# HEALTHY **FAST FOOD** FIXES

When you think of 'fast food', chances are what springs to mind is either something you can order in or comfort food. From a nutrition perspective, neither of these are the ideal healthy choice. I suspect you already know this but, you may believe the reason is because these foods can be high in calories.

While the foods may or may not be packed with calories, nutrition professionals know that the real reason these foods are not your friend is that both are usually laden with actual sugar to make them more moreish or they are heavy on the starchy carbs, which upsets your blood sugar balance, leading to energy dips, cravings for more of the same and weight gain.

Often, one of the perceived barriers to eating healthily is that it is expensive or that it takes a lot of time. This guide is designed to fill the need for food that's ready in a flash, that can be made really quickly ahead of time* or that you simply pop in the oven. What's more, they are delicious and comforting to eat. You'll find tasty alternatives to takeaways, comfort food with a healthy twist (but no compromise on taste) plus some clever tricks and tips so there is always something to make a delicious meal from.

* Some of these recipes use marinades. The marinades are super easy to make, and you can prep the marinated meat, fish or tofu and pop in the fridge the night before so you're good to go when you get back from work.

# TAKE-OUT ALTERNATIVES

These recipes are the perfect replacement for costly (and often unhealthy) take away options.

They're based around a few of the country's favourite take-out options; Chinese / Asian-inspired and Indian – plus good old fish and chips.

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# TANDOORI-STYLE CHICKEN

SERVES 2

2 skinless chicken breasts,
chopped into bite-sized chunks
85g natural yoghurt
Handful flaked almonds
½ tbsp lemon juice
2 garlic cloves, crushed
½ tsp grated fresh ginger root
½ tsp ground cumin
½ tsp ground coriander
¼ tsp ground turmeric
Pinch of cayenne pepper

Place the chicken pieces in a shallow casserole dish then mix together the rest of the ingredients and spread over the chicken.

Cover the dish and place it in the fridge to marinate for at least an hour (or overnight).

Bake the chicken in the marinade at 200°C for 30-35 mins until the meat is cooked thoroughly. Do not turn.

Serve with cauliflower rice (see recipe on page 7) or 40g brown basmati rice.

# CHICKEN SATAY WRAPS

SERVES 2

2 small tortilla wraps
1 cooked chicken breast, cut into strips
A generous handful of shredded iceberg lettuce
8 thin slices or cucumber
½ red pepper, finely sliced

For the satay sauce
2 tbsp natural yoghurt
2 tbsp crunchy sugar-free peanut butter
1 clove of garlic, crushed
1 tsp fresh root ginger, peeled, and finely grated
½ small red chilli, de-seeded and finely chopped
2 tsp chopped fresh coriander
1 spring onion, finely sliced

Combine all the satay ingredients to make the dipping sauce. Heat the wraps individually in a dry frying pan for a few mins to gently toast them on both sides. Spread the satay sauce along the middle of each wrap.

Arrange the chicken, sliced pepper and shredded lettuce on top. Fold over the bottom of the wrap (to prevent the contents falling out as you eat) and fold the sides together to make a roll.

# GINGER CHICKEN

1 tbsp olive oil or coconut oil
4 boneless chicken breasts (skin removed)
1 tbsp clear honey
1 tbsp tamari (soy sauce)
2 garlic cloves, crushed
2 cm piece of fresh ginger, finely chopped
Juice and zest of one large orange
225g button mushrooms, washed and halved
2 bunches spring onions, trimmed and halved

Preheat the oven to 190°C.
Heat the oil in a frying pan and pan fry the chicken for a couple of minutes, then transfer to oven-proof dish.

Mix together the honey, tamari, garlic, ginger, and orange zest and juice and pour over the chicken.

Season with sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, and bake for 10 mins. Add the mushrooms and spring onions, baste and replace in oven for a further 15 mins or until cooked through. Serve with cauliflower rice (see recipe on page 7) or 40g brown basmati rice.

# CAULIFLOWER RICE

1 portion = 100g grams of riced cauliflower.

Take a head of cauliflower and remove the outer leaves. Quarter and then blitz in a blender for 10–20 secs – in batches – or you can grate it with a regular cheese grater.

Tip into a heatproof bowl, cover with cling film, then pierce and microwave for 7 mins on high – there is no need to add any water.

Adding a small handful of chopped spring onion, or seasoning with a little ground cumin (or toasted cumin seeds) adds a flavour twist.

# SESAME SALMON

SERVES 2

2 fillets of salmon

2 tbsp soy sauce

2 tbsp sesame oil

Chilli flakes

2 tbsp mirin / white wine vinegar

225g fresh spinach

Parsley, to serve

Mix the soy sauce, sesame oil, mirin and chilli flakes. Pour over the salmon in a shallow dish. Marinate in the fridge for at least 30 mins (or overnight). This recipe also works with tofu (for this recipe you will need one pack).

Heat a frying pan and add the salmon and its marinade. Cook gently over a low heat for about 8 mins, turning once. While the salmon is cooking, cook the spinach, cabbage and spring onions in boiling water until wilted (approx 3 mins). Serve the salmon on top of the veg and top with sesame seeds and parsley. For a more filling meal, serve with soba (buckwheat noodles) drizzled with a little extra sesame oil, or a little basmati rice.

# GARLIC CHILLI PRAWNS WITH BOK CHOY

300g large fresh, raw prawns, fully prepared

For the marinade
3 cloves garlic, crushed
Juice of 2 limes
1 green chilli, de-seeded
1 spoonful chilli infused oil (or dried chilli flakes)
A good pinch of salt
3 tbsp coconut oil

For the vegetables
250g bok choy, stems separated from the leaf and both stems and leaves roughly chopped
1 tbsp coconut oil
1 tbsp oyster sauce

For the prawns, blend the garlic, lime, chillies, chilli oil or flakes, salt and oil to puree. Marinate the prepared prawns for 5 mins at room temperature.

Cook for 1 and ½ mins per side on a medium hot griddle pan or frying pan. For the bok choy, add the oil to a hot wok or frying pan and stir-fry or steam fry (by adding a dash of water and then covering) for about 4 mins, adding the stems to the pan first to cook for a minute before you add the leaves. Once cooked, remove from the heat and stir through a tablespoon of oyster sauce. Serve immediately with the prawns, and a side of quinoa plus extra veg, if desired.

# EGG FRIED CAULIFLOWER RICE WITH PRAWNS

SERVES 2

300g large fresh, raw prawns, fully prepared
160g frozen green beans
½ white onion, finely diced
1 chilli, finely sliced
1 tsp rapeseed oil
1 large egg, beaten
200g small cauliflower florets
1 tbsp soy sauce
Fresh coriander, to serve

Put the beans in a large sieve, then pour over freshly boiled water to defrost them. Drain and set aside.

Heat 1 tsp oil in a large frying pan or wok. Cook the prawns, onion and chilli for 1-2 mins until softened.

Push these ingredients to the side of the pan. Add the remaining teaspoon of oil, then pour in the egg, stirring to scramble it. Pulse the cauliflower in a food processor until it resembles rice. Add the cauliflower and soy sauce to the pan and stir. Add the green beans and peas and cook for 1-2 mins until hot.

Serve with torn fresh coriander.

# TERIYAKI TOFU WITH SOBA NOODLES

SERVES 2

200g soba (buckwheat) noodles
2 packs of tofu
4 tbsp tamari (wheat-free soy sauce) or soy sauce,
4 tbsp mirin (Japanese sweetened rice wine)
2 tbsp grated fresh root ginger
2 tbsp sesame oil,
1 tsp xylitol
Coconut oil, for frying
100g fresh spinach leaves

Drain the tofu by placing it in a sieve then weigh it down with something, like a tin of beans for a few hours to squeeze out the remaining water. Cook the noodles for 4-6 minutes then drain immediately under cold water to avoid them overcooking. Slice the tofu and marinate. Heat 1-2 tbsps coconut oil in a large frying pan and add the tofu slices. Gently fry for 5 mins on each side. Add the spinach and heat until it wilts, then throw in the reserved noodles to warm through for a few mins. Serve with remaining marinade drizzled over and masses of veggies and a slice of lemon/lime on the side.

# CHICKPEA & SPINACH CURRY

SERVES 4

1 tbsp coconut oil
2 red onions, sliced
½ head broccoli, chopped into florets
1 mild red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
1 tbsp mild or medium curry powder or madras spice blend
150ml hot vegetable stock
500ml coconut milk
2 x 400g cans chickpeas, drained and rinsed
1tsp sea salt
200g baby leaf spinach, chopped

Heat half the oil in a large pan, add the onions and sweat for 3–4 mins to soften.

Add the chilli and curry powder and cook for a further minute.

Stir in the stock, coconut milk, broccoli and chickpeas and simmer for 15 mins to reduce the sauce and allow the flavours to combine.

Season with salt and taste to check. A couple of minutes before you want to serve, stir in the spinach and let it warm through.

Serve with cauliflower rice. (see recipe on page 7)A salad of diced cucumber, tomatoes and red onion also makes a nice accompaniment.

# CAULIFLOWER DAHL

SERVES 2

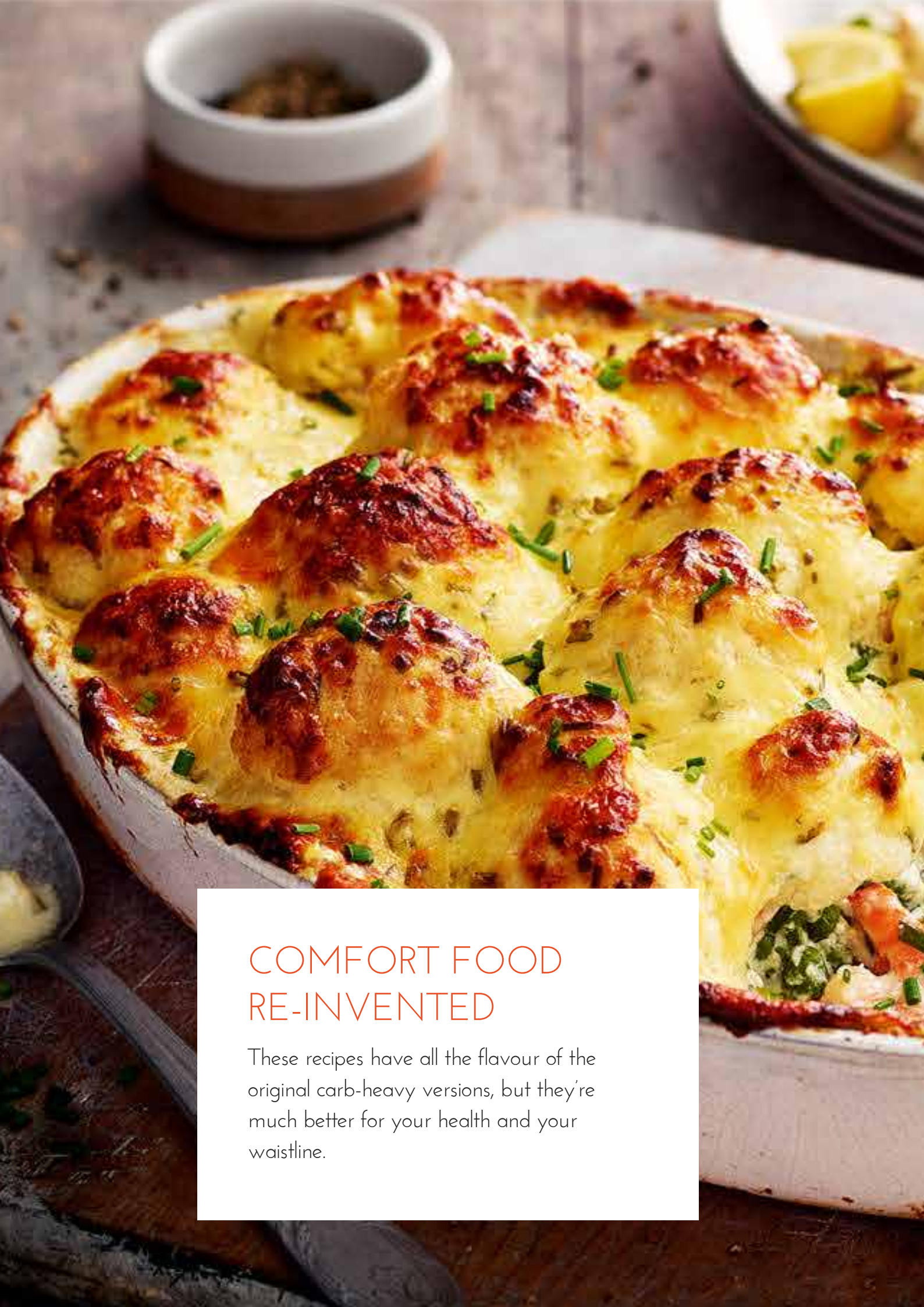
2 onions, finely chopped
2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
2cm fresh root ginger, peeled and chopped
½ tsp turmeric
½ tsp ground cumin
½ tsp cayenne pepper
2 tsp coconut oil or olive oil
150g red lentils, rinsed and drained
Crumbled vegetable stock cube

Put the onions, garlic, ginger, turmeric, cumin and cayenne pepper in a blender and whizz to a puree.

Heat the oil in a pan and add the pureed mixture, frying gently for 5 mins. Add the lentils, stock cube and 375ml water. Bring to the boil and simmer, uncovered, for 10 mins.

Add the cauliflower, cover and simmer for a further 15 mins to allow the lentils to cook down, and for the cauliflower to soften.

Serve with 40g brown basmati rice or plenty of steamed veg.



# COMFORT FOOD RE-INVENTED

These recipes have all the flavour of the original carb-heavy versions, but they're much better for your health and your waistline.

# BANGERS & BEANY MASH

SERVES 2

4 good quality sausages
For the bean mash
1 clove garlic, finely chopped
1x 400g can cannellini beans
3 tbsp olive oil
½ tsp dried thyme
A few small glasses of water

Heat the oven to 200°C and cook the sausages for about 25 mins or as per the instructions on the packet.

While the sausages are cooking, drain the beans in a sieve and rinse well.

Put the drained beans in a saucepan with the oil, garlic and thyme, and add a small glass of water.

Heat slowly until gently bubbling, then leave to simmer, stirring occasionally until the water has been absorbed. Add a little more water, stir and cook as before. Repeat a few more times, adding extra water until the beans are soft and creamy (about 15 mins). Season with sea salt and freshly ground pepper.

Serve with the sausages and a generous serving of steamed green veg.

# CREAMY CASHEW CAULIFLOWER CHEESE

Vary this recipe by using broccoli instead.

SERVES 2

½ large cauliflower, cut into florets
1 vegetable stock cube
25g cashew nuts, finely ground
25g sunflower seeds, finely ground
90ml water
1 tbsp cornflour
150ml milk (you can also use soya or unsweetened nut milk)
A generous pinch of grated nutmeg
25g parmesan (or vegan alternative), optional

Preheat the oven to 200°C (unless you are using the grill). Steam the cauliflower for about 15 mins or until only just tender. Crumble the stock cube in a pan and combine with the ground cashews and sunflower seeds, water, cornflour and a good grind of black pepper.

Bring to the boil (don't be worried if it starts to clump together). Simmer gently and gradually add the milk. Stir to make a thick white sauce.
Put the cauliflower in a shallow oven-proof dish. Pour the sauce over the top, sprinkle with nutmeg and top with the parmesan shavings.

Bake for 20 mins until the cheese is melted or grill for 5 mins until the cheese starts to bubble.

# FISH PIE WITH A CAULIFLOWER CRUST

SERVES 4

1 large cauliflower, leaves removed and cut into large florets
150g frozen peas
25g cornflour
75ml milk
1x 30g pack finely chopped chives
300ml crème fraîche
2 tsp Dijon mustard
1 lemon, zested
280g skinless and boneless cod fillets or other white fish
280g skinless and boneless salmon fillets
165g king prawns (raw and peeled)
75g mature cheddar, grated

# MIXED BEAN CHILLI

SERVES 2

1tsp coconut oil
1 onion
1 red pepper, diced
1tsp cumin
1 tsp crushed chilli
½ tsp chilli powder
150g mushrooms, sliced
½ can of chopped tomatoes
2 tbsp tomato puree
1 x can mixed beans
1 veg stock cube

Heat the oil, and fry the onion and garlic for 2 mins. Add the pepper and spices and sweat for 5 mins.

Add the mushrooms and cook for 1 min.

Tip in rest of ingredients and simmer for 5–10 mins. Serve with sliced avocado, slices of lime, quinoa or cauliflower rice.

# HEALTHY FISH, MUSHY PEAS & SWEET POTATO WEDGES

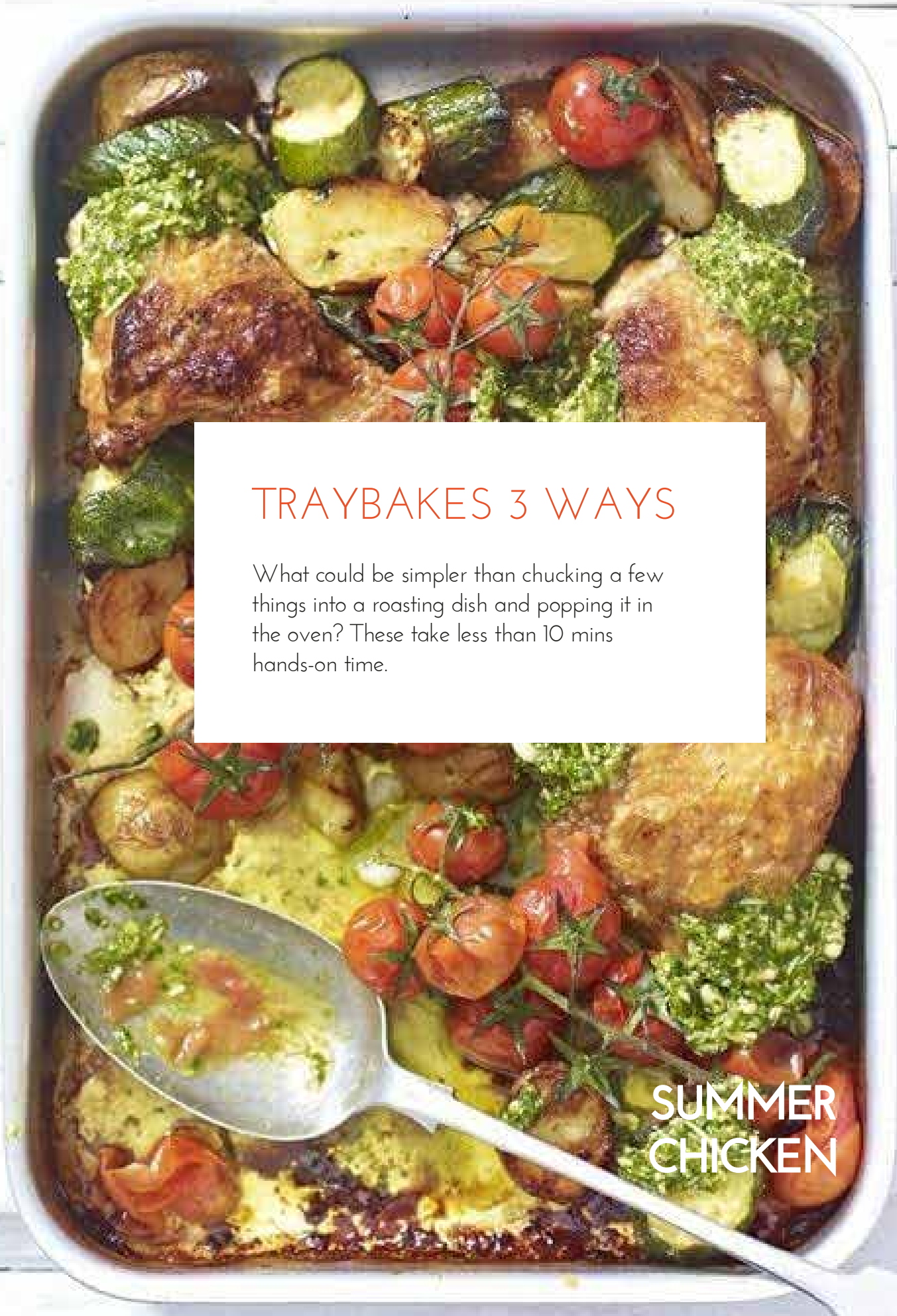
2 small skate wings

For the wedges
1 medium sweet potato, washed but unpeeled, and cut into wedges
2 tsp olive oil
a few sprigs of fresh thyme

For the petit pois
150g frozen petit pois
1 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp lemon juice
3 tbsp fresh mint, finely chopped

Pre-heat the oven to 180°C.
Place the cut up wedges on a baking tray, drizzle with 1 tbsp oil and season. Shake the tray to ensure they are coated, then bake for 40 mins, turning half way through cooking and sprinkling with thyme leaves.
To make the peas, place them in a small sauce pan and cover with boiling water. Simmer for 3 mins, then drain. Toss with 1 tbsp olive oil, lemon juice and mint, then season to taste. Keep warm while you make the fish.
Rinse the fish and pat dry with kitchen paper. Lightly fry the skate wings in 1 tbsp olive oil in a shallow frying pan for about 5 mins each side, until the flesh starts to pull away from the bones. Serve with the wedges in petit pois.

# SUPER-SIMPLE SUPPERS




## TRAYBAKES 3 WAYS

What could be simpler than chucking a few things into a roasting dish and popping it in the oven? These take less than 10 mins hands-on time.

# SUMMER CHICKEN

SERVES 2

200g new potatoes
4 garlic cloves
8 chicken thighs
150g pesto
2 courgettes, cut into 1 cm thick slices
200g cherry tomatoes on the vine
2 tbsp olive oil

Cut the potatoes in half and peel the garlic cloves. Put the chicken thighs in a large roasting tin or dish and arrange the potatoes and garlic around them. Drizzle over the olive oil, season with sea salt and freshly ground pepper, then roast in the oven for 40-45 mins. Add the courgettes to the roasting tin after the chicken has been in the oven for 20 mins.

Add the tomatoes for the final 10 mins cooking time. At the end of the cooking time, the chicken should be golden and cooked through. Remove from the oven and spoon over the pesto before serving.

# MEDITERRANEAN COD TRAYBAKE

SERVES 2

1 red pepper, de-seeded and sliced
1 red onion, cut into wedges
150g cherry tomatoes
A handful of black olives
200g passata
½ a 400g can butterbeans/ cannellini beans, drained
2 skinless cod fillets
Small bunch of basil, to serve

Heat the oven to 200°C.
Place the peppers, onions, tomatoes and olives into a roasting dish and roast for 15 mins until they soften and begin to char slightly at the edges.

Stir in the passata and beans, and season. Push the sauce back a little to create space to nestle in the cod fillets, then put back into the oven and cook for 15 mins until the cod is cooked through. Serve with a large salad or green veg.

# CHICKEN & SQUASH TRAYBAKE

SERVES 4

1kg chicken thighs and drumsticks
200g shallots, peeled and halved
500g new potatoes, cut into thick wedges
400g butternut squash, peeled, deseeded and cut into wedges
4 cloves garlic, unpeeled
1 tbsp rapeseed oil
30g walnut halves
15g fresh thyme
50g goat's cheese, crumbled

Pre-heat the oven to 200°C.
Put the chicken in a large baking dish with the shallots, potatoes, squash and garlic. Drizzle with the oil and shake to coat, then season. Roast in the oven for 45 mins, turning halfway through.

Remove the tray from the oven and stir through the walnuts and the thyme leaves. Roast for a further 10 mins until the chicken is cooked through, the skin is crispy, the squash is tender and the walnuts are toasted.

Sprinkle over the goats' cheese to serve

# HEALTHY PASTA ALTERNATIVES

There's nothing wrong with pasta in small amounts, but we tend to eat too much of it in one sitting, or rely on it too much as part of our cooking repertoire. Courgetti (spiralised courgettes) provide an easy way to cut the carbs and retain the flavour. All these recipes use 2 spiralised courgettes and serve 2. You can add cooked chicken, or salmon or cod loin to make a more filling meal, if you like.

## CHILLI, RICOTTA AND MINT

½ red chilli, thinly sliced
50g soft ricotta
½ small pack mint, leaves picked
Zest and juice of half a lemon

Toss the courgetti in a bowl with the chilli, lemon juice, three quarters of the mint, some sea salt and black pepper. Put onto a plate, season and garnish with the lemon zest, reserved mint and small dollops of the ricotta.

## WALNUT PESTO

200g cooked, peeled prawns
½ bunch basil
4 generous handfuls of spinach
1 tbsp lemon juice
1 clove garlic
3 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp nutritional yeast flakes
12 chopped cherry tomatoes
2 tbsp walnuts, chopped

Whizz up the basil, spinach, lemon juice, garlic and olive oil in a blender. Transfer to a bowl and add nutritional yeast and walnuts.

Add the courgetti and tomatoes and mix well. Transfer to a pan, add the cooked prawns and heat through, and season to taste.

## RED PEPPER PESTO

1 bunch basil
Half a jar of roasted red peppers
1 tbsp lemon juice
1 clove garlic
3 tbsp olive oil
50g grated Parmesan
2 tbsp toasted pine nuts
Mini mozzarella balls, to serve

Whizz all the ingredients,except the mozzarella balls to make the sauce. Season, and mix with the courgetti, garnish with some mini mozzarella balls.

# STORE CUPBOARD SAVERS

## Keep the following in your larder cupboard and it's easy to find something to rustle up

Tinned cannellini or borlotti beans – for a bean mash or salads.

Tinned green/ brown lentils.

Tinned mixed beans.

Soba noodles (made from buckwheat) – use them in stir fries and salads.

Quinoa – ready-made pouches are especially convenient and save time when you're really in a rush.

Ready-cooked lentils in pouches (such as puy or beluga lentils or similar ready-made, flavoured mixes).

Extra virgin olive oil for salad dressings.

Sesame oil for oriental-inspired dishes.

Soy sauce or tamari gluten-free soy sauce.

Antipasti in olive oil – try sundried or semi-dried tomatoes, roasted peppers and artichokes.

Sugar free crunchy peanut butter.

Spices and dried herbs – like herbes de Provence, tarragon, oregano, chilli powder, chilli flakes, curry powder (or garam masala), ground cumin, coriander and ginger, paprika, turmeric and cayenne pepper.

Oil or sea salt-based rubs to flavour meat and fish.

# BEST-KEPT FREEZER GOODIES

Sliced peppers

Ratatouille/ Mediterranean veg

Quinoa & vegetable mix

Chargrilled aubergine slices

Herbs – assorted

Avocado