw and cooked, play a prominent role in Italian meal planning all year long but some are given special attention for holiday meals. This recipe has graced our table at Christmas and special family events. The exquisite blending of its flavors belies the simplicity of the preparation of this side dish.

Serves 8 (2 halves each)

8 endives (witlof), approximately 5 oz (150 g) each

2 tablespoons salted butter

pinch salt

pinch sugar

½ cup (approximately 2 oz) crumbled gorgonzola

5 walnut halves, chopped (about 2 tablespoons chopped walnuts)

- Preheat the oven to 190°C (375°F). Cover the bottom of an oven-proof casserole with vegetable spray.
- Trim a thin sliver off the root end of each endive. Slice vertically each endive in half taking care to keep loose leaves together. Under running water, gently wash them, shake off excess water and pat dry with a paper towel.
- Melt the butter in a heavy, deep skillet, large enough to accommodate the endives in one layer. Lower the flame and place the halved endives in the skillet cut side down. Sprinkle the salt and sugar. Cover tightly and cook slowly for 15 minutes.
- Using 2 spoons or small tongs, carefully turn the endives over and continue to cook for another 15 minutes.
- When the endives are full cooked, carefully transfer them to the prepared casserole. Pour over any pan juices, sprinkle the cheese and the nuts on top and bake for 15 minutes. Serve hot.

Per serving

Energy: 336 kJ/ 80 cal; Protein 2 g; Fat 6 g (includes 3 g saturated fat and 14 mg cholesterol); Carbs 1 g; Fibre less than 1 g

Cut back on the food bills and enjoy fresh-tasting, easily prepared, seasonal, satisfying and delicious low or moderate GI meals that don't compromise on quality and flavour one little bit with *Money Saving Meals* author **Diane Temple**. For

more recipes check out Diane's Money Saving Meals
(<http://www.moneysavingmeals.com.au/>).

Boeuf Bourguignon inspired by Julie and Julia

You get the flavour without spending a fortune in my simplified version of this classic French dish. It's a heart-warming, make-ahead dish for wintry weather. I have cut back on the amount of meat and used shortcut bacon instead of a chunk of bacon to cut back on the sat fat. But I did use a good-ish red wine and a little butter (it is a French dish) combined with olive oil. Of course you can substitute margarine if you prefer. Serve with mashed potato (a low GI potato one preferably) or sweet potato and green beans. To cut the fat and calories, have a smaller serving and enjoy the hearty flavour.

Serves 6

2 tablespoons butter

1 tablespoon olive oil

800 g gravy beef

1 large onion, chopped

2 carrots, chopped into chunks

150 g (5 oz) shortcut bacon, fat trimmed, chopped into large dice

½ teaspoon dried thyme

4 cloves garlic, crushed

1½ cups red wine

1 cup beef stock

2 tablespoons tomato paste

1 bay leaf

8 small pickling onions, peeled, and halved if large-ish

300 g (10 oz) button mushrooms

¼ cup parsley

- Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F).
- Chop the meat into largish chunks (remember, meat shrinks when cooked).
- Heat 1 tablespoon butter and all the oil in a large saucepan and brown the meat well in 2 batches on a high heat. Remove all meat from pan. Add the onion, carrots, bacon and thyme and cook, stirring occasionally on a low heat for 5 minutes. Stir in the garlic and wine, bring to the boil and simmer for about 3 minutes until the wine has reduced a little. Stir in the stock, tomato paste, bay leaf and beef, bring to the boil, cover and simmer for 1 hour and 10 minutes.

- While the casserole is simmering away, Place the pickling onions on an oven tray lined with baking paper and mix with remaining butter that has been melted, salt and freshly ground black pepper. Roast in the preheated oven for about 30 minutes or until soft.
- Add the mushrooms the casserole dish and continue cooking, covered, for 15 minutes until the meat is tender and the mushrooms are softening. Stir in the roasted onions and cook for another 5 minutes until heated through. Top with parsley.

Per serving

Energy: 1700 kJ/ 406 cal; Protein 36 g; Fat 20 g (includes 8 g saturated fat and 95 mg cholesterol); Carbs 10 g; Fibre 5 g

Gratined fruit

This made-in-minutes (about 15 minutes) recipe from ***Lyndey Milan: The best collection. Fast, fabulous food*** makes the perfect sweet and light finish to a festive feast. Choose fresh seasonal fruit – it's hard to go past mangoes or strawberries for a summery dessert. If serving with wine, choose a sweeter style of sparkling wine. Lyndey's book is available from major bookstores or online.

Serves 4

2 large mangoes (allow 1 cheek, sliced per person)

Zabaglione

2 egg yolks

4 teaspoons marsala

4 level teaspoons caster sugar

Zest of 1 lemon

- Prepare the fruit and preheat the grill (if it is one that takes time to warm up).
- Put all the zabaglione ingredients in the top of a double boiler, or straight into a saucepan if you are careful. Beat with a balloon whisk over a gentle heat until the whole thing has trebled in volume and is light and frothy throughout.
- Put the fresh fruit into ramekins and top with the zabaglione. Pop under a preheated griller until brown. Be careful not to burn it.

Per serving

Energy: 960 kJ/ 229 cal; Protein 4 g; Fat 3 g (includes 0.8 g saturated fat and 106 mg cholesterol); Carbs 42 g; Fibre 5 g

Home cooking with low GI ingredients is a new feature in *GI News*. **Libby Warne** and her husband Dan made the decision to eat the low GI way to help Dan manage his blood glucose (he has type 2 diabetes) and to lose some weight. They post all the recipes Libby creates and cooks on their website with Dan's photos. For more recipes, check out lowgicooking.com

Baked lemon and raspberry cheesecake

For me the party season is a killer for lashing out on various combinations of sugar, butter, cream and eggs – so I am all for alternatives. Enter stevia. With this cheesecake you can treat your friends and family with a lower-cal version of baked cheesecake – the sweet stevia offsets the tangy lemon and the bright red raspberries piled on top of the creamy base make it the perfect centrepiece for any occasion. Prepare it a day ahead to allow time to set and cool. And just have a sliver if you need to watch your weight. Of course, substitute an equal amount of sugar if you don't have stevia. Just be aware that there'll be more calories and carbs than in our nutritional analysis.

Serves: 10

Base

1 cup whole almonds
1 cup wholegrain oats
1/2 cup wholegrain, wholemeal flour
1/4 cup grapeseed (or olive) oil
3 teaspoons hermesetas stevia
3 tablespoons (about 50 ml) lemon juice
1 egg

Filling

500 g (1 lb 2 oz) smooth ricotta
1/2 cup lemon juice
Seeds of one vanilla bean scraped off (or 1 teaspoon vanilla essence)
Zest of one lemon grated finely (2 level teaspoons flat)
3 heaped tablespoons stevia hermesetas
4 eggs

Topping

Fresh raspberries or thawed frozen raspberries

- Preheat the oven to 160°C/325°F. Lightly grease a 30 cm/12 in diameter springform pan with olive oil.
- To make the base, pulse almonds and oats together in a food processor with a sharp blade, until coarse grains form, but chunks of almond are scanty. Add the flour, stevia and egg and continue to pulse. While pulsing, gradually add the olive oil and lemon juice, checking the consistency as you go. The end result should press together in your fingers and form a crumbly dough that holds together well, but does not stick to your fingers. Scrape out crumbed mix into the springform pan. Press down, loosely at first, then gradually more firmly. When flat, press down more tightly using a cup with a flat base, till the surface is as smooth as possible. Bake for 10 minutes then remove from oven.
- Meanwhile, make the filling. Combine ricotta and eggs in the (cleaned) processor and pulse for 2–3 minutes until completely smooth. Gradually add lemon juice, zest, vanilla bean scrapings and stevia.
- Pour topping into base, and bake for 40 minutes or until golden and just set in the centre. Remove from oven and allow to cool completely. Refrigerate overnight.
- Remove from fridge half an hour before serving. Transfer the cheesecake to plate you wish to serve it on and top with raspberries. Fresh blueberries, strawberries, passionfruit, or mango would also make excellent toppings. You can also add 2 tablespoons of liqueur to the cheesecake while cooking in place of half the lemon juice – cointreau is particularly good, and amaretto is my absolute favourite.

Per serving

Energy: 1350 kJ/ 323 cal; Protein 14 g; Fat 23 g (includes 5 g saturated fat and 118 mg cholesterol); Carbs 13 g; Fibre 3.5 g

Busting Food Myths with Nicole Senior

Myth: *We can grow more food or import it. Technology will find a solution to food supply.*

Fact: *We must make some changes if our children are to inherit a decent quality of life.*

While many of us are lucky enough to pick and choose what we eat for good health, we need to act now for our children to enjoy this privilege in the future. There's much each one of us can do, and as the saying goes, think global, act local.

I attended the Sydney Food Fairness Alliance's sydneyfoodfairness.org.au Food Summit 2009 recently and listened to a number of experts share some of the challenges ahead for Sydney (where I live) for human health and the health of the planet. It may well apply to your city too. Some of the key problems Sydneysiders need to deal with are food waste, poor agricultural practices and loss of agricultural land. With the super-indulgence of Christmas around the corner, food waste seems appropriate to tackle head on this month.

In New South Wales, 38% of the average household garbage bin is filled with food waste – about 800,000 tonnes a year. Look at it this way, we throw out about \$600 million worth of fresh food because we don't get to around to cooking it. And it's not just a Sydney problem. Research conducted in 2004 found Australians were throwing away \$5 billion worth of food every year– the equivalent of one out of every five grocery bags.

As well as throwing money out the window, food waste in landfill is an environmental disaster. Not only are the inputs of energy, water, feed and fertiliser squandered, but for every tonne of food waste, almost a tonne (about 9/10 of one actually) of greenhouse gas is produced.

Adding insult to injury is the large number of people who don't get enough to eat, both at home and abroad. More than a million Australians for example – many of them children – experience food insecurity on a regular basis.

What can we do? Research shows, many people simply have no idea of the impact their food waste has, so awareness is vital. The UK is doing a great job with their campaign www.lovefoodhatewaste.com.

Make avoiding food waste in your home your Number One New Year's Resolution. With some simple changes to your shopping and storing routines you can help save your pennies and our planet.

- Plan your meals a few days or a week ahead. A little planning goes a long way.
- Make a shopping list – and stick to it.
- Shop smart. Only buy what you need. Don't be seduced by specials for foods you won't eat.
- Store fresh food properly so that it keeps well.

- Look after leftovers. This includes the veggie peelings and scraps from preparing the meal and the meal itself. Don't automatically bin vegetable peelings. A compost or a worm farm can happily gobble up scraps while producing natural fertiliser for your garden or a community garden.
- Store the meal leftovers properly and transform them into new dishes or enjoy the next day as a 'free' lunch.

Talking Turkey with Prof Trim

How many steps?

Physical activity guidelines for weight loss and fitness recommend 30–60 minutes of activity per day. But realistically, how much is that? You can walk to the fence and chat with the neighbour for 20 minutes, then use the last 10 minutes to walk home.

On the other hand, some experts have recommended using a pedometer and trying for up to 10,000 steps a day. But again, this is not very realistic, because all these steps can be done at a dawdle.

Now a well known group of experts (American Journal of Preventive Medicine 2009;36(5):410-415) has suggested walking 3000 steps in thirty minutes on five days in each week. This can be three lots of 1000 steps in ten minutes each day. One hundred steps a minute should be the going rate.

For more information on weight loss for men, check out Professor Trim's website www.professortrim.com.

GI Symbol News with Alan Barclay

POM Wonderful joins GI Symbol Program

POM Wonderful 100% Pomegranate Juice with its impressive line-up of polyphenols (a type of antioxidant) now carries the GI Symbol. Made from the juice of five fresh pomegranates, it contains no added refined sugars, artificial ingredients or filler juices. As with all fruit juices, keep those portions moderate. Here's what you get: 1 cup POM Wonderful 100% Juice:

GI 53, available carbs per serving 37 g; GL per serving 19; Energy per serving: 630 kJ/150 cal.

Catherine Saxelby reported on pomegranates in the February 2009 issue of *GI News*. Here are some of her tips for ways to enjoy pomegranate juice:

- ***Dilute it.*** Start with one part pomegranate juice, top with four parts sparkling water or chilled tap water. Add a squeeze of lime or lemon juice and some ice cubes.
- ***Use it as a marinade*** for duck, chicken or pork or in sauces and dressings.
- ***Mix it*** into plain yoghurt or over ice-cream to flavour desserts. It's quite thick and syrupy so pours well.



For more information about the GI Symbol Program

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Posted by GI Group at [8:04 AM](#)

GI Update

GI Q&A with Prof Jennie Brand-Miller

A high fat food may have a low GI. Doesn't this make these foods sound healthy, even when they're not?

The GI is a measure of carbohydrate quality, not an all-in-one index of a food's nutritional worth. We don't recommend jelly beans simply because they are low in fat

and the same goes for foods that are low GI but 'nutritionally challenged'. It's important to think about all of the different nutritional qualities of a food, and not only its GI. For example, potato chips and French fries are lower GI than baked potatoes. Corn chips are lower GI than sweet corn. The reason: large amounts of fat in food tend to slow the rate of stomach emptying and therefore the rate at which foods are digested. Yet the saturated fat in these foods makes them less healthful and contributes to a greatly increased risk of heart disease.

If we were to weigh the health benefits of a high GI but low fat food (e.g. potatoes) versus one high in saturated fat but low GI (e.g. some biscuits), then we vote for the potatoes. Again, the GI was never meant to be the sole determinant of what foods you choose to eat. It's essential to base your food choices on the overall nutrient content of a food, including kilojoules, fibre, fat and salt. This is where the GI Symbol Program (<http://www.gisymbol.com/>) helps consumers identify nutritious sources of low GI carbs.

Save foods that contain saturated fats, even if they're low GI – such as confectionery, cakes and biscuits – as treats for special occasions.

New GI values with Fiona Atkinson

We don't just test health food. And I have to say I have never seen so many smiley volunteers when they heard we were GI testing chocolate mud cake, pavlova, Christmas mince pies, Christmas cake and rum balls! After all, it is the festive season whether or not you are a believer. What did we find. Well, no surprises in the calorie and fat department. So if you are celebrating, enjoy these foods, but remember they are treats for special occasions, so keep those portions moderate, slip into damage control mode and successfully navigate your way through the silly season.

Chocolate mud cake (a bought one from Woolworths supermarket): GI 43

Per 100 g serving you'll get 1650 kJ/393 cal, 4 g protein, 21 g fat, 46 g carbs and 2 g fibre

Pavlova (Woolworths Select Classic Pavlova Shell, prepared with whipped cream, sliced strawberries, sliced banana and passionfruit): GI 49

Per 100 g serving you'll get 816 kJ/194 cal, 2 g protein, 9 g fat, 26 g carbs and 2 g fibre

For American readers, pavlova is a light and airy, frothy meringue cake made up of

egg whites and sugar that is crunchy on the outside and gooey inside, then piled high with whipped cream and fruit. Traditionally the fruit used is kiwi berries, but any fruit will do. Named for the Russian ballerina Anna Pavlova, recipes for pavlova first showed up in written form in the early 1930s.

Christmas cake (Big Sister Christmas Rich Fruit Cake): GI = 53

Per 50 g serving you'll get 766 kJ/183 cal, 2 g protein, 7 g fat, 28 g carbs and 2 g fibre

Rum balls (Christmas Selection by Woolworths Rum Balls, packet of 12): GI = 50

per 25 g serving (1 rum ball) you'll get 363 kJ/87 cal, 1 g protein, 3 g fat, 14 g carbs and 1 g fibre

The **Christmas mince pies** are still in the oven! Watch this space as we will be posting their GI values on December 1 or 2.