

THURSDAY - DINNER

Emily's Feta Cheese Couscous

Serves 2 (each serving contains approximately 571 kcal, 26g protein, 19g fat, 77g carbohydrates)

The Ingredients

300ml boiling water
150g wholemeal couscous
1 small courgette (150g)
250g green beans
15g fresh flat-leaf parsley
15g snipped fresh chives
150g feta cheese
1 lemon
1 mild red chilli
1 teaspoon rapeseed or olive oil (5g)
50g baby spinach leaves
Freshly ground black pepper

The Method

Pour the boiling water over the couscous. Cover with clingfilm and set aside for 5 minutes.

Trim the courgette and using a vegetable peeler, cut into ribbons. Trim down the green beans, then in half on the diagonal. Place the green beans in a petal steamer fitted into a pan. Steam the green beans for 2 minutes, then add the courgettes and steam for another 1 minute.

Strip the leaves from the parsley and finely chop. Snip the chives into small pieces. Crumble the feta and cut the lemon in half, then cut one half into wedges. Cut the red chilli in half, then remove the seeds and finely chop.

Fluff up the couscous with a fork and fold in enough lemon juice to taste with the oil and then gently fold in the steamed vegetables with the feta cheese, spinach leaves and chilli. Season with pepper. Arrange Emily's vegetable couscous in bowls and add a lemon wedge to each one to serve.

*Suitable for vegetarians

FRIDAY - DINNER

Fish Tacos

The Fish Taco recipe was created by the Home Economics transition year students from Cashel Community School, Tipperary.

Serves 2 (each serving contains approximately 542 kcal, 36g protein, 20g fat, 59g carbohydrates)

The Ingredients

2 teaspoons rapeseed or olive oil (10g)
250g boneless & skinless white fish fillets (such as cod, haddock or hake)
1 teaspoon ground cumin (5g)
1 teaspoon ground coriander (5g)
1 teaspoons smoked paprika (5g)
2 limes
50g piece red cabbage
1 tomato (100g)
1 small ripe avocado (75g)
4 scallions (75g)
4 small wholemeal wraps (160g)
4 tablespoons natural yoghurt (60g)
Freshly ground black pepper

The Method

Preheat the grill to high. Line a baking tray with tin foil and brush with a teaspoon of the oil. Add the fish fillets and then sprinkle over the cumin, coriander and paprika. Cut one of the limes in half and squeeze over the juice from one half. Season with pepper and then drizzle over the remaining teaspoon of oil. Place under the grill for 8-10 minutes or until the fish is cooked and starting to scorch in places.

Trim, core and thinly slice the cabbage. Chop the tomatoes into small pieces and put in a bowl. Cut the avocado in half and remove the stone, then scoop out the flesh and chop. Trim and finely chop the scallions. Stir the avocado and scallions into the tomatoes and squeeze in the juice of half of the second lime. Season with pepper.

Cut the remaining half a lime into wedges to use as a garnish. Heat a non-stick frying pan and cook the wraps for 20 seconds on each side. Test with a small knife to ensure the fish is cooked through.

Divide the cabbage among the wraps on plates and top with the tomato & avocado salsa. Flake the fish into big chunks and using a tongs add to the wraps. Add a tablespoon of yoghurt to each one. Garnish with the lime wedges to serve.

* Suitable for vegetarians if plant-based alternative is used instead of fish

SATURDAY - DINNER

Burger & Chips

Serves 2 (each serving contains approximately 505 kcal, 32g protein, 19g fat, 53g carbohydrates)

The Ingredients

3 tomatoes
¼ cucumber
10g little Gem lettuce leaves
80g baby spinach leaves
250g potatoes
1 tablespoon rapeseed or olive oil (15g)
2 x 100g lean <5% fat steak burgers (you can ask your local butcher to make these for you, or make them yourself)
2 small seeded brown burger buns
1 teaspoon mustard (5g)
1 teaspoon tomato ketchup (5g)
1 small pickled gherkin (well drained – 15g)
Freshly ground black pepper

The Method

Preheat the oven to 200°C, (400°F), gas mark 6. Cut one of the tomatoes into slices and dice the remaining two. Dice the cucumber. Trim the lettuce leaves. Arrange the spinach, diced tomatoes and cucumber into small serving bowls and set aside until needed.

Cut the potatoes into 1cm chips, leaving the skin on and blanch in a large pan of boiling water for 3 minutes, then drain well.

Shake the potatoes out onto a roasting tin lined with parchment paper and drizzle over the oil. Toss with tongs until evenly coated. Bake for 20-25 minutes until crisp and golden brown, turning the potatoes at least twice to ensure they cook evenly.

Meanwhile to make the burgers, heat a griddle or non-stick frying pan over a medium to high heat. Season the burgers with pepper, then add to the pan and reduce the heat to medium. Cook the burgers for 4 minutes on each side until cooked through and nicely charred. Test with a small knife to ensure they are cooked through.

Meanwhile, toast the burger buns and smear the bottoms with the mustard and the tops with the ketchup. Add the lettuce and tomatoes to the bottom halves and put a burger on top. Slice the gherkins and add to the burgers, then finish with the top. Arrange on the plates with the chips and serve alongside the salad.

* Suitable for vegetarians if plant-based alternative is used instead of beef

SUNDAY – DINNER

Stefano's Creamy Chicken & Mushroom Pasta

The 2024 OT Food plan would not be complete without a pasta dish from our 2022 Leader Stefano Sweetman, this dish is one of his husband Gerard's favourites.

Serves 2 (each serving contains approximately 583 kcal, 65g protein, 20g fat, 42g carbohydrates)

The Ingredients

1 lean bacon medallion
2 skinless chicken fillets (300g)
200g mushrooms
2 garlic cloves
100g wholewheat penne pasta
1 tablespoon rapeseed or olive oil (15g)
1 teaspoon dried chilli flakes
125g light cream cheese
200g baby spinach leaves
Freshly ground black pepper

The Method

Cut the bacon medallion into small pieces. Dice the chicken into small pieces. Cut the mushrooms into thin slices. Peel and crush the garlic.

Cook the penne in a pan of boiling water for 10-12 minutes or according to packet instructions until just tender.

Meanwhile, heat a large non-stick frying pan over a medium heat. Add the oil and then the bacon and chicken. Season lightly with pepper and sauté for 2-3 minutes until the chicken is sealed and lightly golden.

Tip in the mushrooms and then stir in the garlic and chill flakes. Continue to sauté for another 2-3 minutes until the mushrooms are tender. Fold in the cream cheese until evenly combined. Add the spinach, then cover with a lid and leave for 1 minute to wilt.

Drain the penne in a colander in the sink, reserving half a teacup of the pasta water and return to the pan. Fold in the creamy chicken mixture, adding a little of the reserved pasta water if necessary to make a smooth creamy sauce. Test with a small knife to ensure the chicken is cooked through.

Divide the creamy chicken and mushroom pasta into bowls and add a good grinding of black pepper to serve.

*Suitable for vegetarians if a plant-based alternative is used instead of bacon and chicken

* Suitable for batch cooking

MONDAY - DINNER

Veggie Spag Bol

Serves 2 (each serving contains approximately 565 kcal, 26g protein, 12g fat, 95g carbohydrates)

The Ingredients

1 onion (150g)
2 garlic cloves
1 carrot (150g)
1 celery stick
100g mushrooms
1 tablespoon rapeseed or olive oil (15g)
2 teaspoons dried Italian seasoning
400g tin green lentils, drained and rinsed
1 tablespoon tomato puree (15g)
400g tin chopped tomatoes
½ reduced sodium vegetable stock cube
100g wholewheat spaghetti
2 teaspoons freshly grated Parmesan (10g)
Freshly ground black pepper

The Method

Cut the onion in half, then peel and finely chop. Peel and crush the garlic. Peel, trim and finely chop the carrot. Trim and finely chop the celery. Dice the mushrooms.

Heat a large non-stick frying pan over a medium heat. Add the oil and then tip in all the prepared vegetables and Italian seasoning and sauté for about 5 minutes until softened with a little colour.

Tip the lentils into the vegetable mixture, then season with pepper and cook for 1-2 minutes until evenly combined.

Stir in the tomato purée and crumble in the stock cube, then cook for another minute, stirring. Pour in the chopped tomatoes, stirring to combine. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer gently for about 15 minutes until the lentils are piping hot and tender, stirring occasionally.

Meanwhile, cook the spaghetti in a pan of boiling water for 10-12 minutes or according to packet instructions until just tender. Drain in a colander in the sink and return to the pan. Fold in the veggie Bolognese sauce until evenly combined and then divide among bowls and scatter over the Parmesan to serve.

NOTE: If you are short of time, instead of making the sauce from scratch use a 430g jar Bolognese sauce (no more than 5g sugar and 3g fat – check the label).

*Suitable for vegetarians

TUESDAY - DINNER

Speedy Turkey & Tomato Penne Pasta

Serves 2 (each serving contains approximately 546 kcal, 33g protein, 18g fat, 65g carbohydrates)

The Ingredients

150g wholewheat penne pasta
4 turkey rashers (100g)
1 garlic clove
1 tablespoon rapeseed or olive oil (15g)
400g passata (Italian sieved tomatoes)
30g baby spinach leaves
Small handful fresh basil leaves (5g)
40g freshly grated Parmesan
2 teaspoons pumpkin seeds (10g)
Freshly ground black pepper

The Method

Bring a large pan of water to the boil. Tip in the penne and give it one stir, then simmer for 10-12 minutes or according to packet instructions until just tender.

Cut the turkey rashers into small pieces. Peel and crush the garlic.

Heat a large non-stick frying pan over a medium to high heat. Add the oil and then tip in the turkey rashers and garlic. Sauté for 2-3 minutes until lightly golden. Pour in the passata and season with pepper. Bring to a simmer, then reduce the heat and simmer for another minute or two, adding a little of the pasta water if you think the sauce needs it.

Drain the penne and tip into the turkey and tomato sauce with the spinach and tear in the basil. Gently mix until the spinach has wilted.

Divide the turkey and tomato penne into bowls and scatter over the Parmesan and pumpkin seeds to serve.

* Suitable for vegetarians if plant-based alternative is used instead of turkey rashers

WEDNESDAY - DINNER

Black Bean Stir Fry with Noodles

Serves 2 (each serving contains approximately 525 kcal, 22g protein, 12g fat, 85g carbohydrates)

The Ingredients

100g wholewheat noodles
1 onion (150g)
1 small red pepper (150g)
1 carrot (150g)
150g mangetout
1 garlic clove
5cm piece fresh root ginger (10g)
1 tablespoon rapeseed or olive oil (15g)
400g tin black beans, drained and rinsed
2 tbsp reduced salt soy sauce (30g)
½ teaspoon dried chilli flakes, (2.5g)
2 teaspoons toasted sesame seeds (10g)
1 tablespoon honey (20g)

The Method

Place the noodles in a pan and cover with water. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 2-3 minutes until soft but have a slight chew.

Meanwhile, peel the onion, then cut in half and thinly slice. Remove the core from the red pepper and cut the flesh into thin slices. Peel the carrot and cut into matchsticks. Cut the mangetout into strips. Peel the garlic and ginger and then finely grate.

Heat a wok or large non-stick frying pan over a high heat. Add the oil and then tip in the onion and stir-fry for 1-2 minutes until just beginning to colour. Tip in the chilli flakes, tossing to combine. Add the garlic and ginger, red pepper, carrot and stir-fry for another 2-3 minutes until the vegetables are tender but still crunchy, adding a tablespoon of water if you think it needs it.

Tip in the black beans and cooked noodles, then sprinkle over the soy sauce and honey. Continue to stir-fry for a minute or so until the beans and noodles are hot. Add the mangetout and stir-fry for another minute.

Divide the black bean stir-fry with noodles into bowls and scatter over the sesame seeds to serve.

* Suitable for vegetarians