

Christmas survival guide

#TheMayWay

INCLUDING 8 CHRISTMAS RECIPES
PERFECT TO PREP AHEAD FOR
A STRESS-FREE FESTIVE PERIOD

Welcome!

For most of us, the Christmas festive period can be challenging when it comes to eating and drinking, let alone enduring the hectic pace, as we gallop towards the big day!

This guide will help you ease that stress and temper the excess!

But first, let's get real....

Realistically, this isn't a time to be thinking about shedding those extra pounds but neither do you want to find yourself piling on the weight and face an even bigger challenge in the New Year!

I've tackled some of the issues we can face and help you with:

- tips to keep your weight under control over the festive season
- which are the best drinks to opt for to stay in control

PLUS

8 great plant-based recipes you can batch cook ahead of the busy period, not only to help you cope with the endless meals you find yourself serving, but also to ensure you're offering some tasty nutritious meals too!

So here's to a jolly, happy and healthy festive period!



6

ways to stick to your healthy eating habits over Christmas (without being a bore!)

If you're heading to the in-laws or spending time with family and friends, whose food choices are different to those you'd prefer, you'll need a few key strategies to help you secretly stay on track over the Christmas period without being a health bore! After all, it's Christmas and your healthy eating message is likely to fall on merry deaf ears!

But first.....start by working backwards...in other words, have an end result in mind.

How do you want to feel in the New Year? Do you want to look great, feel slimmer and generally more confident about yourself?

Aligning these wishes with the foods you choose over the festive period will go a long way to helping you stay on track where possible. It's hard enough to make the right choices at the best of times, but even harder when you're not in control of what's on offer.



6 WAYS TO STICK TO YOUR HEALTHY EATING HABITS OVER CHRISTMAS

1 DO EAT 3 MEALS

One of the biggest pitfalls is the idea of saving yourself for the big meal, whether that's a big family lunch banquet or a dinner out with friends or family. Keeping your blood sugars balanced throughout the day is key. Skipping a meal will result in very low blood sugars and you'll then arrive at a meal ravenous, jittery, light headed and perhaps even a little anxious. These are all signs of low blood sugar and are messages for you to EAT, EAT, EAT and in particular sugar. You are much more likely to over-indulge if you arrive at meal in this state. Stick to eating 3 balanced meals during the day and savour and enjoy the big meal without overeating.



CHECK OUT THIS BLOG POST: [CHRISTMAS DINNER: A SURPRISINGLY NUTRITIOUS MEAL](#)

2 STAY HYDRATED

To enjoy the Christmas festivities with full energy and vitality, you'll need to stay hydrated, so drink plenty of water. Drinking water not only helps you to feel energised but also helps to flush out toxins, which would otherwise leave you feeling drained and lethargic. Make a point to have a glass of water in between each alcoholic drink when you're out socialising. If you spending the day with family and friends, keep a herbal tea on the go wherever you can. This will not only distract you from snacking, but will help you to avoid alcoholic drinks for a little longer. Have a rule not to drink alcohol before a certain time and only during a meal; on normal days this may not be a problem but in the midst of the festive celebrations, alcohol tends to flow at the most unusual times!

Try these simple Christmas drink alternatives:

- For a warming tea, Infuse fresh ginger slices in a cafetière. TIP: Keep thick slices of ginger in the freezer and use them from frozen. Remember, the longer you steep your ginger the better, so keep it strong and top up with boiling water for a instant delicious tea
- Keep a mint plant going over Xmas, so you have a constant supply of fresh mint, which you can then use directly in a mug or in a cafetière for fresh mint tea. Dried mint also works well using a teapot & tea strainer
- Make up a large jug or bottle of water infused with either fresh cucumber slices or mint leaves. This makes for a refreshing alternative to plain water
- Try adding some fresh mint leaves or a slice of lemon to a regular green tea for a refreshing twist



CHECK OUT THIS BLOG POST: ["DRINKING SMART" OVER XMAS; WHAT TO CHOOSE AND WHY?](#)

3 LIMIT SUGAR

This is especially hard when there are so many sweet treats on offer over the christmas festive period. However, understanding that eating foods and drinks that are high in sugar encourages cravings will help you to be much more selective as to when you will opt to indulge in an that enticing sweet offering. Keeping your blood sugars balanced is key, so opt for low glycemic foods, in other words, foods that release sugars into the blood stream slowly, so that you can avoid the blood sugar surges and the inevitable dips (and consequent cravings) that follow. Choose a combination of good lean proteins, healthy fats and plenty of vegetables and fruits.

4 SNACK OR EAT BEFORE YOU GO OUT

If you're heading to a bar or party, then make sure you've eaten a meal before you go out. As you are full and satiated prior to the evening's activities, you are less likely to indulge in unhealthy party food or snacks that are on offer. If you're going out for a meal, perhaps have a light snack; for example a small salad or a piece of fruit with a small handful of nuts. This way, you will not be ravenous and are more likely to make healthier choices when scanning the menu.

5 BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF

Are you really hungry and do you really want to eat the food that is on offer on the buffet or canapé trays? You may find that you are eating simply because it is presented in front of you but in reality, the choices are not your favourites or you're not actually that hungry? If you are tempted and are genuinely hungry, then make a decision how many canapés you will try and stick to it. One approach is to only accept every other offering as the canapé trays make their rounds. Opt for the vegetables and protein-based choices first, rather than the fried or pastry option, as these will take the edge of your appetite and avoid unnecessary calories. By the time the dessert trays come round, a "mind over matter" approach will help you to politely refuse the tempting sweets.

6 STAY ACTIVE

Try to take the attention away from food and meals by encouraging some exercise or any other activity over the christmas festive period. It's not always easy to muster the family or friends away from the sofa and warmth, but you'll be surprised how much fun it can be if you do manage a brisk walk or a wander around a museum.



CHECK OUT THIS BLOG POST: [MY 10 TOP TIPS ON HOW TO AVOID WEIGHT GAIN OVER CHRISTMAS](#)

Christmas Batch Cooking Recipes



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Starters

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Buckwheat and Chia Rosemary Crackers



HERE'S HOW

Combine :

- 140g Buckwheat flour,
- 100g ground Almonds,
- 1 tbsp Chia Seeds,
- 2 tbsp olive oil,
- 1 tsp dried Rosemary,
- Salt & Pepper

Add enough water to form a soft dough
Roll out between 2 sheets of grease proof paper, cut into small squares and bake at 200 degrees for 10-15 mins, checking half way.



Sundried Tomato Tapenade



HERE'S HOW:

Combine the ingredients below in a food processor and pulse to a fine mixture. Check seasoning.

- 50g Parmesan, grated (Vegan version: Optional)
- 100g Ground almonds
- 100g Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 140g jar Sun Dried Tomatoes; drained from oil and roughly chopped
- 1 tbsp Capers
- Pinch Cayenne Pepper (optional)
- 3-4 large cloves Garlic, crushed
- Juice of half a Lemon
- Salt & Pepper



Mains

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Easy One Pan Ratatouille



Easy One Pan Ratatouille



This tasty Vegan Mediterranean combo is loosely based on a ratatouille but I've kept it a little drier and added paprika and chilli for an extra kick. It's perfect served with protein rich quinoa for a delicious, balanced nutritional boost over the festive period. It's a wonderfully comforting yet healthy choice!

PREP TIME:

HERE'S HOW

- Heat a little of the flavoured oil from the sundried tomatoes (or olive oil), and gently fry the onions and garlic.
- Turn the heat down to very low and allow them to caramelise for around 15 mins, stirring occasionally (if you have the time, this will be worth it!)
- Now add the aubergine cubes and combine them with the onions. Cook these for around 5 mins, before adding the courgettes and peppers.
- At the same time, add the sundried tomatoes (including some of the oil), paprika, herbs and chilli, season well and toss carefully to combine.
- Cook covered, over a very low heat for 15 mins.
- Finally, add the fresh tomatoes and cook for a further 5 mins.

YOU'LL NEED

- 2 onions, thinly sliced
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 aubergine, cubed
- 1 courgette, cubed
- 1 red pepper, cut into 2 cm squares
- 1 yellow pepper, cut into 2 cm squared
- 1 small jar sundried tomatoes, in oil
- 1 large handful of fresh cherry tomatoes, halved
- 2 tbsp Olive oil (if not using the oil from the sundried tomatoes)
- 1 tbsp sweet paprika
- 1 tbsp mixed dried herbs
- 1 tsp chilli flakes (optional) Salt



SUMMARY:

This is ideal to keep in the fridge for up to 1 week, ready to heat up to serve with quinoa, brown rice or pasta. It's actually better made in advance, so the flavours have a chance to develop and infuse into the vegetables.

Butternut Squash and Lentil Dhal



Butternut Squash and Lentil Dhal



This hearty Vegan Butternut Squash and Lentil Dhal is a delicious way to combine warming spices with protein-rich lentils, nutritious butternut squash and spinach. I've used green lentils here as I prefer a variety that holds its shape and doesn't go too mushy, but all varieties are fine to use.

PREP TIME:



HERE'S HOW

[-WATCH THE VIDEO HERE-](#)

- In a separate saucepan, cover the lentils in plenty of cold water, bring to the boil and simmer for 15 minutes, until they are beginning to soften.
- Meanwhile, heat the ghee in a large saucepan over a moderate heat and add the onions, ginger and garlic; cook for approximately 5 minutes, allowing them to "sweat" until they are soft, stirring to ensure it doesn't stick or brown.
- Add the spices including the cayenne (if using) and toss continuously for a further 2 minutes. Season well with salt.
- Add the tinned tomatoes, combine well; bring to the boil, reduce heat and allow to gently simmer for approximately 10 mins until cooked through.
- Drain the lentils and return to the hot saucepan.
- Add the onion and tomato mixture to the lentils, then the butternut squash. combine well and cook for 20 mins until the butternut squash is cooked and the sauce has thickened. If the sauce is too dry, add more water, a little at a time.
- Once the butternut squash is cooked, add the spinach leaves and allow them to wilt into the sauce.
- Cover and allow to rest.
- Meanwhile, sauté the red onions in some ghee until they are slightly coloured at the edges.
- Then add the cumin seeds and continue to sauté until the aroma is pungent. Arrange on top when serving.

YOU'LL NEED

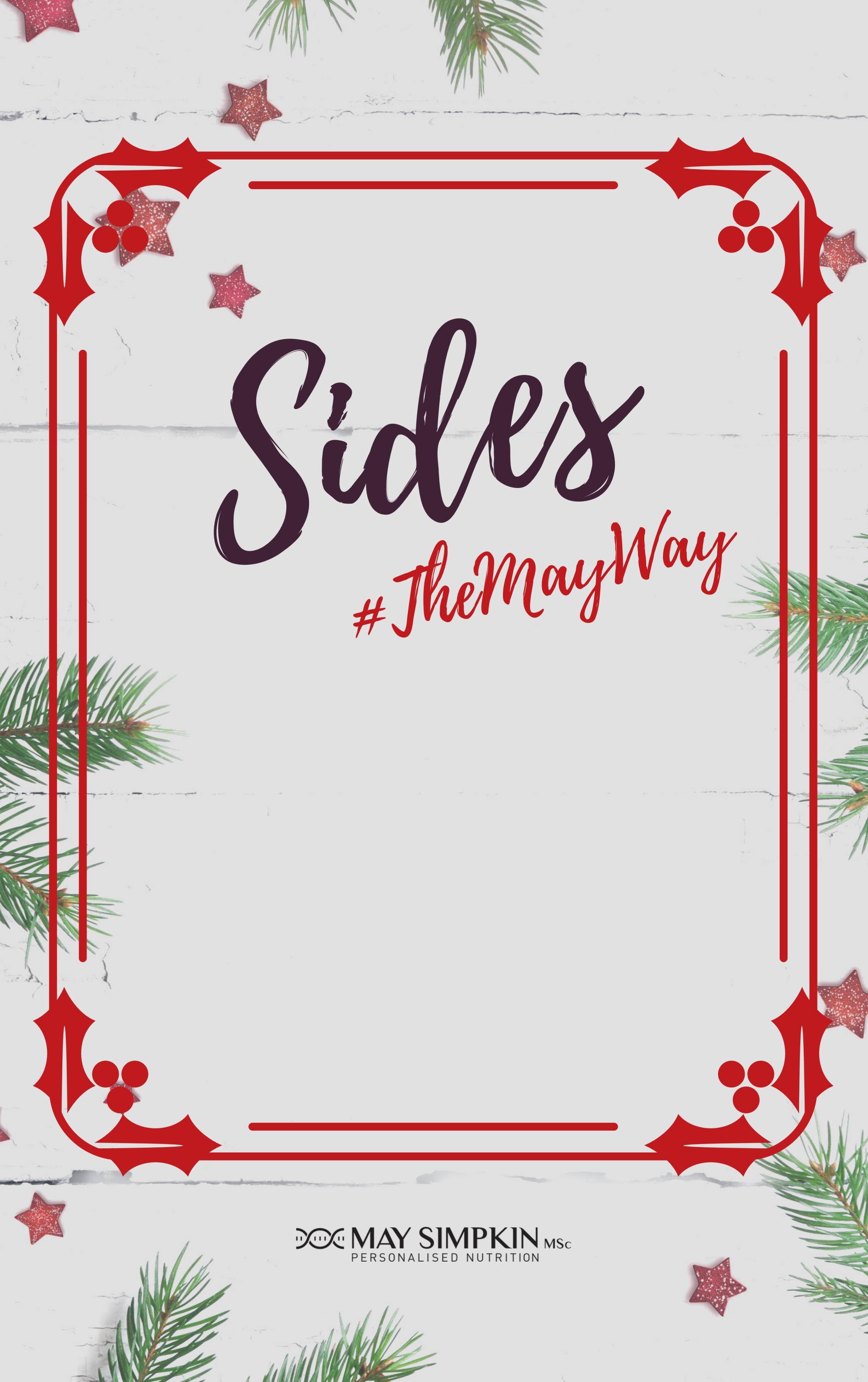
- ½ Butternut squash peeled and cut into 2cm cubes
- 300 g green Lentils
- 1 large Onion finely chopped
- 4 cm piece of fresh ginger grated
- 4 cloves Garlic crushed
- 1 tin chopped Tomatoes
- 1 tbsp ground Cumin
- 1 tbsp Turmeric
- 200 ml Water or more if necessary
- Pinch Cayenne Pepper optional
- 2-3 large handfuls of fresh spinach washed and chopped
- 1 tbsp Ghee (or Vegan Coconut Oil)
- 1 tsp salt

To Garnish (optional)

- 2 medium Red Onions finely sliced
- 1 tsp Ghee (or Vegan Coconut Oil)
- 1 tbsp Cumin seeds

ALTERNATIVES:

Butternut squash can easily be replaced with Sweet Potato or Pumpkin as a delicious alternative. This is even better the next day and ideal to keep in the fridge as a quick one dish supper after a busy day out and about with friends and family.



Sides

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Quinoa & Edamame Bean Salad with Almond Butter Dressing



YOU'LL NEED:

- 400g frozen Edamame Beans
- 200g Quinoa
- 2 carrots, shredded
- 1 small handful fresh Coriander, chopped

For the dressing:

- 2 tbsp Almond butter
- 1 tbsp Tamari Soy Sauce
- Juice of half a lemon or 2 tbsp Apple cider vinegar

NB: Substitute Tamari for any soy sauce or use Tamari for a gluten free version

HERE'S HOW:

- Cook Quinoa and Edamame beans (from frozen) and allow to cool.
- Meanwhile make the dressing; combine 2 tbsp almond butter, 1 tbsp Tamari soy sauce, 2 tbsp lemon juice/apple cider vinegar in a jar and shake until well mixed, adding enough water for the desired consistency.
- Adjust quantities to taste.
- In a large bowl, combine quinoa, edamame beans, shredded carrots, chopped coriander and pour over the dressing.
- Mix well & serve.

This salad is ideal made with quinoa that is still slightly warm, but not hot and best eaten on the same day.



Roasted Cauliflower, Green Lentil and Hazlenut Salad with a Tahini Chimichurri



YOU'LL NEED:

- 1 whole Cauliflower
- 4 tbsp Rapeseed oil
- 50g hazelnuts, roughly chopped
- 200g green lentils
- 1 large handful each of fresh flat leaf Parsley, Coriander and basil
- 4 cloves Garlic
- Juice of half a Lemon
- 4 tbsp Olive oil
- 1 tbsp Tahini
- Salt & Pepper to taste

HERE'S HOW:

- Cut cauliflower into small florets and the stalk into small chunks.
- Toss with rapeseed oil in a large bowl and arrange on a baking tray.
- Bake for 45 mins at 180 degrees until golden
- Chop hazelnuts and roast for 5-10 mins in the oven, checking until lightly toasted
- Cook green lentils in a pan of water for 15 mins until tender

Make Chimichurri:

- Finely chop flat leaf parsley, coriander and basil and combine with very finely chopped garlic, lemon juice, olive oil, tahini and salt and pepper. Adjust quantities as desired. Add a little water for a pouring consistency.
- Finally arrange the green lentils on a large serving dish and top with the roasted cauliflower and then drizzle the Tahini Chimichurri sauce on top.
- Drizzle with olive oil before serving





Desserts

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Orange and Dates No-bake Bites



YOU'LL NEED:

- 125g Dates
- 2 tbsp Flaked Almonds
- 2 tbsp Desiccated coconut
- 2 tbsp Ground almonds
- 1 tbsp sunflower seeds
- 1 tbsp Pumpkin seeds
- 1 tbsp Raw cacao powder (or 2 tbsp if not using Carob)
- 1 tbsp Carob powder (caffeine free, naturally sweet cacao alternative)
- 2 tbsp Coconut oil
- 1 tbsp Orange zest and/or 1/2 tsp Orange extract
- Pinch Himalayan pink salt

HERE'S HOW:

- Pulse the dates and orange zest in a food processor until blended and then add the flaked almonds, coconut, ground almonds, seeds and cacao & carob powder you have a coarse mixture. [If using Thermomix, 10 secs, speed 10]
- Add the coconut oil and blend until smooth and well combined.
- Using a spatula, spoon the mixture in a brownie tin and pat down with the back of a spoon.
- Top with desiccated coconut and continue to pat down until the mixture is firm and compact.
- Refrigerate for at least 30 mins.
- Cut into small bite-size squares before serving.
- These will store in the fridge for up to a week or in the freezer

Roasted Almond Dark Chocolate Bark



YOU'LL NEED:

- 200 g Raw Almonds
- 250 g Good Quality Dark Chocolate At least 80% Cacao solids
- 1 pinch Cayenne pepper
- 1 pinch sea salt
- 2 tbsp Seed mix any combination

This dark chocolate bark keeps really well, wrapped in the parchment paper in an airtight container in the fridge/freezer

HERE'S HOW:

- Line a small brownie tray with parchment paper, arrange the almonds in a single layer. Sprinkle with a little cayenne pepper and salt.
- Roast the almonds at 180 degrees for 20 mins until they are slightly darker but not burnt. Keep checking. Allow to cool
- Meanwhile break the chocolate into small pieces and melt over a "bain marie" and then pour the chocolate carefully over all the almonds
- Scatter the seed mix on the surface gently and allow to cool, before placing the whole tray in freezer for 20 mins
- Once it's completely set, remove from the freezer. Take the whole chocolate slab out of the tray and place on a solid wooden board, upside down with the paper on top.
- Using the end of a rolling pin, break the bark into rough uneven pieces.

AN EASY ACHIEVABLE APPROACH TO HEALTHY LIVING

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IT'S A JOURNEY TO KNOWLEDGE, JOY AND EMPOWERMENT



Please do not hesitate to get in touch
with any queries whatsoever:

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