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**MEAL  
PLANS &  
RECIPES**

## Dinner Party Menu 1

### **Starter:** Avocado & Garlic Sauce with Crudités and Pitta Crisps

Using the recipe for Garlic Sauce, (see Dips & Dressings), add an avocado to this delicious mixture to make a dip. Spoon into individual small dishes (tiny soufflé dishes or ramekins would be ideal), and place one on each serving plate.

Prepare lots of fresh vegetable crudités and arrange round, together with pitta crisps, (see Dips & Dressings). Alternatively use the recipe for Avocado and Tofu Dip, (see Dips & Dressings).

### **Main:** Salmon Teriyaki

**Serves:** 4

**Cooking Time:** 5 minutes

- 4 salmon fillets
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp Teriyaki sauce
- 1 tbsp clear honey
- Juice and zest of 1 lime
- Wedges of lime to garnish

- 1 Line the grill pan with tin foil and lay on the salmon fillets.
- 2 Mix together the oil, Teriyaki sauce, honey and lime juice and zest. Pour this over the salmon, turning the fish to coat both sides. Leave to marinate for at least 20 minutes.
- 3 Heat the grill, then cook the salmon for 4-5 minutes, turning once and spooning over the marinade.
- 4 Serve with juices poured over, garnish with lime wedges, sugar snaps and tiny new potatoes or saffron mash.

### **Dessert:** Grilled, Caramelised Pineapple with Passion Fruit Coulis

- Slices of fresh pineapple
- 1 tbsp soft brown sugar
- 1 passion fruit
- Kirsch/white rum
- Sprig of mint (optional)
- Honeyed plain yoghurt/low fat fromage frais

- 1 Sprinkle slices of fresh pineapple with a tablespoon of soft brown sugar and grill under a preheated grill until melted and caramelised.
- 2 Put one slice on each serving plate.
- 3 Halve one passion fruit per person and scoop out the flesh. Stir in a little kirsch or white rum to flavour, and spoon around the pineapple.
- 4 Garnish with a sprig of fresh mint and serve with honeyed plain yoghurt or low fat fromage frais.



## Dinner Party Menu: 2

### Starter: Smoked Salmon & Dill Pâté

Serves: 4

- 150g/5½ oz smoked salmon pieces
- 200g/7oz low fat soft cheese
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 2 tbsp roughly chopped fresh dill (reserve 4 sprigs)

- 1 Place the salmon, soft cheese and lemon juice into a food processor and blitz to form a smooth mixture.
- 2 Remove the blade and stir in the dill. Scrape out into a bowl. If the mixture is too stiff, add a little plain yoghurt to achieve the right consistency.
- 3 Heap the mixture on to thin slices of toasted baguette and garnish with sprigs of fresh dill.

### Main: Louisiana Blackened Chicken

Serves: 4

Cooking Time: 12-15 minutes

*There's nothing boring about this chicken dish – the flavours explode on the palate. It can also be made with turkey breast fillets and is great served cold for picnics.*

- 4 boneless skinless chicken breasts
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp ground black pepper
- ½ tsp paprika pepper
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp dried oregano
- ½ tsp dried thyme
- 2 tbsp oil

- 1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6
- 2 Cut each chicken breast into three long strips. In a large bowl mix together all the dry seasonings and toss in the chicken strips, (toss very well to make sure each one is evenly coated).
- 3 Heat the oil in a large frying pan, and fry the chicken pieces on both sides over high heat, just to seal the chicken and roast the spices.
- 4 Transfer the chicken to a roasting tin and continue cooking in the oven for 10-12 minutes until the chicken is cooked through.
- 5 Serve the chicken with rice and wilted spinach with Garlic Sauce (see Dips & Dressings).

### Dessert: Apricot Yoghurt Ice

*A simple ice-cream maker is ideal if you like ice-creams and sorbets, as it enables you to make your own low-fat, additive free healthy desserts. Complicated recipes just aren't necessary, the simplest are usually the best.*

- 225g/8oz dried apricots
- Vanilla extract
- Large pot of low fat Greek yoghurt
- Amaretti or Kirsch
- Amaretti biscuits

- 1 Soak, then cook 225g/8oz dried apricots in enough water just to cover. Sweeten to taste and add a few drops of natural vanilla extract.
- 2 Cool, then puree the mixture with a bar blender or in the liquidiser.
- 3 Add a large pot of low fat Greek yoghurt and whiz again. Taste to check for sweetness, then pour into an ice-cream maker or polythene freezer box. Freeze until needed.
- 4 To serve, spoon into small glasses, and if liked, pour over a little Amaretti or Kirsch and serve with Amaretti biscuits.



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**MEAL  
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## Dinner Party Menu: 3

### Starter: Prosciutto & Pear Salad in Radicchio

- 1 radicchio
- 70g/2oz pack of Prosciutto ham
- 1 large or 2 small pears
- A handful of basil leaves
- 4 tbsps of plain yoghurt
- 1 tbsp of pesto
- Ciabatta bread

- 1 Carefully remove each whole leaf from the radicchio and wash gently. Place one large or two small leaves onto a serving plate. Shred the remaining leaves and place in a mixing bowl.
- 2 Cut a 70g/2oz pack of Prosciutto ham into thin strips and add to the bowl, together with 1 large or 2 small pears, chopped, and a handful of torn basil leaves. Mix together and spoon into the radicchio leaves.
- 3 Make the dressing by mixing together 4 tablespoons of plain yoghurt with 2 tablespoons of water and 1 tablespoon of pesto.
- 4 Season and spoon over and around each serving; garnish with more basil leaves.
- 5 Serve with chunks of warm ciabatta bread.

### Main: Tiger Prawn Provençal

Serves: 4

Cooking Time: 6 minutes

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 small red chilli, finely chopped or 1-2 tbsp sweet chilli sauce
- 400g/14oz raw tiger prawns, peeled
- 1 large ripe beefsteak tomato, skinned and finely chopped
- 4 sundried tomatoes in oil, drained and chopped
- 1 tbsp white wine vinegar or lemon juice
- 8 pitted black olives, halved
- Salt and black pepper
- Fresh basil leaves

- 1 Heat the oil in a frying pan or wok and add the garlic and fresh chilli. Fry gently for a minute to soften but not brown, then add minutes until the prawns have turned pink.
- 2 Add the chopped tomato and sundried tomatoes, vinegar and olives, and cook for a further 2 minutes. Season and add a few torn basil leaves.
- 3 Serve immediately with rice scattered with more torn basil leaves.

### Dessert: Raspberry & Elderflower Fool

Serves: 4

- 200g/7oz raspberries
- 400g/14oz low fat Greek yoghurt or fromage frais
- 4 tbsp elderflower cordial

A delectable and incredibly easy dessert:

- 1 Simply mash or puree the fresh raspberries and fold into the low fat Greek yoghurt or fromage frais and sweeten with the elderflower cordial.
- 2 Spoon into small dishes or glasses and top with a sprig of fresh mint or lemon balm.



## Dinner Party Menu: 4

### Starter: Warm Spinach Salad

Serves: 4

Cooking Time: 2-3 minutes

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 red onion, thinly sliced
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 2 tbsp pine nuts
- 6 sundried tomatoes in oil, drained and cut into strips
- 2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 225g/8oz bag baby spinach
- Handful of fresh basil leaves
- Piece fresh parmesan, flaked

**1** Heat the oil in a frying pan or wok and add sliced onion, garlic and pine nuts. Cook over fairly high heat until nuts begin to brown. Add the sundried tomatoes.

**2** Add the balsamic vinegar, remove from the heat and mix thoroughly. Add the spinach and basil and toss well. Pile onto each serving plate and sprinkle with a few flakes of fresh parmesan. Serve with warm crusty bread.

*The Catalan Spanish have a variation of this dish, adding a few raisins, instead of the sundried tomatoes, and replacing the pine nuts with flaked almonds.*

### Main: Pork Steaks with Wild Mushroom Sauce

Serves: 4

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

- 4 Pork shoulder steaks
- 1 tbsp oil
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 280g/10oz mushrooms, sliced
- 1 tbsp tomato puree
- 1 tbsp redcurrant jelly
- 1/2-1 tsp sweet paprika pepper and a little salt
- 150ml/1/4 pint beef stock
- 150ml/1/4 pint red wine or stock
- 1 tbsp cornflour

**1** Trim any excess fat from the pork. Heat a non-stick frying pan and give it a light spritz of oil. Seal the pork on both sides, then reduce the heat to medium and cook for 3-4 minutes on both sides until cooked through. Remove from the pan and keep warm.

**2** To make the sauce add the oil to the pan, then the garlic and mushrooms and cook, stirring frequently, for 2-3 minutes. Add the tomato puree, redcurrant jelly, and the paprika and salt. Stir to mix, then add the stock and red wine. Mix the cornflour with a little water and stir into sauce, bring to the boil and simmer for a few minutes.

**3** Return the pork to the pan to heat. Serve with rice, new potatoes or polenta and lots of vegetables.

### Dessert: Spice Island Bananas

Serves: 4

- 25g/1oz butter
- 2 tbsp soft brown sugar
- 1 orange
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 4 large bananas
- Rum/Tia Maria
- Low fat ice cream or tropical fruit sorbet

**1** In a large non-stick frying pan melt 25g/1oz of butter and add 2 tablespoons of soft brown sugar.

**2** Add the juice and finely grated rind of an orange and 1 teaspoon of cinnamon. Bubble together before adding 4 large quartered bananas.

**3** Cook together for 2-3 minutes, then pour in a good slug of rum or Tia Maria, or whatever you have.

**4** Serve immediately with low fat ice-cream or tropical fruit sorbet.



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**MEAL  
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## Dinner Party Menu: 5

### Starter: Thyme & Parmesan Polenta with Balsamic Mushrooms

A very easy starter that can be prepared in advance.

- Packet of polenta
- Vegetable stock
- Fresh thyme
- Parmesan
- Mushrooms
- Olive oil
- Balsamic vinegar
- Fresh parsley

- 1 Make instant polenta according to the packet instructions using vegetable stock and fresh thyme to flavour.
- 2 Pour into a flat square cake tin. Dust with grated parmesan and allow to cool.
- 3 Cut into triangles and grill or griddle just before serving. Top with sliced mushrooms cooked in a little olive oil and flavoured with a little balsamic vinegar.
- 4 Garnish with a few flakes of parmesan and fresh thyme and parsley.

### Main: Roasted Vegetable Couscous

Serves: 4

Cooking Time: 30-40 minutes

- 2 large parsnips, peeled
- 2 sticks celery or 1 fennel bulb
- 2 sweet potatoes, peeled
- 1 large red onion
- 2 large courgettes
- 1 large red pepper, deseeded
- 8-12 whole unpeeled cloves garlic
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Few sprigs fresh rosemary and thyme
- 350g/12oz couscous
- 1 tsp cayenne pepper and a little salt
- Juice of 1 lemon
- Chopped fresh coriander

- 1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6
- 2 Cut the parsnips and celery (or fennel) into chunks and cook in boiling salted water for 2-3 minutes, then drain and tip into a greased large roasting tin.
- 3 Add the sweet potato, onion, courgettes and red pepper all cut into large chunks. Sprinkle over the garlic cloves, then drizzle over the oil.
- 4 Toss the vegetables in oil to coat evenly, strew the herbs over the top and roast in the oven for about 30-40 minutes or until golden brown.
- 5 Cook the couscous according to packet instructions, then season with cayenne pepper and salt and lemon juice.
- 6 Serve the couscous on a large dish with the roasted vegetables on top, sprinkled with the coriander.

*There are so many variations to this theme: use your own favourite vegetables – pumpkin and squash are ideal when in season, chickpeas or other beans can be added to make the dish more substantial, raisins and pine nuts can be added to the couscous for extra flavour.*

### Dessert: Watermelon with lime, Mint & Ginger Syrup

Serves: 4

*This wonderfully fresh tasting dessert can be made ahead of time, covered tightly with cling film and refrigerated. If watermelon is not in season, use any another melon or combination of varieties and colours.*

- 4 generous slices of watermelon
- 1 tbsp clear honey
- 2 tbsp shredded fresh mint
- 2 chunks of ginger preserved in syrup

- 1 Cut the melon into chunky cubes and put into a bowl. Add the honey and mint.
- 2 Cut the ginger into very small strips and add to the bowl, together with a tablespoon of the syrup.
- 3 Gently mix everything together and leave for the flavours to mingle for at least an hour.