



## December 2018

GI News is published online every month by the University of Sydney, School of Life and Environmental Sciences and the Charles Perkins Centre, and delivered to the mailboxes of our 97,000 subscribers. Our goal is to help people choose the high-quality carbs that are digested at a rate that our bodies can comfortably accommodate and to share the latest scientific findings on food and diet with a particular focus on carbohydrates, dietary fibres, blood glucose and the glycemic index.

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### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

#### FRUIT FOR THOUGHT

“There is no way that taking a pill can replace eating fruits and vegetables ... In theory, one could cram all the good things that plants make—essential elements, fibre, vitamins, antioxidants, plant hormones, and so on—into a pill. But it would have to be a very large pill, and no one can honestly say what should go into such a pill. Or in what proportions. Health issues aside, the biggest drawback is that a pill would always taste like a pill. It can’t give you the earthy smell and taste of a fresh ear of corn, the sweetness of a juicy tomato still warm from the afternoon sun, the crunch of an apple, the festive green of a snap pea or broccoli floret, or the smooth nutty taste of an avocado. Stick with real fruits and vegetables—they taste better and contain a bounty of phytochemicals that don’t come in capsules.”— Prof Walter Willett, *Eat, Drink and Be Healthy*

It’s hard to imagine dinner time when the spotlight wasn’t on “eat your vegetables”. But it’s not that long ago—a bit over 100 years. The discovery of vitamins and minerals in the early years of the twentieth century was the wakeup call and “Dr Vitamin”—Elmer Verner McCollum (1879–1967) – was a key player in ensuring they had a bigger part of the dinner plate. They were protective foods he said, because “they were so constituted to make good the deficiencies of whatever else we liked to eat”.

It's not just the leafy ones that matter. It's all of them, because, as Harvard's Prof Walter Willet says, "so far, no one has found a magic bullet that works against heart disease, cancer and a host of other chronic diseases as well as fruits and vegetables seem to do".

We are spoiled for choice in the produce aisles. As well as the proverbial leafy greens (spinach, lettuce and cabbage), we can take our pick from veggies that technically are fruits such as avocado, cucumber, marrow (squash), tomato, capsicum (peppers), and green beans; stems or bulbs such as onion and globe artichoke; stalks such as celery and asparagus; flower stalks and buds such as broccoli and cauliflower; and roots and tubers such as carrots, potato and sweet potato. And there's more, there are the protein-rich edible dried seeds from the legume family: beans, peas and lentils.

As for fruit, next time someone purses their lips and tells you it's "full of sugar," you can sweetly smile back and tell them there's a smart evolutionary explanation for that and for our sweet tooth. First of all, hunting and gathering are hard work, so discovering ripe fruits dangling on a branch in front of us or bright berries on a bush was a no-brainer. Sweetness told our forebears they were safe to pick and eat. Bitterness, on the other hand, helped them steer clear of fruits with potentially tummy upsetting toxins.

You can then explain that the sweetness comes from natural sugars – typically fructose (fruit sugar), glucose and sucrose ranging from a mere trace in pucker-up limes to almost 60 per cent in dates. And although sugars in themselves aren't a health food, in fruits they are also accompanied by really good stuff such as fibre, vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients including eye-catching carotenes in orange-fleshed fruits like mangoes, papaya and peaches and anthocyanins in all the blue/purple berries.

Why are fruits sweet? That's easy. They want us to eat them. Why? Well, look at it from the tree's point of view. When you are rooted to the spot, you need something mobile to help you disperse your seeds. The sweet, ripe, juicy flesh of a fruit tree's fruit is an inducement. It tempts us and animals, birds and insects to tuck into it and, one way or another, spread the seeds far and wide. This successful strategy has seen seeds become the original globe trotters.

However, it's unlikely we humans would make the finals if seed dispersal was an Olympic sport. As competitors, we are outclassed. A thirsty hyena can chomp through 18 tamma melons in a night then disperse seeds over a home range of some 400 square kilometres (150 square miles). This is impressive, but possibly pales alongside a black bear sitting around gorging up to 30,000 berries in a day, then distributing thousands of seeds over its territory.

**Read more:**

- [The Good Carbs Cookbook \(Murdoch Books\)](#)

## WHAT'S NEW?

### NOT ALL PLANT-BASED DIETS ARE CREATED EQUAL

While plant-based diets are recommended to reduce the risk of heart disease, some are associated with a higher risk of heart disease, according to a study published in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*.

The Harvard researchers created three versions of a plant-based diet: an overall plant-based diet which emphasized the consumption of all plant foods and reduced (but did not eliminate) animal food intake; a healthful plant-based diet that emphasized the intake of healthy plant foods such as whole grains, fruits and vegetables; and a less healthy plant-based diet which emphasized consumption of refined grain products, fries, white bread, sugar-sweetened beverages etc.

“When we examined the associations of the three food categories with heart disease risk, we found that healthy plant foods were associated with lower risk, whereas less healthy plant foods and animal foods were associated with higher risk,” said Ambika Satija, the study's lead author. “It's apparent that there is a wide variation in the nutritional quality of plant foods, making it crucial to take into consideration the quality of foods in a plant-based diet.”

The authors note limitations on their study: it's observational and based on self-reported diet assessments. It's very important to remind people that not all plant-based diets are created equal, but we have a couple of quibbles about their lists. They did not look at the overall GI/GL of diets; and their selection of “less healthy” foods which includes the usual suspects leaves out alcohol (they say they adjusted for it), and adds in foods/beverages that current dietary guidelines recommend as good choices in moderation as part of a healthy eating pattern. In particular:

- Traditional staples (regular durum wheat pasta and white rice) – often combined with significant portions of vegetables and eaten worldwide by millions of people in healthy meals that are part of their cuisine; and
- 100% fruit juices – ½ cup or 125mL is regarded as equivalent to one serving of fruit in Dietary Guidelines.

No wonder the punters are confused about what to eat – nutrition gurus aren't consistent with dietary guidelines they help formulate.

#### Read more

- [Healthful and unhealthful plant-based diets and the risk of coronary heart disease in US adults](#)
- [Prof Clare Collins: Love meat too much to be a vegetarian? Go 'flexitarian'.](#)

### PLANT-BASED OR VEGAN DIETS MAY HELP KEEP TYPE 2 DIABETES IN CHECK

While a predominantly plant-based diet rich in fruits, vegetables, nuts, legumes, and seeds with no (i.e., vegan) or few animal products has been linked to a significantly lower risk of developing type 2 diabetes, it's not clear if it might also be linked to improved mood and wellbeing. To try and find out, researchers trawled through the available evidence. The studies involved a total of 433 people in their mid-50s, on average.

A systematic critical analysis of the results showed that quality of life – both physical and emotional – improved only in those patients on a plant based/vegan diet. Similarly, depressive symptoms improved significantly only in these groups.

Nerve pain (neuropathy) eased in both the plant based and comparator diet groups, but more so in the former. And the loss of temperature control in the feet in those on the comparator diets suggests that eating predominantly plant-based foods may have slowed the progressive nerve damage associated with diabetes, say the researchers.

Average (HbA1c) and fasting blood glucose levels fell more sharply in those who cut out or ate very few animal products and these participants lost nearly twice as much weight: 5.23 kg vs 2.83 kg. The fall in blood fats (cholesterol and triglycerides) – a known risk factor for cardiovascular disease – was also greater in those on plant based/vegan diets.

In six of the studies, those following a plant based/vegan diet were able to cut down or discontinue the drugs they were taking for their diabetes and associated underlying conditions, such as high blood pressure. Overall, the results indicated that even though the plant-based diets were more difficult to follow, at least to begin with, participants stuck to them better than those in the other groups.

#### Read more

- [Effectiveness of plant-based diets in promoting well-being in the managements of type 2 diabetes](#)
- [Prof Clare Collins: Love meat too much to be a vegetarian? Go 'flexitarian'.](#)
- [Tani Khara: Why do vegans have such bad reputations?](#)

#### HIGH-CARB PLANT-BASED DIET LEADS TO WEIGHT LOSS

A plant-based diet high in carbohydrates can reduce body weight and body fat and improve insulin function in overweight individuals, according to a study published in *Nutrients*.

In the 16-week randomized clinical trial, researchers with the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine placed participants in either a plant-based, high-carbohydrate, low-fat diet group or asked them to maintain their current diet. The plant-based diet group avoided all animal products and added oils and limited fat intake to 20–30 grams per day. There were no limits on calories or carbohydrate intake. The control group maintained their current diets, which included meat and dairy products. Neither group altered their exercise routines. Total carbohydrate intake did not change in the control group, but increased significantly in the plant-based diet group, both as absolute intake and as a percentage of total calories. Participants in this group focused on whole, minimally-processed carbohydrates from fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes.

At the end of the trial, body mass index, body weight, fat mass, visceral fat volume (fat around the organs), and insulin resistance decreased significantly in the plant-based diet group. There were no significant changes in the control group.

“Fad diets often lead people to fear carbohydrates. But the research continues to show that healthy carbohydrates -- from fruits, vegetables, beans, and whole grains -- are the

healthiest fuel for our bodies,” says lead study author Hana Kahleova, M.D., Ph.D., director of clinical research for the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine.

**Read more:**

- [A Plant-Based High-Carbohydrate, Low-Fat Diet in Overweight Individuals in a 16-Week Randomized Clinical Trial: The Role of Carbohydrates](#)

**NEW GI VALUES FOR GUAVAS AND PAPAYA**

Fruit	GI	Serving size (grams)	Available Carbohydrate (grams)	GL
Guava bites	29	140g	13g	4
Guava puree	47	140g	13g	6
Papaya bites	38	137g	13g	5
Papaya puree	42	137g	13g	5

These GI results are from a randomized, crossover study that compared the effects of consuming bite-sized and pureed guava and papaya in 19 healthy participants (9 elderly and 10 young adults) recruited from the general public in Singapore. Glycemic index testing was carried out following the International Standard.

**Read more:**

- [Fruit form Influences Postprandial Glycemic Response in Elderly and Young Adults](#)

**DIABETES, DRIED FRUIT AND BLOOD GLUCOSE**

A recent randomised crossover study conducted in China published in *Nutrients* demonstrated that medium or low GI dried fruit (dried apples, dried jujubes, dried apricots and raisins), did not raise blood glucose concentrations excessively when consumed as a substitute for a high GI carbohydrate-based food (rice).

Eleven healthy, young Chinese volunteers consumed the test meals in a randomised order on seventeen separate mornings with a one-week wash-out period between each test session. The test meals included: (1) dried fruits containing 50g available carbohydrates; (2) mixed meals consisting of dried fruits and rice each contributing 25 g available carbohydrates; (3) mixed meals consisting of dried fruits and rice each contributing 25 g available carbohydrates supplemented with 30g almonds. Taking the nutrient profile and antioxidants of dried fruits into account, the researchers say they may have the potential of being included into a blood-glucose-managing diet without altering the total carbohydrate intake.

Dried fruit	GI	Serving size (grams)	Available Carbohydrate (grams)	GL
Dried apples	43	19g	13g	5
Dried jujubes	55	21g	13g	7
Dried apricots	56	23g	13g	7
Raisins	56	19g	13g	7

**Tip:** Dried fruits generally have low GI values and are a great source of fibre, but the calorie count is much greater than for fresh fruit, so watch portion size. Dried fruit can be very more-ish!

**Read more:**

- [Postprandial Glycaemic Responses of Dried Fruit-Containing Meals in Healthy Adults: Results from a Randomised Trial](#)

### **BEWARE FERMENTED FRUIT THIS FESTIVE SEASON**

The kererū pigeon (*Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*) was named Bird of The Year in New Zealand, winning the popular vote by a clear margin. This metallic green, grey and white native wood pigeon is renowned for its spectacular aerobatics, the ‘whoosh’ of its wings and its complete lack of self-discipline. Forest and Bird, who organise the annual competition, uses terms like “drunk” and “gluttonous” to describe it because it likes to gorge itself on rotten fruit on the forest floor. Some seasons, the abundance of fermented fruit can leave the pigeons so drunk they end up falling from the trees and having to be rescued.

Not a tall story says GI News editor, Philippa Sandall. “Growing up in New Zealand we had a bumper cropping Christmas plum tree in our garden that became jars and jars of jam (great for gifts). But, the tree was such a prolific producer, my mother couldn’t keep up the preserving and plums lay fermenting on the ground. One year we rescued a tipsy thrush who had seriously overindulged. It took him several hours to sober up in a cardboard box to keep him safe from the family cat.

### **PERSPECTIVES: DR ALAN BARCLAY**

#### **CAN FRUIT BE PART OF A HEALTHY DIET TODAY?**

Dietary guidelines since Day One back in the late 1970s have recommended that we eat fruit every day for our health and wellbeing. We have plenty of choice to meet that target – not only are there hundreds of different kinds of fruit but, in many cases, we can opt for fresh, frozen, canned or dried. But, in today’s “obesogenic world”, as the headlines put it, is fruit still a healthy choice, after all, it’s primarily comprised of carbohydrates – in particular (gasp!) sugars.

**Fruit nutrition** With the exception of fat-rich avocados and olives, carbohydrate is the primary source of energy in most fruit. An average piece (150g) of fresh fruit gives us 10–20g available carbohydrate, plus a little protein (less than 2g) and even less fat (under 1g). When it comes to fibre (soluble and insoluble), an average piece (150g) of unpeeled, fresh apple or pear or stone fruit provides between 2–4g of fibre. Citrus is similar when peeled. A small handful (30g) of dried fruit provides 1.5–3g fibre per serve, and melons only 0.5–1g per average slice (75 g). Most fruits are good sources of a variety of vitamins and minerals – in particular vitamin C, potassium and magnesium.

It’s the sugars in fruit that gets people’s knickers in a knot these days. Crusading diet books in recent years have tended to encourage the belief that fruit is full of fructose and that’s simply not the case. The average fructose content of fruit eaten in Australia and other Western nations is around 50% of the total carbohydrate content, with the balance coming

from glucose. Pome fruits like apples and pears have more at around 65% of the total carbohydrate content; stone fruits like apricot, cherries and plums have much less at around 35%. It's also worth keeping in mind that most fruits are mostly water (that's why fruit is refreshing). The carbohydrate content is typically around 10% by weight.

The GI of most apples, pears, citrus and stone fruits is low (under 55). Melons tend to be medium to high GI (GI 68–78), but most will have a low GI because melons are mostly water and have very little carbohydrate. Canning fruits in sugary syrups typically raises their GI, but fruits canned in 100% fruit juice typically have a lower GI. Drying fruits doesn't have much of an effect on the GI of the fruit.

**Fruit and health** Systematic reviews of the best available scientific evidence in humans have found that regular whole fruit consumption:

- Is not associated with weight gain in either [population studies](#) or [clinical trials](#). Indeed, population studies generally find that the more fruit we eat, the less we weigh.
- Is associated with a [decreased risk of developing type 2 diabetes](#).
- Is associated with a lower risk of developing [high blood pressure](#), [heart disease and stroke](#).
- Is associated with a [lower risk of depression](#).
- Finally, people who eat more fruit (and vegetables) on a regular basis may not only feel better – they [actually look better](#)!

**How much fruit should we be eating?** Dietary guidelines currently recommend that adults consume at least 2 serves (2 cups in the USA) of fruit each day. A serve of fruit is:

- 150g (1 piece) of medium-sized fruit e.g. apple, banana, orange, pear
- 150g (2 pieces) of small fruit e.g. apricots, kiwi fruit, plums
- 150g (1 cup) diced, cooked or canned fruit
- 125ml (½ cup) 100% fruit juice
- 30g dried fruit. e.g. 4 dried apricot halves, 1½ tablespoons of sultanas

**How much fruit are we eating?** In most developed nations, most people do not eat the minimum recommended number of serves of fruit each day. In the [USA](#), adolescents consumed an average of 0.51 cups and adults 0.61 cups of fruit per day. Australians do better according to Australia's most recent [national nutrition survey](#):

- Australians two years and over, consumed on average around 1.5 serves of fruit (including fruit juice and dried fruit) with fresh or canned contributing around 1 serve, and fruit juice and dried fruit 0.5 serve.
- Children on average consumed slightly more serves of fruit than adults (1.7 compared with 1.5).

The take home? Fruit is a healthy food. Up your intake and get those two serves a day for optimal health and wellbeing.



Alan Barclay PhD is a consultant [dietitian](#). He is author of *Reversing Diabetes* (Murdoch Books), and co-author of 30-plus scientific publications, *The Good Carbs Cookbook* (Murdoch Books), *Managing Type 2 Diabetes* (Hachette Australia) and *The Ultimate Guide to Sugars and Sweeteners* (The Experiment Publishing). Follow him on [Twitter](#) or check out his [website](#).

## **KEEPING IT GREEN – EATING FOR BODY AND PLANET** **A GREENER CHRISTMAS THAT WON'T COST THE EARTH**

We associate “green” with Christmas, but many of our Christmas traditions are far from it. By the New Year, garbage bins are overflowing and unwanted gifts clutter our homes. To add insult to injury, family finances are in the red. Here are our top tips for a greener Christmas that won't cost the earth.

**Buy Greener Gifts** There is nothing more wasteful than unwanted gifts. Useless stuff is just a burden that weighs us down, and does not represent the peace, love and joy of the season. Remember that products always have a higher impact than services. Try giving experiences or homemade gifts such as the cookies, jam or chutney you are renowned for; a framed family photo; time out with a massage voucher; or tickets to a concert or sports event.

**Source Food Ethically** Every food purchase we make has an impact, both on the environment and the people involved in producing it. We can minimise our environmental footprint by choosing more plant-based and locally produced foods. Farmers markets can be a great place to find fresh local produce that provides a better profit for the farmers. Look for local, ethical and sustainable food products, such as free-range turkey and sustainable seafood. Consumable gourmet gifts like chocolate and coffee are popular but look for Fair Trade products.

**Reduce Food Waste** Discarded food not only wastes the food itself but also the energy and resources required to grow, transport and store it. If it ends up in landfill it produces greenhouse gases. To avoid over-catering, plan your guest list and menu. Quickly refrigerate any leftovers in reusable containers and give them to guests take home. If any leftover food won't be eaten within 3 days, freeze it for later. Avoid food scraps in landfill and instead compost egg shells, fruit and vegetable scraps (or put them in a worm farm). To avoid stinky garbage bins, you can bury seafood scraps in the garden and improve the soil.

**Choose Reusable Tableware** Disposable plastic cutlery, cups, plates and straws are convenient for us but terrible for the planet. They will remain on earth much longer than we will. Skip plastic straws altogether and choose reusable metal cutlery, crockery and glasses. If reusable tableware is not an option, choose biodegradable or compostable cutlery and plates (such as bamboo), and ideally break them into smaller pieces before disposal or composting. For gatherings, have clearly labelled tubs/bins in sight so guests can easily recycle cans and bottles.

**Use Eco-Friendly Gift Wrapping, Cards and Decorations** Come Christmas morning, millions of living rooms are littered with torn and scrunched wrapping paper. Much of this paper,

sadly, is not recyclable due to glitter, fabric and metallic embellishments. If the kids did the wrapping, it's likely there's a generous amount of sticky tape too. Reuse pre-loved gift bags and ribbons where you can. Instead of buying wrapping paper and greeting cards, make your own from old maps, comic strips, newspapers, postal delivery boxes and children's artwork. Balloons and tinsel use a lot of finite resources and balloons can be a nightmare for aquatic life if they end up in waterways. Instead decorate your house with fresh flowers and compost them afterwards.

**Buy a Real Christmas Tree** In theory, artificial Christmas trees are meant to last forever but over many years they start to look ratty and the plastic pine needles fall off. While the metal trunk may be recyclable at some centres, the thousands of plastic pine needles are not and spend hundreds of years in landfill. For a more environmentally friendly alternative go to a local farm and buy a real tree that can be replanted in the New Year or sent to the chipper afterwards and made into mulch. If you have a green thumb you could choose an indoor potted conifer, enjoy it all year round and decorate it each Christmas.

**Use LED Lighting** LED Christmas lights are far more efficient than incandescent Christmas lights, wasting less energy and saving you money. According to [Canstar Blue](#), LED Christmas lights will typically add only cents to your energy bill, or at most a few dollars over the entire Christmas season. To save even more energy, use a solid light setting instead of twinkling or flickering lights. Solar LED lights are a great energy-saving option for outdoor displays. Consider using a timer so lights are only left on in the evening and turned off before going to bed.

#### **Christmas in a Nutshell:**

- Being "green" doesn't mean missing out on your favourite Christmas traditions.
- Remember happiness does not come from stuff, but from doing good things including caring for the earth.
- In the true spirit of Christmas think about both the planet and people in your purchasing.
- Source plant-based, free-range, local and ethical festive fare where possible and avoid waste

Thanks to Rachel Ananin aka [TheSeasonalDietitian.com](#) for her assistance with this article.



In this series we explore how you can reduce your ecological impact through your food choices. We'll help you do your bit for the environment, one mouthful at a time.

**Nicole Senior** is an Accredited Nutritionist, author, consultant, cook, food enthusiast and mother who strives to make sense of nutrition science and delights in making healthy food delicious.

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## **GOOD CARBS FOOD FACTS A TO Z**

### **DATES**

Fresh dates "are so remarkably luscious that there would be no end to eating them, were it not for fear of the dangerous consequences that would be sure to ensue" noted Pliny the

Elder long ago. In moderation however, they make the perfect snack and they bring moist deliciousness to fruit breads, cakes, cookies, muffins, stuffing, crumble toppings, salads or combined with meats in tagines (try lamb and dates). And there's more, there's thick, sticky date syrup enjoyed as a sweetener for thousands of years in the Middle East and North Africa drizzled over tahini or yogurt.

**Food skills: shopping.** Fresh or soft dates such as the large plump fleshy Medjool dates with their chewy toffee-like taste are sold loose and prepacked and are delicious in salads, desserts and for a treat instead of chocolate (they tend to be pricy but worth it). They should be plump and moist with glossy skins. When buying packaged dates, check the use-by or best-before date.

Dried dates, though a little wrinkly, shouldn't look withered, and should still be plump and glossy, with an even colour. Avoid those with crystallised sugar on their skins as this means they are not quite as fresh as you might like. Unpitted dates will have better flavour than pitted as they stay moister. If using pitted dates check as you chop as there can sometimes be traces of stones (also called pits).

**Food skills: storing.** Fresh or dried, dates keep well for a few months in an airtight container in a cool, dry place. They also freeze very well. They will continue to dry out and their sugars will slowly come to the surface creating white sugar spots. Freezing prevents this.

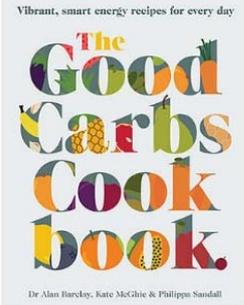
**Food skills: what's in them.** Dates are sweet, so it's not surprising to learn they contain 70% sugars: a varying combination of sucrose, fructose and glucose, depending on the variety of date. They are high in fibre and also contain vitamins A, thiamine, niacin and riboflavin, and some iron, magnesium, calcium and potassium. They also contain a fair bit of sorbitol (a sugar alcohol or polyol) and that's what makes them excellent for promoting bowel regularity, although those with an irritable bowel and sensitive to FODMAPS (certain sugars that can be poorly absorbed by the body) may want to give them a miss. The rest of us can make a date with dates over this holiday season.

<b>Good Carbs Food Facts</b>	
<b>Dates</b>	
★ ★ ★ ½	
<b>Glycemic index 39–45</b>	
<b>Gluten free</b>	
<b>Serving size – 5 regular dried dates, pitted (about 25g or 1oz)</b>	
Kilojoules	300
Calories	73
Protein	0.5g
Fats – Total	0g
Includes:	
--Saturated fat	0g
–Unsaturated fat	0g
–Cholesterol	0g
Saturated : unsaturated fat ratio	0.0
Carbohydrates – Total	19.5g
<i>Available</i>	17g
Includes:	
--Natural sugars	16.5g
–Natural starches	0.5g
–Added sugars	0g
–Added starches	0g
<i>Unavailable</i>	2.5g
Includes:	
–Dietary fibre	2.5g
Sodium	4mg
Potassium	180mg
Sodium : potassium ratio	0.02
Glycemic load	7
Diabetes exchange	1
Ingredients: Dates	

Source: [The Good Carbs Cookbook](#)

## IN THE GI NEWS KITCHEN

### THE GOOD CARBS COOKBOOK

 <p>Vibrant, smart energy recipes for every day</p> <p><b>The Good Carbs Cookbook</b></p> <p>Dr Alan Barclay, Kate McGhie &amp; Philippa Sandall</p>	<p><u><i>The Good Carbs Cookbook</i></u> (by Alan Barclay, Kate McGhie and Philippa Sandall) published by Murdoch Books helps you choose the best fruits, vegetables, beans, peas, lentils, seeds, nuts and grains and explains how to use them in 100 refreshingly nourishing recipes to enjoy every day, for breakfast, brunch, lunch, dinner and dessert. The recipes are easy to prepare, (mostly) quick to cook, long in flavour and full of sustaining goodness, so you feel fuller for longer. There is a nutritional analysis for each recipe and tips and helpful hints for the novice, nervous, curious or time-starved cook.</p>
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## **PARSNIP, YOGHURT AND DATE SALAD**

Squishy dates and raw parsnip balance each other beautifully in this simple salad that does not like to be kept waiting and is best served as soon as you have tossed it. Parsnips taste better as the weather gets colder so winter is the perfect time to relish them in their unadorned state. Preparation time: 20 minutes • Serves: 6

4 medium parsnips (about 600g/1lb 5oz)  
10 soft dates, pitted and roughly chopped  
2 tablespoons roughly chopped mint leaves  
150g (5oz) natural yoghurt  
1 tablespoon lemon juice  
2 teaspoons runny honey  
2 tablespoons (40ml) olive oil  
Salt flakes and freshly ground white pepper

Peel the parsnips and cut them in half lengthways. Remove any woody centres and discard. Coarsely grate the parsnips into a bowl. Add the dates, mint, yoghurt, lemon juice, honey and oil. Add salt and pepper to taste and then gently toss all the ingredients together.

### *Per serve*

710kJ/170 calories; 3g protein; 7g fat (includes 1.5g saturated fat; saturated : unsaturated fat ratio 0.3); 21g available carbs (includes 16g sugars and 5g starches); 4.5g fibre; 65mg sodium; 545mg potassium; sodium : potassium ratio 0.1

## **TOMATO AND FIG SALAD WITH BURRATA AND DATE-MINT DRESSING**

All the tantalising tastes and colours of summer's best with tasty beauties such as tomatoes and figs, come together in this sublime salad. The witlof (add a few small cos leaves if you wish) is the crunchy base for the tomatoes crowned with the cooling menthol taste of mint to balance the creamy cheese. Preparation time: 25 minutes • Serves: 6

1 shallot, very finely chopped  
¼ cup (60ml) date syrup  
Juice 1 plump lemon  
¼ cup (60ml) extra virgin olive oil  
salt flakes and freshly ground pepper  
1 handful mint leaves, finely shredded  
1 witlof, leaves separated  
6 medium heirloom tomatoes  
6 large fresh figs  
1 burrata  
2 teaspoons finely chopped lemon thyme

To make the dressing put the chopped shallot, date syrup, lemon juice, oil with salt and pepper to taste, in a bowl. Give it a couple of whisks and then stir in the mint. • Arrange the witlof leaves on a platter. Cut the tomatoes into chunks and figs into quarters roughly the same size – and arrange casually over the witlof. Place the burrata in the centre of the platter. Give the dressing a good stir, spoon over the salad and scatter with lemon thyme.

### Tips

- If you prefer, swap the burrata for fresh mozzarella which if large can be torn into mouthful pieces.
- If date syrup is not on hand, put stoned medjool dates with enough water for the consistency you want in a blender and start the processing on a low speed to allow the dates to break up, then blend on high until smooth adding lemon juice to taste.

### Per serve

1035kJ/245 calories; 6g protein; 15g fat (includes 5g saturated fat; saturated : unsaturated fat ratio 0.5); 21g available carbs (includes 20g sugars and 1g starches); 4g fibre; 145mg sodium; 485mg potassium; sodium : potassium ratio 0.3

### ANNEKA MANNING: BAKECLUB



Aneka Manning – author, food editor, home economist, mother of two and the founder of BakeClub – specialises in teaching the ‘why’ behind the ‘how’ of baking, giving home cooks the know-how, understanding and skill to bake with confidence and success, every time. She has written and contributed to a number of books, including popular titles such as *The Low GI Family Cookbook* (Hachette), and *BakeClass* (Murdoch Books).

### SPICED DATE, NUT AND POMEGRANATE LOAF

This moist, fragrant date and nut loaf studded with dried cranberries and hazelnuts has a little crunch and is mildly spiced and is delicious freshly baked or toasted and topped with ricotta. Preparation time: 20 minutes (+ cooling time) • Baking time: 50–55 minutes • Serves 20



1¼ cups (300ml) freshly brewed black coffee  
1 cup pitted dates, coarsely chopped  
½ cup dried cranberries  
½ cup currants  
2 tablespoons pomegranate molasses  
2 tablespoons honey

Slightly heaped  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup raw sugar  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  cup sunflower oil or 75g (2 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz) butter  
1 orange, zest finely grated  
2 teaspoons mixed spice  
2 eggs, lightly whisked  
50g (1 $\frac{3}{4}$ oz) walnuts, coarsely chopped, plus an extra handful, coarsely chopped, to decorate  
50g (1 $\frac{3}{4}$ oz) hazelnuts, coarsely chopped, plus an extra handful, coarsely chopped, to decorate  
2 tablespoons sesame seeds  
1 $\frac{1}{2}$  cups wholemeal plain flour  
2 teaspoons baking powder

#### *Glaze*

2 teaspoons pomegranate molasses  
2 teaspoons honey  
1 teaspoon water

Preheat the oven to 180°/C350°F. Grease a loaf tin (21 x 10cm/9 x 4in base measurement) and line the base and two long sides with non-stick baking paper. • Combine the coffee, dates, cranberries, currants, pomegranate molasses, honey, sugar, butter or oil, orange zest and mixed spice in a large saucepan. Bring to the boil over a medium heat. Remove immediately from the heat and set aside to cool. • Stir the eggs, walnuts, hazelnuts and sesame seeds into the cooled date mixture. • Sift the flour and baking powder together, returning any bran to the flour. Add to the date mixture and use a wooden spoon or spatula to stir gently until just combined. • Pour the mixture into prepared tin and use the back of a spoon to smooth the surface. Sprinkle with the extra nuts, pressing into the mixture slightly. • Bake for 50–55 minutes, or until the loaf is firm to the touch on the top and cooked when tested with a skewer. If it is browning too quickly, cover with foil after 40 minutes. Remove from the oven and stand in the tin for 10 minutes before turning out on a wire rack. • To make the glaze, combine the honey, pomegranate molasses and water in a small bowl. Brush over the top of the hot loaf. Set aside to cool before serving.

#### **Tips**

- Pomegranate molasses is available from specialty food stores and delicatessens.
- If honey is firm or crystallised, heat it in the microwave for a few seconds to soften before using.

#### *Per serve*

785 kJ/188 calories; 3g protein; 8.5g fat (includes 1g saturated fat; saturated : unsaturated fat ratio 0.13); 24g available carbs (includes 17g sugars and 7g starch); 3g fibre; 76mg sodium; 244mg potassium; sodium : potassium ratio 0.3

#### **MACADAMIA, DATE AND GOJI BERRY BARS**

This dense bar is halfway between a fruit cake and a slice. Studded with macadamias, dates, goji berries and cranberries it has a real festive feel and makes a wonderful gift cut into four bars, wrapped in cellophane and tied with ribbon. Makes 24 pieces • Preparation time: 10 minutes • Baking time: 30 minutes

Macadamia oil or sunflower oil, to grease  
200g (7oz) macadamia halves, toasted  
150g (5oz) dried dates, coarsely chopped  
100g (3½oz) dried cranberries  
50g (1¾oz) goji berries  
½ cup plain wholemeal or spelt flour  
90g (3oz) raw sugar  
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon  
⅓ teaspoon baking powder  
⅓ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda  
1 egg  
1 teaspoon natural vanilla extract or essence

Preheat the oven to 160°C/320°F. Lightly grease a square 18cm/7in (base measurement) cake tin and line the base and two sides with one piece of non-stick baking paper. • Combine the macadamias, dates, cranberries, goji berries, flour, sugar, cinnamon, baking powder and bicarbonate of soda in a medium bowl. Whisk together the egg and vanilla. Add to the macadamia mixture and stir with a wooden spoon until evenly combined. • Press the mixture evenly into the prepared tin with your fingers or the back of a spoon. Bake in preheated oven for 30 minutes or until golden and aromatic. Remove from the oven and cool in the tin. • Cut into small pieces to serve.

#### *Per piece*

510kJ/ 120 calories; 1.5g protein; 7g fat (includes 1g saturated fat; saturated : unsaturated fat ratio 0.2); 13.5g available carbs (includes 12g sugars and 1.5g starch); 2 g fibre; 11mg sodium; 87mg potassium; sodium : potassium ratio 0.1

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