



*Freshwell*  
**LOW CARB PROJECT**

— REAL FOOD, LOW CARB, GOOD HEALTH —

4 week Rotating Meal Planner

Dr Kim Andrews

# The Freshwell Low Carb Project Meal Planner

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## The Freshwell Low Carb Project Meal Planner

Hello there! You will have decided to pick up this meal planner if you are considering trialling a low carbohydrate lifestyle. I'm therefore going to assume you are already aware of some of the health benefits low carb eating can bring.

This is a meal planner designed to help those people starting a low carb lifestyle. I decided to produce it as I find that many people give up after a few weeks as they aren't sure what to eat or they start to find "meat and veg" boring.

Comments I've heard include: "I caved on day 3 as I just didn't know what to eat so I had some bread" or "I am so sick of yoghurt or eggs for breakfast" – the second one always makes me smile a little, as in my experience, most people have spent almost all of their life eating cereal or toast at breakfast time.....

This meal planner is not supposed to be taken as gospel – it is here to provide people with some tasty ideas and options that I have discovered along the way - when they are stuck in a rut, or when they don't know where to start. By all means have soy spaghetti every day or make larger amounts so the same meal can be eaten two nights running. Or if you can't get away from sandwiches for lunch then make a large batch of Fat Head Dough rolls on a Sunday and keep them in an airtight container to use for lunches throughout the week. Or if you have meals you already enjoy, make a few tweaks to remove the carbs and fill up on the good stuff!

I have only included recipes that are not commonly made or that need 'low carb' adjustments. For example, I have assumed that most people can make a basic Bolognese sauce or chilli con carne, and are able to cook a steak or roast a piece of meat. Even if you can't – have a look on Google as these dishes are inherently low carb in themselves so any preferred recipe will suffice.

If you're low on time you can make quick and easy store-bought substitutions, e.g. use ready-made falafel, use chopped up high quality sausages instead of meatballs, buy ready-made meatballs, buy already grated cheese. Every little helps when you are making most meals from scratch.

For some lunch options my meal planner suggests home-made soup. I haven't included any particular recipes as you are free to make your favourites. Options might include broccoli and stilton, cream of chicken, cream of vegetable, roast cauliflower and parmesan, cream of mushroom or tomato and feta. Wherever possible try to avoid canned soups as they tend to include sugar amongst a dearth of other ingredients. If you do need something quick then some of the bought fresh soups would be a better option – just check the ingredients for sugar and keep the carbohydrate content low.

All recipes can be served with vegetables of your choice. Root vegetables such as swede, turnip, squashes and parsnips are quite starchy and consequently contain more carbohydrate so avoid when possible or only have a small portion. Try and stick to vegetables grown over ground – brassicas are a good choice and include cauliflower, cabbage, kale, broccoli and brussels sprouts. Bell

peppers, asparagus, mushrooms, courgette, spinach, green beans, cucumber and salad greens are also all excellent options.

On Sundays you will notice that I have only suggested two meal options. I have presumed that people may get up a bit later on Sunday, so a late breakfast/brunch, followed by an evening meal should suffice. This will also help you see that three meals a day isn't always necessary and it's ok to skip breakfast if you are not hungry.

If you have diabetes you may want to avoid the chickpea based recipes in this planner. Although grain free and less processed than usual flours, chickpeas are still moderately high in carbohydrates so could send up blood sugars higher than desired. In these cases have guacamole instead of hummus, and use fat head dough to make pizza instead of a soca base. Give the nachos a miss and try the seed crackers instead.

I am not vegan or vegetarian but I am sure that a lot of these recipes can be substituted with fish or possibly meat free alternatives such as tofu or Quorn– if you come up with any excellent meal options that would work for a vegan or vegetarian diet then do pass them on to me as I would love to hear about tried and tested recipes that I can continually update this meal planner with.

I have included 4 weeks of meal planning. Of course, any day can be substituted with another if you are too busy to prep meals on certain days of the week. On some days, the following days lunch revolves around leftovers from dinner the night before (specifically the fat head dough rolls and soca pizza) so take that into account if moving days around.

I would suggest you plan your meals for the week ahead and then shop accordingly. Initially when starting out on low carb you definitely have to plan ahead as often you will need ingredients that you won't usually stock in your fridge or cupboards.....and that's a danger point for caving in and hitting the carbs....

Whenever possible, start by clearing your cupboards of carbs like pasta, rice and bread, and remove the old treats like milk chocolate, sweets, crisps and biscuits. That helps to prevent temptation and falling at the first hurdle....

Some people experience “keto flu” when they first start low carbing. This usually happens to people who have been previously eating a pretty carb laden diet. Symptoms may include nausea, constipation, headaches, fatigue and sugar cravings. These symptoms usually start after 24-48 hours of reducing carbs and are over within a few days to two weeks, up to a month at most. To an extent, these symptoms can show how carb laden your diet was previously and should spur you on. If you can get through this stage you will be rewarded with a new mental clarity and high energy levels. In turn your taste buds will change and you will stop craving carbs and get off the rollercoaster of sugar peaks and troughs.

You do not need to measure out portions or count calories when following a low carb lifestyle. I would generally recommend that you eat until you are satisfied and then stop. DO NOT EAT if you are not hungry, even if it is a mealtime. Ultimately, longer term, most low carbers find that two meals a day works well for them and they tend to skip breakfast as they are still full of protein and fat from the night before. Intermittent fasting or time restricted eating are proven ways to lose

weight and allow your liver to detoxify – if you can try to stick to an 8 hour window of eating e.g. 10am to 6pm and then fast for 16 hours, you will be doing well.

I was lucky enough not to be overweight, take any medications or suffer any illnesses when I decided to try a low carb lifestyle. However, when I learnt how much sugar my body was converting starchy carbohydrates into and the inflammatory effect of sugar on my body, I knew I had to make the change. I have never looked back. My young children eat the same meals as us and my husband no longer needs antacid and allergy medications (which he previously took daily). My own father is 4 stone lighter and no longer has high blood pressure or diabetes.

Don't let anyone tell you that carbs are needed or necessary. They are not. Cutting carbohydrates will not harm you and will not cause diabetes or any other disease process. Cutting carbs will make you lighter, healthier and more energetic – you don't have to take my word for this – try it.

If you do suffer with any illnesses and/or take any prescribed medications, please ensure you talk to your doctor before making any major lifestyle changes including a low carb approach. I am unable to give medical advice to anyone who is not a patient at Freshwell Health Centre.

Please do let me know your success stories and any recipes that you have tried and tested and would recommend to others.

Good Luck and Enjoy!

Dr Kim Andrews

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## Low Carb Pantry Essentials

I'm only listing those items unlikely to already be in your kitchen cupboards.

In most of the recipes, herbs and spices can be omitted without causing any major issues.

Please only use the following fats – extra virgin olive oil, light olive oil (to deep fry), butter, lard, coconut oil. Do not use vegetable oil including margarine, corn oil, sunflower oil or rapeseed oil.

Use full fat milk and full fat Greek or natural yoghurt only.

Most large supermarkets will stock these items.

I find it easier to buy some items like erythritol online.

If you live in the Braintree area there is an excellent Asian cook shop on Fairfield Road in Braintree town opposite the Wetherspoons pub. It is a real treasure trove of ingredients and they sell almond flour, chickpea flour, psyllium husk and coconut oil/flour as stock items. You may have to ask when inside as the ingredients whereabouts isn't always obvious!

I think Aldi sells the best bean pasta alternatives. They sell soy bean spaghetti, mung bean fettuccini and black bean spaghetti in boxes. They usually sit with the dried pasta or in a special health section. Sainsbury's and Waitrose also regularly stock pasta alternatives.

- Full fat Greek yoghurt
- Crème Fraiche
- Grated mozzarella cheese
- Almond flour (large supermarkets, Holland and Barrett, Asian Cookshop)
- Almond meal/ground almonds (in baking section of most supermarkets)
- Erythritol (large supermarkets, Amazon, eBay)
- Coconut flour (Lidl, Aldi)
- Coconut oil
- Soy Bean Spaghetti (Aldi, Sainsbury's, Waitrose)
- Mung Bean Fettuccini (Aldi, Sainsbury's, Waitrose)
- Dark chocolate – minimum 85% cocoa solids
- Cacao or Cocoa powder
- Chickpea flour- also known as besan or Gram flour (in most large supermarkets in the Indian or International section)
- Apple Cider Vinegar – preferably with The Mother (Aldi, Home Bargains, Holland and Barrett)
- Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- Pumpkin seeds
- Sunflower seeds
- Sesame seeds
- Flaxseed
- Psyllium husk (online or Asian Cookshop)
- Garlic powder

## My 10 Low Carb Mottos

1. Only eat when hungry – not when a mealtime dictates it.
2. Breakfast is not the most important meal of the day – only Mr Kellogg said that (and I think he had an ulterior motive!)
3. Don't snack - it's unnecessary and probably means you didn't eat enough fat and protein at your last meal.
4. If you are not hungry when you wake, skip breakfast and try to have a brunch followed by an evening meal.
5. When in doubt eat eggs or meat (aim to limit meat preserved with nitrites such as cured sandwich meats, salami and bacon).
6. Eat large amounts less often.
7. If it has ingredients on it, don't eat it!
8. Avoid low fat diet options whenever possible – such as yoghurts, mayonnaise, cream cheese, cottage cheese. Always pick full fat (people often struggle with this one as it goes against everything they have previously been told about healthy eating).
9. Avoid processed snack products claiming to be low carb such as protein bars, smoothies or shakes – they have a ridiculously large ingredients list and are often still quite high in “natural sugars”.
10. Eat food that you buy as it was originally produced/as nature intended it - and you can't go far wrong!

**Eat. Real. Food.**

## Drinks

You can have unlimited tea and coffee. Limit milky drinks like lattes and cappuccinos to maximum one a day and use full fat milk. If you can't drink tea or coffee unsweetened, use erythritol.

- Water (sugar free squash is acceptable)
- Wine – enjoy a few glasses per week
- Spirits with diet/slimline mixers
- AVOID fruit juice, smoothies, cider, beer
- When having milk, try to choose full fat milk as it contains less sugar and will keep you fuller for longer

## Snacks and Desserts

Wherever possible try not to snack.

If you are peckish then choose one of these snacks as opposed to carb laden treats.

It is also nice to be able to have a dessert after dinner with family or friends every now and then!

- 3 squares dark chocolate – minimum 85% cocoa solids
- Small handful of nuts – Brazil, almond, pistachio, walnuts, macadamia, peanuts
- Small bowl of berries – strawberries, blackberries, blueberries, raspberries
- Small bowl of full fat Greek yoghurt
- Sugar free jelly (made from a packet) – can serve with cream or yoghurt if you wish
- Slices of apple or pear with cheese
- Apple or pear
- Small bowl of olives
- Aubergine fudge brownies (see recipe)
- Fudge popsicle (see recipe)
- Butter Pecan Cheesecake (see recipe)
- Seed crackers (see recipe) with hummus, guacamole or peanut butter
- Shortbread biscuit (see recipe)



# Four Week Meal Planner

WEEK ONE (see recipes in bold)							
Meal	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<b>Breakfast</b>	Greek yoghurt with blueberries	Scrambled egg with fried mushrooms	Blueberry <b>Microwave Muffin</b>	<b>Home Made Granola</b> with Greek yoghurt	Scrambled egg with smoked salmon	Halloumi with fried eggs and mushrooms	Fry Up! (No toast, hash browns or fried bread)
<b>Lunch</b>	Cheese and ham omelette	<b>Kim's Basic Salad</b> with a tin of tuna	Cheese, antipasti and olives with <b>Seed Crackers</b>	Left over <b>Soca Pizza</b>	<b>Kim's Basic Salad</b> with feta cheese	2-3 high quality sausages with ½ tin of reduced sugar baked beans	
<b>Dinner</b>	<b>Giant Meatballs in Ragu</b> with broccoli	Falafel and <b>Hummus</b> with a <b>Garlic Yoghurt Dip</b>	<b>Soca Pizza</b>	Steak cooked in butter with kale cooked in pan juices	<b>Toad in the Hole</b>	<b>Moussaka with Feta Topping</b>	Roast Chicken with vegetables and <b>Kim's Cauliflower Cheese</b>

WEEK TWO (see recipes in bold)							
Meal	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<b>Breakfast</b>	Greek yoghurt with raspberries	Scrambled eggs with tinned plum tomatoes	<b>Home Made Granola</b> with Greek yoghurt	Raspberry <b>Microwave Muffin</b>	3 or 4 boiled eggs dipped in mayonnaise	Scrambled egg with bacon	Fry Up! (no toast, fried bread or hash browns)
<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Kim's Basic Salad</b> with boiled eggs and olives	Savoury <b>Microwave Muffin</b>	Cheese, antipasti and olives with <b>Seed Crackers</b>	1 or 2 <b>Fat Head Dough Buns</b> with filling of your choice	<b>Kim's Basic Salad</b> with a tin of tuna	Home-made soup and an apple	
<b>Dinner</b>	<b>Soybean Spaghetti and Meatballs</b>	<b>Chicken Traybake</b>	Beef burgers with <b>Fat Head Dough Buns</b>	Steak cooked in butter with cavolo nero cooked in pan juices	<b>Lamb Koftas</b> with <b>Baked Aubergine</b> and <b>Tzatziki</b>	Cottage pie with a <b>Celeriac Mash</b> top	Roast meat of your choice with vegetables and <b>Kim's Cauliflower Cheese</b>

WEEK THREE (see recipes in bold)							
Meal	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<b>Breakfast</b>	Greek yoghurt with pecans and blueberries	Scrambled egg with fried mushrooms	Blueberry <b>Microwave Muffin</b>	<b>Home Made Granola</b> with Greek yoghurt	Boiled Eggs with Halloumi soldiers	Scrambled egg and sausages	Fry Up! (no toast, fried bread or hash browns)
<b>Lunch</b>	Savoury <b>Microwave Muffin</b>	<b>Seed Crackers</b> with Hummus or Guacamole	<b>Kim's Basic Salad</b> with feta and olives	Left over <b>Soca Pizza</b>	Cheese and ham omelette	<b>Kim's Basic Salad</b> with a tin of tuna	
<b>Dinner</b>	<b>Carbonara Fettuccini</b>	Lamb steaks with <b>Baked Aubergine</b> and Tzatziki	<b>Soca Pizza</b>	Falafel and <b>Hummus</b> with a <b>Garlic Yoghurt Dip</b>	<b>Chicken Traybake</b>	<b>Moussaka with Feta Topping</b>	Roast meat of your choice with veg and <b>Kim's Cauliflower Cheese</b>

WEEK FOUR (see recipes in bold)							
Meal	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<b>Breakfast</b>	Greek yoghurt with raspberries and desiccated coconut	Scrambled egg with tinned plum tomatoes	Raspberry <b>Microwave Muffin</b>	<b>Home Made Granola</b> with Greek yoghurt	3-4 boiled eggs dipped in mayonnaise	Halloumi with fried eggs and mushrooms	Poached eggs with smoked salmon and avocado
<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Kim's Basic Salad</b> with Halloumi	Home-made soup of choice with an apple	Cheese, antipasti and olives with <b>Seed Crackers</b>	1 or 2 <b>Fat Head Dough Buns</b> with filling of your choice	Savoury <b>Microwave Muffin</b>	<b>Kim's Basic Salad</b> with tin of tuna	
<b>Dinner</b>	<b>Soybean Spaghetti and Meatballs</b>	Steak cooked in butter with kale and mushrooms fried in juices	Beef burgers with <b>Fat Head Dough Buns</b>	<b>Toad in the Hole</b>	<b>Giant Meatballs in Ragu</b> with broccoli	Chilli Con Carne with <b>Chickpea Nachos</b>	Roast Meat of your choice with veg and <b>Kim's Cauliflower Cheese</b>

# Recipes

## Calzone

Serves 2-3

- 170g grated mozzarella
  - 4 tablespoons/55g cream cheese
  - 6 tablespoons/50g coconut flour (use 55g flax meal if you don't like the hint of coconut flavour)
  - Filling options
    - Meatballs in a tomato sauce (meat or Quorn would work) (see recipe for meatballs and spaghetti or buy ready-made if you prefer)
    - Tuna with onion and red pepper
1. Melt the mozzarella and cream cheese in the microwave for 1 minute.
  2. Mix and add the coconut flour. Stir until the dough is well combined.
  3. Preheat the oven to 180C.
  4. Roll out the dough thinly between two sheets of greaseproof paper.
  5. Add the filling to the centre of the dough and top with cheese of your choice (cheddar and mozzarella both work well).
  6. Fold over to make a pouch and seal the dough gently with your fingers.
  7. Using a sharp knife poke some holes in the dough.
  8. Bake for 18-20 mins or until golden brown and firm to touch.
  9. Cool for a few minutes and enjoy whilst hot or place in an airtight container for up to 5 days.

Enjoy with a side salad.

## Fettuccini Carbonara

Serves 4

- 6 eggs
- 2 packets of smoked streaky bacon
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup grated Parmesan
- Black pepper
- Salt to taste
- 2 tbsp butter
- 300ml double cream
- 1 lemon
- 1-2 packets dried pasta. I prefer this with mung bean fettuccini from Aldi, but soy spaghetti would also work.

1. Grate a whole lemon rind and set aside.
2. Cook the bacon – grill, bake or fry it (keep the cooking liquid).
3. Beat the eggs and stir in the cream. Add the chopped butter and Parmesan cheese.
4. Stir until well combined.
5. Chop the bacon into small pieces and add to the mixture with any of the leftover cooking juices.
6. Add salt and pepper.
7. Cook the pasta as per the instructions on the box.
8. Drain the pasta, do not rinse.
9. Return the pasta to the pan and place on lowest heat.
10. Mix the lemon rind into the wet mixture.
11. Tip the mixture into the pan of drained pasta.
12. Stir once and turn off the heat.
13. Keep stirring until the mixture reaches a thick gloopy consistency.

Serve immediately. Grate fresh Parmesan over the dish and enjoy.

You can also add petit pois or peas to the cooking pasta to serve combined with the sauce or serve them separately on the side.



## Celeriac Mash

- 1 celeriac
  - 50- 100g of butter
  - 100ml single cream
  - 1 clove of minced garlic
  - salt to taste
1. Peel the celeriac and cut into 2-3 cm chunks
  2. Place in a suitable size saucepan, cover with water and season with salt
  3. Bring to the boil and simmer for 15-20 minutes. The chunks will be cooked when a knife easily slices through them
  4. Drain the water and return the celeriac to the pan with the butter and mash until smooth. Add cream and garlic. Season to taste

## Chicken Tray Bake

Serves 4

- 1 small sliced onion
- 1 medium sliced red pepper
- 1-2 medium sliced courgettes
- 1 head of broccoli cut into florets
- ½ small butternut squash, cubed
- 8 chicken thighs, with skin and bone
- 1 tablespoon butter
- ¼ cup (60mls) water
- 2 tbsps (30mls) fresh lemon juice
- Salt and black pepper
- Basil, oregano, garlic powder

1. Preheat oven to 200C.
2. Place onion and veg into a baking dish. I use the veg above but ultimately you can use any veg that you enjoy roasted.
3. Pat the chicken thighs dry and season with salt and pepper.
4. Heat butter in a large frying pan and add the chicken thighs skin side down and cook in batches for about 5 minutes or until the skin is golden and crispy.
5. Turn over and cook for another minute.
6. Place the chicken skin side up on top of the vegetables.
7. Pour the water into the frying pan to clean the pan and pour the resulting fluid over the veg and chicken in the tray.
8. Drizzle with the lemon juice and sprinkle with herbs and garlic powder.
9. Bake for 20-25 minutes, tossing halfway through.

Serve when hot and crispy.

## Chickpea Nachos

Perfect with chilli con carne or as a cracker to use with home-made guacamole or hummus.

Makes about 50 chips.

- 250g chickpea flour (also known as gram flour or besan flour)
  - 1 ½ tsp fine salt
  - 1tsp freshly cracked black pepper
  - 1tsp baking powder
  - 60ml melted coconut oil
  - 4-6 tbsp warm water
1. Sift the chickpea flour, salt, pepper and baking powder into a large mixing bowl.
  2. Add the coconut oil and mix with hands until the dough is crumbly.
  3. Add 60mls warm water and stir until the dough comes together. Add more water if needed. Do not overwork the dough.
  4. Preheat oven to 175C.
  5. Place the ball of dough between two sheets of greaseproof paper and roll out as thinly as possible. The thinner the dough, the lighter and crispier your nachos will be.
  6. Remove the top layer of greaseproof paper and score the dough into triangles.
  7. Slide the baking paper and dough onto a baking tray and place in the oven.
  8. Bake for 10-12 minutes until the nachos are golden around the edges.

Enjoy warm or will store in an airtight container for up to two weeks.

## Fat Head Dough Buns

Makes 4-6 buns or 2 pizza bases

- 1 ½ cup almond flour
- 1 tbsp baking powder
- 2 ½ cup grated mozzarella cheese
- 2 tbsp cream cheese
- 2 large eggs beaten
- 7g dry yeast
- ½ tbsp sesame seeds (optional)
- 1 tbsp erythritol

1. Preheat oven to 190C
2. Mix dry ingredients – almond flour, yeast, erythritol, baking powder – and set aside.
3. Put the cream cheese and grated mozzarella in a glass bowl and microwave in 30 second intervals until the cheese is evenly melted. Stir in between. Usually takes 1 min 30 secs to 2 mins.
4. Pour dry ingredients into the microwaved cheese. Mix with wet hands or a spatula and then add the cold eggs. Mix until a ball of dough forms.
5. Divide the dough into 6 parts and place balls on to a baking sheet lined with greaseproof paper.
6. If you wish, sprinkle sesame seeds on top.
7. Bake for 10-12 mins until the top is golden brown.
8. Allow to cool and then slice in half. Toast lightly if preferred.
9. Serve with a hamburger or cheeseburger or can be used like a basic bread bun in a lunchbox with a filling of your choice.

Keep in an airtight container for up to 4 days.

You can also roll the dough between greaseproof paper sheets and serve as a pizza base (a lower carb option than soca pizza, hence better if you have diabetes).

## Giant Meatballs in Ragu

Serves 4-6

- 1kg beef mince
- 500g minced pork
- 1 egg
- 2 medium onions
- ½ head of garlic
- 1 green pepper
- 1 tbsp fennel seeds (not essential)
- 3 tsp salt
- 2 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tbsp dried basil
- 8 twists of black pepper
- 3 tbsp lard
- Olive oil
- 2 x 400g tins of chopped tomatoes
- ¼ tube tomato puree
- 1 x 500ml pack of passata
- 1 tsp garlic powder (not essential)

1. Mince or finely chop the garlic and add to a large mixing bowl.
2. Finely dice the onions and add to the bowl. Finely dice the peppers (like the onions) and add.
3. Add 2 eggs and mix thoroughly.
4. Add the herbs and fennel, salt and pepper and mix again.
5. Add the minced pork and beef.
6. Cut the lard into small pieces and scatter over the meat mix.
7. Well combine the mixture using your hands.
8. Roll into a large palm shaped ball. Repeat until mixture used.
9. Slather a deep baking tray/dish with olive oil so it is entirely coated.
10. Place the meatballs in the tray.
11. Bake in the oven at 220C for 10 minutes.
12. Turn the heat down to 180C for a further 15 minutes.
13. Remove the tray from the oven.
14. Tip the chopped tomatoes into the tray and add the tomato purée.
15. Add the pack of tomato passata. Sprinkle over the garlic powder.
16. Mix gently without disturbing the meatballs.
17. Put back into the oven for 20 minutes.

Serve 2-3 meatballs per person in a bowl with a side of vegetables of your choice. I love mine with roasted broccoli (which you can bake in the oven at the same time as the meatballs).

Sprinkle cheese on the top if you wish and enjoy!

## Guacamole

Serves 4 as a side

- 2 medium avocados
  - 1 tbsp lime juice
  - ½ tsp salt or to taste
  - 1 tbsp fresh coriander (optional)
  - 1 tbsp olive oil
  - ½ tsp garlic powder
1. Peel avocados and remove stones.
  2. Mash up in a bowl.
  3. Add remaining ingredients and stir until well combined.
  4. Serve as a side with chilli con carne, nachos or with seed crackers.
  5. Can be stored in the fridge in a sealed container for up to 4 days.

## Home-made Hummus

Serves 4

- 2 cups drained canned chickpeas
- ½ cup tahini (sesame paste)
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1-2 cloves garlic or more as to your preference
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- Juice of one lemon plus more to taste
- 1/3 cup water or as needed
- Salt and ground black pepper to taste

1. Place everything except water in a food processor and process.
2. Add water as needed to make a smooth purée.
3. Taste and add more garlic, salt, lemon juice or cumin to your preference.

Serve drizzled with olive oil and sprinkled with a bit of cumin.

Serve with seed crackers as a snack, or with falafel and a tomato and cucumber chopped salad as a main meal.

You can buy falafel ready-made or most larger supermarkets stock a dried falafel mix which can be formed into balls and then deep fried.

## Garlic yoghurt dip

I think this makes a lovely addition to falafel and hummus and is ridiculously easy to make.

1. Take half a large pot of full fat Greek yoghurt.
2. Add 1-2 tsp of garlic powder (depending on how strong you want the garlic flavour to be) and stir well.

Serve!

## Kim's Basic Salad

Serves 1 as a main or 2 as a side.

- 1 bag of mixed salad leaves. I prefer a Bistro salad with beetroot.
- Handful of baby spinach.
- ½ red or yellow pepper.
- Cherry tomatoes
- Cucumber
- 3 tbsp sunflower seeds
- 2 tbsp pumpkin seeds
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Apple cider vinegar (preferably with The Mother)

1. Place the salad leaves in a bowl and add the chopped peppers, tomatoes and cucumber.
2. Sprinkle seeds on the top.
3. Add a good glug of olive oil and vinegar.

Mix and enjoy!

This salad with a tin of tuna steak in olive oil is my favourite go to lunch.

It also acts as an excellent side dish you can prepare in minutes.

Other toppings include:

- Thinly sliced beef steak (which is great with a home-made dressing made of blue cheese mixed with yoghurt).
- Feta cheese is lovely with a sprinkling of dried dill and mint and swop the apple cider vinegar for red wine vinegar.
- Sliced boiled eggs and olives.
- Falafel and hummus.
- Tinned sardines or salmon.
- Grilled slices of halloumi cheese.



## Kim's Cauliflower Cheese

Serves 4 as a side.

- 1 large cauliflower, about 1kg
  - 2 tbsp olive oil
  - 1 x 300ml tub full fat crème fraîche
  - 1 tsp Dijon mustard
  - 1 large egg yolk
  - 100g grated hard cheese – cheddar or Emmental, or vegetarian alternative
  - 20g Parmesan or vegetarian alternative, grated finely
1. Preheat the oven to 200°C. Discard the outer cauliflower leaves. Cut the cauliflower into reasonably chunky florets and toss these plus the inner leaves with the oil and some salt and pepper. Spread out in a large roasting tray, making sure the cauliflower isn't too crowded. Roast for 20 minutes or until tender and lightly browned.
  2. Meanwhile, mix the crème fraîche, mustard and egg yolk together with a good amount of freshly ground black pepper and a little salt, then stir in the grated hard cheese.
  3. When the cauliflower is ready, place it in a baking dish that will hold it more snugly. Spoon the creamy cheese sauce over the top then scatter with the Parmesan. Return to the oven and bake for 12-15 minutes or until golden brown and bubbling.

## Lamb Koftas with Baked Aubergine and Tzatziki

Serves 4

- For the lamb koftas:
    - 1kg minced lamb
    - 2 tsp salt
    - 1 egg
    - 2 finely chopped onions
    - 1tsp dried mint
    - 1 tsp dried dill
    - 1 tsp cumin
    - 6 twists of black pepper
    - Butter or olive oil for frying
  
  - For the baked aubergines:
    - 3 large aubergines
    - Olive oil
  
  - For the Tzatziki:
    - 1 whole cucumber
    - 1 small clove of garlic
    - 500ml full fat Greek yoghurt
    - ¼ tsp salt
    - Pinch of dried dill
1. Mix all the kofta ingredients in a large bowl.
  2. Shape small egg sized patties and pat flat.
  3. Fry the patties in butter or olive oil until crispy/well done on the outside.
  4. Slice aubergines into 2cm thick round discs and place on a baking tray.
  5. Brush on both sides with olive oil.
  6. Bake in the oven at 200C for 25-30 minutes until nicely browned.
  7. Grate the cucumber (leave the skin on).
  8. Place in a sieve or colander and press down until you can't push out more fluid.
  9. Grate the garlic.
  10. Add the cucumber, garlic, yoghurt, dill, and salt to a bowl.
  11. Stir until well combined.

Place all 3 dishes on the table and let everyone enjoy!

## Moussaka with Feta Topping

Feeds 4

- For the base:
    - 3-4 large aubergines
    - Olive oil, for brushing
    - 1kg lamb mince
    - 2 large onions, chopped
    - 4 garlic cloves, crushed
    - 4 tbsp tomato purée
    - 1 tsp ground cinnamon
    - 1½ tbsp dried mixed herbs
    - 2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes
  
  - For the topping
    - 2 large eggs
    - 500g Greek yogurt
    - 200g feta, crumbled
    - 25g finely grated Parmesan
1. Preheat the oven to 220°C/fan200°C/gas 7. Thinly slice the aubergines diagonally, brush on 1 side with a little oil and lay on large baking trays. Roast in the oven for 20 minutes, turning halfway and brushing with more oil, until tender and turning golden. Set aside in a bowl. Reduce the oven temperature to 200°C/fan180°C/gas 6
  2. Preheat the oven to 220°C/fan200°C/gas 7. Thinly slice the aubergines diagonally, brush on 1 side with a little oil and lay on large baking trays. Roast in the oven for 20 minutes, turning halfway and brushing with more oil, until tender and turning golden. Set aside in a bowl. Reduce the oven temperature to 200°C/fan180°C/gas 6.
  3. Meanwhile, heat a large casserole or deep, wide frying pan over a high heat. When hot, add the mince and cook, breaking up with a spoon, for 5 minutes. Stir in the onions and garlic and cook for a further 5 minutes, until the meat has browned and the onions have softened.
  4. Add the tomato purée, cinnamon and mixed herbs to the mince and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Stir in the chopped tomatoes, half-fill 1 can with water and rinse out into the pan. Season and simmer rapidly for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until most of the liquid has evaporated.
  5. Meanwhile, make the topping. Mix the eggs into the yogurt, until combined. Stir in the feta and season well with black pepper.
  6. Layer up the moussaka. Start with a layer of the mince in a deep, large Pyrex dish or similar. Then follow with layers of aubergine and repeat until all the ingredients are used. Divide the yogurt mixture between them, spreading evenly on top of the aubergines. Sprinkle each with the Parmesan.
  7. Cook for 35-40 minutes, until piping hot and golden – cover with foil if the top is looking too brown.

Divide between plates and serve alone or with a side salad.

## Soca Pizza

Serves 1 to 2 depending on appetite! Make extra for lunch the next day.

If you have diabetes, consider using the fat head dough pizza base option instead which will have less effect on your blood sugar.

- Chickpea base
    - 2 tbsp olive oil
    - 1 cup chickpea flour
    - 1 cup water
    - 1/2 tsp garlic powder
  
  - Super easy pizza sauce
    - 1 pack tomato passata
    - 2 tbsp tomato puree
    - Garlic powder
    - 1 tbsp dried Italian seasoning or dried oregano
  
  - Toppings
    - Cheese – cheddar or mozzarella (or a combination of both!)
    - Fresh chopped basil
    - Chopped veggies of choice e.g. red onion and pepper
    - Ham, bacon, prosciutto
    - Anchovies
    - Olives
    - Ricotta cheese and spinach
1. Preheat the oven to 230C and brush a 35x20cm baking tray with oil. Alternatively, you can use a large, round pizza tray.
  2. In a medium bowl, mix together the oil, chickpea flour, water and seasonings. Whisk until completely smooth.
  3. Pour the batter onto the baking tray and tilt to make sure the tray is evenly coated. Cook for 10 minutes until golden and slightly crisp. Remove from the oven but keep the oven hot.
  4. Meanwhile, make the pizza sauce by mixing the ingredients in a saucepan and warming through. Spread on top of the soca base.
  5. Place sliced or grated cheese over the sauce and scatter the toppings of your choice. Bake again for a further 5-10 minutes.
  6. Cut into slices and enjoy!

## Soy Spaghetti with Meatballs

Serves 4

- 500g beef mince
  - 1 medium onion
  - 1 egg
  - ½ tsp Salt and 6 twists of pepper
  - Butter
  - 400g tin of chopped tomatoes
  - 3 tablespoons tomato purée
  - 2-3 cloves of garlic
  - Olive oil
  - 1 pack soybean spaghetti (Lidl and Sainsburys both stock a version).
1. Put beef and chopped onion in a large bowl.
  2. Add salt and pepper and mix well. Add egg and mix again until well combined.
  3. Take a small handful of the mix and roll in your palms to make an egg sized ball.
  4. Repeat until all mixture is used.
  5. Fry in a deep frying pan with butter until meatballs are browned.
  6. Into the same frying pan, add 3tbsp olive oil. Add the chopped garlic and lightly cook through.
  7. Add the tin of tomatoes and the tomato purée. Heat through. Add a pinch of salt.
  8. If the sauce is a little tart, feel free to add a pinch or two of erythritol/xylitol.
  9. Simmer for 10-15 minutes or until sauce thickens.
  10. Bring a pan of water to the boil.
  11. Add 1 tsp of salt to the boiling water.
  12. Add 1 box of soybean spaghetti.
  13. Cook for time as directed on pack.
  14. Drain.

Serve and enjoy with a side of vegetables of your choice. I love mine with roasted broccoli.

If you don't have the time, it's acceptable to buy ready-made meatballs from the supermarket rather than making your own.

You could also use chopped up pork or beef sausages (minimum 85% meat) or Quorn substitutes if you preferred.

## Grain Free Toad in the Hole

Serves 2

- 4 sausages (minimum 85% meat – buy the best you can afford. You can also use a veggie alternative if you wish)
- 100g chickpea (gram/besan) flour
- 2 eggs
- 250ml milk
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 large chopped onion
- 1 tbsp butter
- Pinch of salt
- 6 tsp beef or onion gravy granules
- Water
- ½ tsp wholegrain mustard

1. Preheat oven to 220C
2. Grease a roasting tin with refined/light olive oil or lard
3. Add sausages and toss in oil
4. Bake sausages for 15 minutes
5. Whilst sausages are baking, prepare the batter. In a large bowl add the flour and salt and gently whisk. Add the eggs and whisk again. Slowly pour in the milk. Whisk until no lumps remain. The batter should be the consistency of heavy whipped cream – if it's too thick add more milk.
6. Take the sausages out of the oven and quickly pour the batter into the roasting tin with the sausages.
7. Return the tin to the oven and bake for 30-40 mins.
8. To make the gravy:
  - a) melt the butter in a frying pan and stir in the onions.
  - b) Cook until onions are soft and browned/caramelised. Stir often to prevent sticking.
  - c) Add a pinch of salt and gravy granules.
  - d) Add water until the gravy reaches the required consistency.
  - e) Before serving add a further knob of butter and the mustard.

It would be better to make your own gravy using stock if you have the time or inclination, but I find gravy granules are a quick and easy way to make a reasonable alternative.

## Home Made Granola

- 175g coconut flakes
- 250g nuts – almonds, brazil, pecans, walnuts plus pumpkin seeds (roughly chopped – use any combination of your choice)
- 2 tbsp chia seeds
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 100g coconut oil or butter

1. Preheat oven to 120C.
2. Line a baking tray with greaseproof paper.
3. Combine all ingredients and spread evenly on the tray.
4. Bake for 15-20 minutes until golden, turning halfway through. The darker the crunchier.

Allow to cool.

Eat whilst crispy or store in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.

Serve with full fat Greek yoghurt.

## Microwave Muffins

Serves 1

- 1 egg
  - 1 knob of butter or 2 tsp extra virgin olive oil
  - 50g ground almonds
  - ½ tsp baking powder
  - ½ tsp vanilla extract or almond extract
  - ½ apple or pear, grated
1. Mix the egg and fat together in a bowl.
  2. Add other ingredients and stir well.
  3. Spoon into a mug and microwave on full power for three minutes.

Tip out and enjoy!

If you prefer a crunchy muffin or are cooking for more than one, then cook in the oven for 12-15 mins at 180C – in this situation grease or line the mug first to prevent it sticking. You could also use a small loaf tin too if making 4 or more, but in this case cook for 25 mins or until a fork comes out clean.

### VARIATIONS

- Sweet: Add a small handful of berries such as raspberries or blueberries and serve with a dollop of double cream or Greek yoghurt.
- Savoury: Use the standard recipe but instead of the apple add half a grated courgette and add ingredients of your choice like cheese, walnuts, dried onions etc. After cooking the muffin, you can toast it and cut it into slices and top with cream cheese or other topping of your choice.
- Chocolate: Use the standard recipe and add a teaspoon cocoa or cacao powder and pieces of 85 per cent dark chocolate. You could also add a few cherries which works well.



## Seed Crackers

- 100g sunflower seeds
  - 100g pumpkin seeds
  - 100g flaxseeds
  - 100g sesame seeds
  - 3 tbsp psyllium husks
  - 400ml water
  - 1 tsp salt
1. Preheat oven to 150C.
  2. Combine all ingredients in a bowl and leave to stand until thick – approximately 10-15 minutes.
  3. Spread the mixture out as thin as you can on a baking tray lined with greaseproof paper. You may need more than one tray.
  4. Bake for 1 hour and 10 minutes checking every 15-20 mins to rotate if needed.
  5. When lightly brown and crisp (may take up to 1 hr 30 mins), remove from the oven and leave to cool.
  6. Break into pieces and store in an airtight container.

Serve with home-made hummus, guacamole, cream cheese, pate or cheese of your choice.

## Fudge Aubergine Brownies

- 240g aubergine, cubed and keep skin on
  - 80g butter
  - 200g chocolate (80% +)
  - Sweetener to taste (I suggest about 2 tbsp of erythritol or xylitol)
  - 40g ground almonds
  - 40g cacao or cocoa powder
  - 2 large eggs
  - 1 tsp baking powder
1. Pre-heat oven to 180° c
  2. Into a pan place chopped aubergine and cover with water
  3. Bring to boil and then simmer until soft (about 5 minutes)
  4. Pop a glass bowl over the boiling water and melt the butter and chocolate
  5. Drain water from aubergine (Don't worry that they've shrunk!)
  6. Transfer chocolate mix and aubergine to food processor / blender and blend until smooth
  7. Add in all the other dry ingredients (not the sweetener though or sugar) and blend until fully combined.
  8. Taste the mix and add sweetener or sugar until you are happy with the sweetness!
  9. Now add in eggs and continue to pulse until fully mixed
  10. Transfer to a brownie tin (greased) and bake on 180°c for 20-25 minutes until fully set and the top slightly cracking

Allow to cool and then transfer to a sealed container and eat within 3 days. You do not have to keep them in the fridge but if you do the consistency will change. They will keep for up to 6 days in the refrigerator.

## Butter Pecan Cheesecake

- Cheesecake crust
    - 1 tbsp salted butter, melted
    - 4 tbsp pecans, finely crushed
    - ½ tbsp powdered erythritol
    - Or use smashed up shortbread biscuits (see recipe)
  - Filling
    - 4 tbsp butter
    - 8 oz. cream cheese, softened
    - 4 tbsp powdered erythritol
    - 2 tbsp milk or double cream
    - 1 egg, beaten
    - 1 tsp vanilla extract
    - pecans, for garnishing
1. Preheat the oven to 175°C.
  2. Grease a 4-inch (10 cm) springform pan with butter. Place melted butter, crushed pecans and erythritol in a small bowl. Stir with a fork to combine well. Use your fingers to press mixture into the bottom of the springform pan.
  3. Place in oven to pre-bake for 6 minutes while you prepare the filling.
  4. Place the butter in a small saucepan over medium-high heat. Stirring often, heat until the butter foams up and brown (but not black!) flecks appear.
  5. Remove from the heat and allow to cool a bit. This brown butter creates a caramel-like flavour to the cheesecake.
  6. Place softened cream cheese, erythritol, almond milk or cream, egg and vanilla in a medium bowl.
  7. Use a hand mixer to combine well.
  8. Slowly add the browned butter and stir to combine. Pour mixture into pre-baked shell. Tent loosely with foil and bake for 30-35 minutes or until cheesecake is set and barely jiggles in the centre.
  9. Remove from oven and allow to chill for 10 minutes then place in fridge to chill for at least 2 hours.
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## Fudge Popsicles

Makes 10

- 2 cans/800mls coconut milk
  - 85g dark chocolate (minimum 85%)
  - 22g cacao powder (cocoa powder will also work)
  - 120g erythritol – can use up to 140g if you prefer your fudgesicles sweeter
  - 2-3 tsp vanilla extract
  - 2 tsp cinnamon (optional)
  - ½ tsp ground nutmeg (optional)
  - ¼ tsp salt
1. Add coconut milk to a saucepan and bring to a simmer over medium heat.
  2. Remove from heat and add chocolate and allow to melt.
  3. Add cacao powder, erythritol, vanilla, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt. Mix until well combined and then set aside until reaches room temperature.
  4. When cool, pour into lolly or popsicle moulds and freeze for 3-4 hours.

Freeze for up to 6 months.

To make these even more nutritious you can substitute 1 large avocado for ½ can of the coconut milk and blend it with the cooled mixture before pouring into moulds.

## Shortbread Biscuits

- 270g almond flour
- 45g erythritol
- 1 pinch of salt
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 70g unsalted butter, softened
- 1 large egg

1. Preheat oven to 150C.
2. Add almond flour, erythritol, salt and vanilla extract to a mixing bowl and stir.
3. Add the butter and rub into the dry ingredients until fully combined.
4. Add the egg and mix well.
5. Take tablespoon sized amounts of mixture and roll into balls.
6. Press on to a baking sheet lined with greaseproof paper. Leave a gap between each biscuit as they will spread.
7. Bake for 15-25 minutes until the edges are browned.

These can be stored in an airtight container for up to 7 days.

As a special treat, melt some 85% dark chocolate in a bowl and dip the biscuits into it so they are half covered. Leave to set.

Can also be crumbled up to use as a base for a cheesecake.