

HEALTHY LITTLE COOKBOOK WEEK 1



HPNB HEALTHY LITTLE COOKBOOK WEEK 1

Hi all,

I hope this finds you in good health and good spirits.

I have scoured the internet for the best, and tastiest, recipes and am bringing it to you as I had some requests for ideas. Some of the recipes are mine but the fast majority are from others who are credited so please check out their websites if you like their stuff.

It's divided up into 4 weeks and a "Summer edition". I like to build up to the more complex stuff. We'll start nice and simple; with a few great, healthy, dishes that are easy to make and build a fantastic base from which to progress.

Second, you won't find hundreds of "great ideas" for breakfast, lunch and dinner here. As great as a lot of cookbooks are, most of them are just overwhelming and get people looking at pretty pictures, dreaming of what they're going to start cooking tomorrow, of meals they'll never cook.

Most of the meals for week 1 are staples, these are the ones you'll keep going back to time and time again. This is the stuff that's easy to make, delicious and you can just chuck into a pan or throw in the oven.

Please note that the focus here is on health, rather than weightloss. I find that when most people cook from scratch weightloss is not that much of an issue. I also find that "dieting" post-natal means you're focusing on the wrong thing.

I've kept it all as simple as possible, you don't need to be a Masterchef to make any of this stuff, and most of the meals can be made in advance or in batches. Once you get the hang of cooking these dishes you will find that **the entire week's cooking takes no more than 2.5 hours** per week. Once you get handy with this stuff eating healthy is as straight forward as ordering in a take away, and it tastes a lot better.

Enjoy.

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Week 1, breakfasts;

Overnight Oats (BBC Good Food)



Takes less than 5 minutes to make, I usually make a batch for the entire week.

Ingredients per portion;

25-30 grams porridge oats
200ml Milk/Almond milk
75 grams of Yoghurt
Drizzle of honey
Whatever frozen fruit you like. I tend to use berries but cherries etc work just as well.

Method; Chuck it all in a container/jar and leave overnight. This keeps for 4-5 days in the fridge so I tend to make for a full week.

Scrambled Eggs with Smoked Salmon



It doesn't look exciting but it more than does the job. Obviously other fish, protein or veg works as well.

Ingredients;

3 eggs
35 grams of smoked Salmon.
Some salt and pepper (chives if you want)

Method;

Beat eggs in a bowl with some pepper. Stir in the salmon.

Cook very gently in a frying pan for 3-4 minutes, until eggs are softly scrambled. Remove from the heat and stir gently for a few more seconds.

Enjoy.



Week 1; Dinners.

The reason I'm listing the dinners before doing the lunches is because there's nothing nicer, or easier, than having last night's dinner as your lunch. Most of these dinners can be (part) batch cooked and frozen so you can make several of these at the same time and get all your week's cooking done in one afternoon.

All the dinners listed here are easy to cook and, in my opinion, should be part of everyone's repertoire. You simply cannot live a healthy life without cooking your own food.

Over the next few weeks the recipes will get a bit more ambitious, but these meals are my go-to for when I just want to cook a whole batch of food in one go to prepare for a busy week coming up.

VEGETABLE CHILI;



Ingredients

2 Tins of peeled or chopped tomatoes
2 Tins of red kidney beans
3 Peppers
3 Onions
3 Good size carrots
1 pack Coleman's chili mix (or Cajun herb mix)
Some Tomato paste

Add Beef mince/Turkey mince or Quorn is you prefer a protein with it.

Method;

Chop the peppers and onions and slice the carrots.
Sweat the onions, peppers and carrots in a large pan.
Add a squeeze of the tomato paste and stir through.
Add the tins of tomatoes and kidney beans (make sure you rinse the kidney beans properly) and chili mix. Stir well and leave to simmer for 20-25 minutes.

SPAGHETTI BOLOGNESE (BBC GOOD FOOD)



A very simple recipe, takes 30 minutes to cook the sauce but, if you pay close attention to the cottage pie recipe then you'll find a lot of similar steps. It also freezes very well and keeps up to 2 months in the freezer.

Ingredients;

500 Grams beef mince
1 onion
1 celery stick
2 carrots
2 tins of peeled tomatoes
2 garlic cloves
1 beef stock cube
Tomato puree
Italian Herb mix

Method

Heat a large saucepan over a medium heat. Add a tablespoon of olive oil and once hot add the beef mince and a pinch of salt and pepper. Cook the mince until well browned over a medium-high heat (be careful not to burn the mince. It just needs to be a dark brown colour). Once browned, transfer the mince to a bowl and set aside.

Add another tablespoon of oil to the saucepan you browned the mince in and turn the heat to medium. Add the onions, celery and a pinch of salt and fry gently for 5-6 minutes, or until softened and translucent. Add the garlic and cook for another 2 minutes. Add the grated carrot then pour the mince and any juices in the bowl back into the saucepan.

Add the tomatoes to the pan and stir well to mix. Pour in the stock, bring to a simmer and then reduce the temperature to simmer gently for 30-45 minutes, or until the sauce is thick and rich. Add some Italian herb mix. Taste and adjust the seasoning as necessary.

When ready to cook the spaghetti, heat a large saucepan of water and add a pinch of salt. Cook according to the packet instructions. Once the spaghetti is cooked through, drain and add to the pan with the bolognese sauce. Mix well and serve.

COTTAGE PIE



A firm favourite of mine as it's easy to make, another one where you put everything in a big pot and then to chuck in the oven whilst doing other things and it keeps very well. Note my Mash cheat and that you can buy all the veg frozen, chopped already.

Ingredients;

Some olive oil (Vegetable oil will work just as well)
1 ¼ Kg Beef Mince
2 Onions (Finely chopped)
3 Carrots (chopped)
3 Sticks of celery (chopped)
2 Garlic cloves (finely chopped)
3 Table spoons of flour
1 Table spoon tomato puree
Optional red wine (1 glass)
850ml Beef stock
4 Table spoons Worcestershire sauce
3 Thyme sprigs
2 Bay leaves

For the mash;

1.8Kg Potatoes
225ml Milk
25g Butter
Some nutmeg or cinnamon (whatever you prefer)
Or just buy frozen mash

Method

Heat 1 tbsp oil in a large saucepan and fry the mince until browned – you may need to do this in batches. Set aside as it browns. Put the rest of the oil into the pan, add the vegetables and cook on a gentle heat until soft, about 20 mins. Add the garlic, flour and tomato purée, increase the heat and cook for a few mins, then return the beef to the pan. Pour over the wine, if using, and boil to reduce it slightly before adding the stock, Worcestershire sauce and herbs. Bring to a simmer and cook, uncovered, for 45 mins. By this time the gravy should be thick and coating the meat. Check after about 30 mins – if a lot of liquid remains, increase the heat slightly to reduce the gravy a little. Season well, then discard the bay leaves and thyme stalks.

Meanwhile, make the mash. In a large saucepan, cover the potatoes in salted cold water, bring to the boil and simmer until tender. Drain well, then allow to steam-dry for a few mins. Mash well with the milk, butter, then season with the nutmeg and some salt and pepper. **OR just buy it frozen and pre made. Defrost in the microwave and job done**

Spoon meat into 2 ovenproof dishes. Pipe or spoon on the mash to cover. If eating straight away, heat oven to 220C/200C fan/gas 7 and cook for 25-30 mins, or until the topping is golden.

SALAD LEAF BEEF MINCE OR CHICKEN TACOS



This is the easiest thing in the world to make and, if you make it with chicken instead of beef, it's extremely lean and tasty. The salad leaf works really well as a replacement taco shell.

Ingredients;

500 grams Beef/Turkey mince or pieces of chicken.
1 Large onion
2 diced tomatoes
1 cup of grated cheese
Some taco/cajun seasoning (to taste) You can buy the pre-made mixes, they're fine.
3 Heart of Romaine lettuces
Salsa
Sour Cream

Method;

In a large skillet, over medium-high heat, add the mince/chicken and onion. Stir until meat is cooked. Drain grease.

Add the taco seasoning and water to skillet. Stir until mixture comes to a boil. Reduce heat to low and let simmer 10 minutes.

Rinse the lettuce leaves in cold water to clean. Pat dry with paper towels. Take 1/3 cup of meat mixture and place in the center of lettuce leaf. Top with a little cheese, tomato, salsa and sour cream.

ROAST BEEF/CHICKEN WITH POTATOES AND VEG



This is one of those things that frightens some people but is actually one of the easiest things in the world to cook. It's a classic "chuck everything into a pot, roast and eat" recipe and it keeps for a fair while. Obviously you can do the roast with chicken or pork as well.

Ingredients;
3 sprigs rosemary, leaves picked and finely chopped
3 tbsp wholegrain mustard
6 tbsp rapeseed oil
2 tbsp sunflower oil
1 onion, quartered
1 bulb garlic, halved
750g (1 1/2lb) parsnips
2kg (4lb) Good quality British Beef topside roasting joint
1.5kg (3 1/2lb) potatoes, peeled
3 tbsp runny honey
325g (7oz) broccoli, cut into small florets
25g (1oz) butter, softened
zest and juice of 1/2 lemon

Method;

One hour before you're ready to cook, remove beef from the fridge. Heat oven to gas mark 9, 240°C, fan 220°C. Mix together the rosemary, mustard, 3 tbsp oil and seasoning. Arrange the onion, garlic and parsnips in a large roasting tray. Toss half the mustard mix through the veg, sit the beef on top. Rub over the remaining mustard mix and roast for 15 mins.

Meanwhile bring a pan of salted water to the boil. Add the potatoes, cover and simmer for 5 mins. Drain well, return to the pan and shake to fluff them up. Pour the remaining oil into a roasting tin and heat in the oven. Spoon the potatoes into the hot fat, coating well, then season.

Reduce oven to gas mark 5, 190°C, fan 170°C. Continue to roast for 1 hr 10 mins, turning the vegetables once or twice. Add the potatoes to the oven on the shelf below the beef 30 mins before the end of the cooking time making sure to turn them a couple of times. About 15 mins before the end of the cooking time drizzle the honey over the beef and parsnips. This is for medium beef, adjust the cooking time if you prefer it rare or well done.

Remove the beef from the tray, cover and rest for 30 mins. Return the vegetables and potatoes to the oven to crisp them up. Steam the broccoli for 3-5 mins, or until tender. Mash together the butter, lemon zest and juice, and season before tossing through the hot broccoli. Heat the gravy.

Slice the beef and serve with the parsnips, potatoes, broccoli and gravy.

STEAK AND STEAMED VEG



There is nothing more beautiful than a nicely cooked steak and everyone should be able to cook one to perfection.

Ingredients;

1 Steak
1 or 2 bags of Frozen Vegetables that can be steamed in the microwave.

Method;

Make sure steak is at room temperature before you start cooking.
Oil the steak, season on one side and put a frying pan on high heat.
When the pan is hot enough put the steak on, 6 minutes for medium rare, turning every minute.
After cooking have the steak rest on a WARM plate for 3-4 minutes. Whilst resting rub it with a bit of butter and it'll be even juicier.
At the same time throw the bag of frozen veg in the microwave and cook for the duration listed on the bag.

Week 1 Lunches;

Lunch is that kind of meal where it goes wrong for a lot of people. If you're used to grabbing a sandwich, a packet of crisps and a coke then you're in real trouble come 3 o'clock. Also, a sandwich, packet of crisps and a coke is not a meal for an adult, it's what kids eat (even though they shouldn't). If you are taking care of a baby it gets even more difficult as you'll quite often just end up grabbing whatever's nearest or easiest.

Ideally you want lunch to be a real meal. It should be nourishing, filling and enjoyable. Ideally you should be able to take 30 minutes or so to sit down and enjoy it, rather than shove a sandwich into your mouth whilst on the go. But we should be honest and admit that 30 minutes of peace and quiet doesn't happen that often when you have a baby. **OK, it never happens so we can kiss that goodbye and stop beating ourselves up if we do have a sandwich every now and again.**

As I mentioned above, a lot of my lunches tend to be left-overs from dinner, I make almost everything in large batches as 2 kilos of chili takes just as long to make as 2 bowls do.

If my freezer/fridge is full of homemade meals I have a chance to eat healthy, if I have to make everything on the day I'll struggle, especially with lunch.

LENTIL SOUP;



Always popular and quite filling, I tend to have a soup like this with a bit of chicken breast rather than flat bread for a more filling, and lower-carb, lunch. This also always tends better a day or so after making it.

Ingredients;

2 cups red lentils, picked over and rinsed
1 serrano chili pepper, chopped (remove seeds for less heat)
1 large tomato, roughly chopped
1/2-inch piece ginger, peeled and grated
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1/4 teaspoon ground turmeric
A bit of salt
1/4 cup roughly chopped fresh Coriander, plus more for topping
1/4 cup Greek yogurt

Method;

Combine the lentils and 7 cups warm water in a pot, cover and bring to a boil. Add the chile pepper, tomato, ginger, garlic, turmeric and 2 teaspoons salt. Partially cover and simmer over medium-low heat, stirring frequently, until thickened, 18 to 20 minutes. Stir in the coriander. Thin the soup with water, if desired, and season with salt. Mix the yogurt with 2 teaspoons water and a pinch of salt in a small bowl. Ladle the soup into bowls and top with the yogurt and more cilantro. Serve with naan.

MINI MEATLOAVES



Now these don't look great but they taste amazing. Tasty salad on the side and that's lunch sorted. Make a batch, have them cool down and then freeze them. They do keep for a solid 5 days or so.

I add gherkins and chilies to the recipe but anything pickled works very nicely as well.

Ingredients;

500 grams sausage meat or turkey mince
500 grams of beef mince
80 grams of porridge oats
70 grams of brown sauce
2 eggs, beaten.
2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
Some salt to taste (1/2 teaspoon is enough for me)

Method;

Preheat the oven to 200 degrees
Mix all ingredients in a bowl, mix very well.
Divide mixture into 12 balls, or however many go into your muffin tray
Throw in the oven for approx. 30 minutes, depending on how deep your muffin tray is.
Cool down, or eat one hot if you're greedy, and keep in the fridge or freezer.

Caramelized chicken legs or drumsticks



Marinate when buying, throw in the freezer and cook in a batch when needed. You can just throw these in the oven at the start of the week and then grab whenever you're hungry, it's easier than making a sandwich!!

Ingredients;

2 ½ lbs chicken legs
1 ⅔ tablespoons olive oil (to help it stop sticking to the pan)
½ cup soy sauce
1 ⅔ tablespoons ketchup
¾ cup honey
2 -3 garlic cloves, minced

Method;

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit or 180 degrees Celsius.
Place chicken in a 9 x 13 inch baking dish. Mix together the oil, soy sauce, ketchup, honey, garlic, salt and pepper.
Pour over the chicken.
Bake in preheated oven for one hour, or until sauce is caramelized.
Could also use wings or pork ribs.



Credit where it's due; Thanks to BBC, Genius, Good food etc. for the use of the pictures and some of the recipes listed in week 1. Thanks to HDwallpaper.com for the picture on the cover