

A HEALTHY SLICE OF HAPPINESS

An Irish foodie's (mostly healthy!) adventures in London Town

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Healthy eating to start the year right!

January 13, 2014 by Evie

I know that I might be out on a limb here, but I love January! Don't get me wrong, I am always sad when Christmas is over, it's definitely my favourite time of year. But there is something so refreshing and renewing about January. I always feel full of energy and excitement for what is to come as well as a renewed focus on health and fitness. I will have a couple of projects on the go this year when it comes to healthy eating. The first I am calling project lunchbox. I am going to try and bring healthy and exciting lunches with me to work every day that will prevent me from getting bored with my food. The other focus this new year is that I am trying to eat out less, which means I will be making more new recipes! Here is one of the first.

I was given the Ottolenghi cookbook as a Christmas gift and I have to say I was enraptured from the minute I opened the cover. The focus is on using simple and healthy ingredients and mixing them to create great flavours. These meatballs are fab and I've basically reduced the levels of oil used to make them slightly healthier. I hope you enjoy them as much as me!



Turkey and Sweetcorn Meatballs with Roasted Red Pepper Sauce:

Adapted from Ottolenghi Cookbook



Fast becoming my favourite dinner

Serves 4, 7pp per serving

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@lornaocallaghan try doing double-unders....tricky!!!!

1 month ago

@voiceUKbbc I'm obsessed with Sophie's shoes from tonight's show....anyone know who is designer?!

2 months ago

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Ingredients:

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- ▣ 100g sweetcorn kernels
- ▣ 3 slices of low calorie bread such as weight watchers
- ▣ 500g turkey breast mince (Its important that its breast as leg mince is fattier)
- ▣ 1 egg
- ▣ 4 spring onions, finely sliced
- ▣ 1 clove of garlic, crushed
- ▣ 2 tspn freshly chopped parsley
- ▣ 2 tspn cumin
- ▣ 1 tspn salt
- ▣ 1/2 tspn pepper

For the sauce



- ▣ 4 red peppers, halved and deseeded
- ▣ 1 tspn olive oil
- ▣ 1 tspn salt
- ▣ 25g fresh coriander
- ▣ 1 garlic clove, peeled
- ▣ 1 small chilli
- ▣ 1 tbsn sweet chili sauce
- ▣ 2 tbsn cider vinegar or white wine vinegar

1. Start the sauce first. Spray the peppers with low calorie cooking spray on both sides then spread on a baking tray. Bake in a 200 degree Celsius oven for 35-40 mins, until the skins have charred. Cover them with cling film and allow them to cool.
2. While all that's going on, get onto the meatballs. Heat a frying pan over a medium heat and pop in the corn kernels. Cook for a couple of minutes until slightly blackened. Removed from the heat and allow to cool.
3. Blitz bread using a processor or shred into breadcrumbs with a grater. Add these to a large bowl and the rest of the meatball ingredients, including the sweetcorn (make sure its cool.)
4. Get your hands in and mix everything really well. Now its time to get meatballing. I made meatballs slightly smaller than a golf ball and I ended up with 24 meatballs, 6 per person. It make it easier to roll them with wet hands as the meat doesn't stick so much.
5. Spray an oven tray with cooking spray and pop the meatballs onto it, evenly spaced. put this into your preheated (200 degrees c) oven for 15 – 20 mins. The meat should be firm but bounce back when you push on it.
6. While they are baking, finish the sauce by placing the peppers and all the other sauce ingredients into a blender. I am usually cautious with the chili, adding a little bit first and then tasting. Blitz this all together then adjust the seasoning. Heat this sauce on the hob for 5 mins, until warned through.

7. Finally, serve it all up together. I love this with some yummy brown rice and some green vegetables.

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Winter is here: Soups for the Soul

November 17, 2013 by [Evie](#)

When the weather turns colder and it is time to batten down the hatches, there is nothing I find more comforting than a proper bowl of homemade soup. Soup is such an easy and comforting thing to have bubbling away on the hob, and I struggle to justify tinned soup in anyway. All those additives and artificial flavourings are totally unnecessary when you can make a pot chock full of healthy vegetables taste so good, so easily. So I have this super easy and quick soup recipe for you, to prove how seriously simple, not to mind healthy, it can be to make at home.

“ Courgette and Parmesan Soup:



Pot of warming goodness

Serves 4, 2pp per person

- ▣ 1 tbsn olive oil
- ▣ 1 kg of courgettes, diced into chunks
- ▣ 2 cloves of garlic, crushed
- ▣ 500ml good chicken stock
- ▣ 2 tbsp fat free fromage frais or 0%fat greek yoghurt
- ▣ 50g fresh Parmesan, grated

1. Heat a large, heavy based saucepan and add the olive oil to the pan.
2. Once the oil is heated, add the garlic and courgette to the pan. Cook for 3-5 minutes until the courgette has started to soften.
3. Add the chicken stock to the pot, bring to the boil and

cook for approx 10 minutes, until the courgette is cooked.

4. Take the pan off the heat, season with salt and pepper and the blitz the soup with a hand blender.
5. Stir in the yoghurt and then blitz again. Stir in the Parmesan and stir until it has melted into the soup. Taste the soup and season with salt and pepper.

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A Surprise and Swedish Cinnamon Buns

October 6, 2013 by Evie

Hey Ho Everybody!

I know its been shockingly long since I've written to you guys! I promise I have a very good reason! A month ago today, on a seemingly ordinary Thursday evening, I walked along the beach here in Whitstable to the best evening of my life! My boy was waiting for me on the beach on sunset and got down on one knee. It was a total surprise but we couldn't be happier!

So naturally, the last few weeks have been a whirlwind of celebrating and letting it all sink in. We were on holiday for a week too so I have shamefully neglected cooking and blogging. So today, instead of a healthy recipe, you are getting a very naughty one....only because you have been so patient! These buns are fab for a few reasons. Firstly, they are yum! But the main reason is that you can make them up the night before you want them and leave them in the fridge. The next morning, take them out of the fridge for 30 mins and then pop them in your oven for 25 mins.



Swedish Cinnamon Buns:



Gooey cinnamon buns

Serves 12, 10pp per bun:

For the bun dough

- 240ml milk
- 80g butter
- 1x7g pack of fast action yeast
- 110g caster sugar

- ▣ 600 – 700g plain flour
- ▣ 1 Tspn salt
- ▣ 3 eggs

For the filling:



- ▣ 90g sugar (I used half caster and half brown)
- ▣ 110g butter (Its easier if this is left out of the fridge for an hour before you use it)
- ▣ 2 Tablespoons cinnamon

1. Warm the milk in a saucepan until its starting to bubble but dont let it boil. Add the 80g butter and take the pan off the heat. The butter will melt but you want the milk to cool too – Wait until its blood temperature, lukewarm to the touch.
2. In a large bowl, add the milk mixture and then sprinkle the yeast over it. Allow to stand for a minute. Add the rest of the ingredients to the bowl, starting with 500g of flour and mix gradually. You can do this by hand or in a food mixer.
3. Gradually add the extra flour as you feel you need it, you may not need it all. I use about 650g. It depends on how big your eggs are. Once it forms a smooth ball, its time to knead.
4. Here is where a machine comes in handy. Use a dough hook and need on low for 5 minutes or need by hand for 10 minutes until you have a smooth springy dough.
5. Place in a lightly oiled mixing bowl and allow to rise for 1 hour.
6. Meanwhile, make the filling. Mix the softened butter, sugar and cinnamon in a bowl until you get a smooth paste.
7. After an hour, knock back the dough to get the air out of it. Roll out to a large rectangle about 1cm thick. Spread the cinnamon paste evenly across the dough and roll up tightly until you have a long sausage.
8. Slice the roll into 12 even pieces and spread these evenly across a lined baking tray. Cover loosely with cling film. Here you have options. You can either pop these in the fridge for tomorrow morning or you can allow them to rise for 45 mins to and hour and then bake.
9. If you have put them in the fridge overnight, take them out about 30 minutes before you want to use them to allow them to reach room temp. They will have risen in the fridge slowly. Preheat your oven to 180 degrees celsius. after 30 minutes, remove the cling film and pop your buns in the oven.
10. Mine took about 25 minutes. Towards the end of baking, mine were starting to brown too quickly so I covered them with tinfoil for the final ten minutes.
11. When they are ready, take them out of the oven. You can eat these warm as they are but I like to drizzle a little icing made from icing sugar and water.

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Spicy Lamb Steaks with Tabbouleh

August 27, 2013 by Evie

I love the Hairy Bikers! They are absolutely nuts but fab! As you guys know from previous posts, these two larger than life northerners embarked on a weight loss journey and did very well! I have given you some recipes from their original cookbook and now, due to the success of the first, they have a new book out! Its called Hairy Dieters: Eat for Life and its great. This is one of the first recipes I tried from the book. I love lamb, but roasting a whole leg of lamb for just two people seems a waste. So this suited me down to the ground. Its really tasty. I made a little mint yoghurt to go with it and it will definately go on the regular dinners list! The salad is great to have in the fridge and have a spoon with lunches so I make lots but this amount has six servings.



Spicy Lamb Steaks with Tabbouleh:

Adapted from "The Hairy Dieters: Eat for Life"

Serves 2, 9pp per serving



Spicy Lamb Steaks

- ▣ 2 lean lamb steaks (around 100g each) – Waitrose sell very lean lamb steaks but you can always trip regular lamb steaks
- ▣ Juice of half a lemon
- ▣ 1/2 tsp cumin
- ▣ 1/2 tsp ground coriander
- ▣ 1/2 tsp crushed dried chillies
- ▣ sea salt flakes
- ▣ 1 tsp olive oil
- ▣ Tabbouleh:
 - ▣ 200g dried bulgur wheat
 - ▣ 1/4 medium cucumber cut into chunks
 - ▣ 1/2 medium red onion, finely sliced
 - ▣ 1/2 red pepper, cut into chunks
 - ▣ 2 tbsp freshly chopped mint
 - ▣ 2 tbsp freshly chopped parsley
 - ▣ 2 crushed garlic cloves
 - ▣ juice of half a lemon

- 📏 1 tspn olive oil
- 📏 Salt and pepper

1. Stick your lamb steaks in a ziplock sandwich bag. Add the cumin, coriander, lemon juice and chillies. Season with salt and pepper and then shake about the bag a bit to ensure the marinade coats the lamb steaks. Its best to do this a few hours in advance but leave them for at least 15 mins!
2. Meanwhile get the tabbouleh ready. Add the bulgur wheat to a small saucepan and stir in boiling water from the kettle and some salt. Ensure the grain has about half an inch of water above the top of it so that it doesnt dry out. Bring back to the boil and cook for 10 minutes.
3. Put the cucumber, pepper and onion in a salad bowl. When the bulgur is soft, drain it and run it under cold water. Shake out excess water then add to the salad bowl. Add salt and pepper, crushed garlic, lemon juice and the olive oil. Dont forget the fresh herbs. Toss well.
4. Heat a griddle pan or non-stick frying pan and add about 1 tsp oil. When the pan is quite hot place the lamb steaks in so that the sear. Cook for 2-3 minutes on each side, depending on how well cooked you like it. Remove from the pan and allow to rest for 5 minutes.
5. Slice lamb steaks and serve with the tabbouleh. Chop some fresh parsley for on top and I like some mint yoghurt too. Just stir 1 tspn of mint sauce into 2 tablespoons 0% fat greek yoghurt.

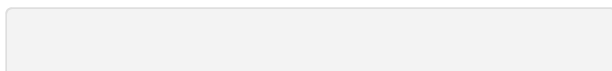
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Healthy, Hearty Cassoulet

August 13, 2013 by Evie

Cassoulet is one of those hearty French dishes that always reminds that the heart and soul of French cooking is rustic food made with the best ingredients. This is pretty much the opposite of haute cuisine, but that's what I love about French food. You can find perfectly presented dishes with 30 or 40 steps in the presentation but to me, a one pot of cassoulet made with the best ingredients is just as special! This is best served with some crusty bread and a good glass of red wine. It only improves if made the day before! The key to this is using a small amount of the best sausages you can find as well as decent red wine. It may seem a lot of ingredients but once you have got them all ready to go, its a case of adding them to one pot at the right time and that is about it!

“ Cassoulet:





Yummy Cassoulet

Serves 6, 6pp per person

- ▣ 1 tspn good olive oil
- ▣ 1 large onion, sliced
- ▣ 6 (around 250g) really good quality sausages, cut into three or 4 pieces each (I got some from my butchers)
- ▣ 2 chicken breasts, sliced into chunks
- ▣ 3 or 4 medium carrots, peeled and cut into chunks.
- ▣ 2 celery sticks, cut into sizeable chunks
- ▣ 2 garlic cloves, crushed or finely chopped
- ▣ 2 rashers of bacon or bacon medallions, cut into small pieces
- ▣ 2 tins chopped tomato
- ▣ 1 tbsp tomato puree or tomato paste
- ▣ small glass good red wine (about 120-150 ml....you can use the rest for the chef!)
- ▣ 100ml water
- ▣ 1 tspn sugar or sweetener
- ▣ 1 bay leaf
- ▣ 1 tspn dried oregano
- ▣ 1 tspn chilli flakes
- ▣ 200g chickpeas (the large cans have 400g but only 200g when drained)
- ▣ 200g cannellini beans or butter beans (same as above)

1. Heat olive oil in a deep casserole and add the sausage chunks. brown the sausages on all sides and add the onions. Fry these until slightly coloured and softened but not burnt!
2. Next fry off the chicken breast pieces until they are browned on each side. Stir in the garlic and bacon and cook for 2-3 minutes.
3. Add the carrot and celery and stir well so they get covered with the juices in the bottom of the pan. Stir in the tomatoes, tomato paste, red wine, water and sugar. Stir well and then add the bay, oregano and chilli.
4. Last but not least add the chickpeas and beans and give everything a good stir. Bring to the boil and either simmer for 45 mins or pop into an oven at 180 degrees celsius for 45mins.
5. After 45 mins, test the thickness of the sauce, I find I need to add 100-150ml of water to the mix to make a

nice silky sauce.

6. Serve in a deep bowl with some crusty French bread and some of that leftover vino!

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Fasolatha: Summer Bean and Vegetable Soup

July 29, 2013 by Evie

Summer time is usually a time when soup is not at the fore front of anyones mind. But I love fresh and flavoursome soups in warm weather with some crusty bread for dipping and maybe a nice glass of wine. This soup is something I picked up when I was living out in Greece a few years ago. It is yummy and healthy and best of all, is really cheap to make!



Fasolatha: Greek Bean and Vegetable Soup:

Serves 4, 1pp per person (just soup...I wish that included bread and cheese!)



Great sprinkled with cheese. Dont forget crusty bread to dunk!

- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 clove of garlic
- 400g tin cannellini beans
- 2 sticks of celery, finely chopped
- 2 carrots, finely chopped
- 1 tin of tomatoes
- 1 Tablespoon tomato puree
- Tablespoon of good olive oil
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano
- 100ml good chicken stock
- Salt and pepper to taste

1. Heat the olive oil in a saucepan. Add the onions and a sprinkle of salt and fry for a few minutes until soft.
The salt helps the onions to soften without colouring.
2. Add the garlic and fry for a minute or two more,

browning it slightly.

3. Next stir in the chopped celery and carrots, ensuring that they are nicely coated with olive oil. Allow them to soften for 5 minutes.
4. Add the cannellini beans, tomato puree and tinned tomato. Stir well to ensure everything is well blended.
5. Sprinkle in the oregano then bring the pot to the boil. Simmer for 30 minutes until the vegetables are well cooked.
6. It is important to taste now. Adjust the seasoning to your liking. I sometimes find I need a sprinkle of sugar to take the edge off the tomato flavour.
7. If the broth is quite thick (which I often find is the case), stir in chicken stock. Cook for a further 15 mins and you are ready to eat!

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Paprika Chicken Stew

July 1, 2013 by Evie

I love paprika, it can brighten up a dish with just a small sprinkle of the vibrant red powder! Smoked paprika is my favourite, it brings a wonderful flavour that can transport me to Spanish holidays! This is such a simple dinner, I've adjusted it from a Hairy Dieters recipe and it went down a treat with my other half.



Paprika Chicken Stew:



Yummy paprika chicken stew

Serves 2, 6pp per serving

- ▣ Low fat cooking spray
- ▣ 1 medium onion, finely chopped.
- ▣ 4 skinless and boneless chicken thighs
- ▣ 1 clove garlic, crushed
- ▣ 1/2 tspn smoked paprika (I used 1 tspn because I love the flavour)
- ▣ 200g chopped tomatoes or passata
- ▣ 200ml good chicken stock

- 📦 1 bay leaf
- 📦 1 large yellow pepper, cut into chunks
- 📦 1 stick celery, sliced
- 📦 1 tspn mixed herbs
- 📦 1 tspn cornflour
- 📦 1 tspn water

1. Heat a deep frying pan or casserole dish and spray with cooking spray.
2. Add the onions to the pan and cook for approx 10 mins until softened.
3. Meanwhile trim each of the chicken thighs of remaining fat and cut each one in half.
4. Add the chicken to the pan and cook for 3 or 4 mins a side so they are lightly browned.
5. Stir in the garlic and paprika, making sure chicken is coated in paprika.
6. Stir in the tomatoes and stock. Add the herbs, bring to the boil and cover the pan. Simmer for 20 minutes.
7. After 20 mins, add the peppers and celery to the pan and recover. Cook for approx 30 minutes until the vegetables are soft and chicken tender.
8. In a cup, mix the cornflour and water to make a paste. Add this to the pan and cook for a final 3 or 4 minutes until the sauce has thickened.
9. Serve with rice or potatoes and some vegetables.
Enjoy!

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