

Eating while Self Isolating

Adapted from: <https://www.bupa.co.uk/newsroom/ourviews/eat-healthily-when-self-isolating>

Since we're all staying at home over the coming weeks in a bid to stay safe and well, it's tempting to turn to comfort or convenience foods, particularly if you can't get to the supermarket or you're feeling stressed or anxious. What's more, without your usual routine of travelling to class or work, gym membership or sports clubs, you might not be burning as many calories as normal.

But eating a healthy diet and being mindful of your portion sizes can help you to maintain a healthy weight, support your mental health, keep your immune system healthy and your energy levels up during your time indoors. While there's no need to buy more food than you need, there are lots of ingredients in your cupboards to help create a nutritious meal. What's more, cooking and baking are great activities that can help pass the time and take your mind off things.

Store Cupboard Heroes

Wholegrains

Wholegrain carbohydrates are a great source of fibre, B vitamins, folic acid, antioxidants and micronutrients. They release their energy slowly, helping you to feel fuller for longer.

Examples include wholemeal and wholegrain bread, brown rice, wholewheat pasta, wholegrain breakfast cereals, oats and potatoes with the skin left on.

Pulses

Pulses such as beans, peas and lentils are a great source of plant-based protein, fibre and other nutrients. You can get pulses either dried or tinned and they'll live in your kitchen cupboards for years.

Fruit and vegetables

Fruit and vegetables are a great source of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and fibre that help to protect your body from disease. Fresh, frozen, tinned, dried and juiced varieties all count towards a healthy diet.

Vegetables like sweet potatoes, pumpkin, butternut squash, beetroot and onions will stay fresh for longer than other varieties – so make good use of these. If you can't get fresh fruit and vegetables, it's a good idea to use frozen varieties instead - try using frozen fruit to make smoothies and add frozen vegetables like spinach, garden peas and sweetcorn to soups, stews, curries and casseroles.

Nuts and seeds

Nuts and seeds are a good source of protein and healthy fats. They'll also last for years in your cupboards without going off. Try adding a tablespoon of mixed nuts and seeds to your breakfast cereal, snacking on a handful or using them in soups and salads.

Spices and seasoning

See what herbs and spices are hiding among your spice rack and use them to pack your meals with flavour. Try:

- using ground ginger, garlic powder and onion powder if you can't get fresh
- sprinkling ground cinnamon and nutmeg over your morning oats

- using dried herbs such as oregano, coriander and basil in pasta dishes
- adding spices like ground turmeric, garam masala, paprika, cumin and chilli powder to curries
- cutting down on salt by using pepper instead

Tinned foods

Some of the tinned foods gathering dust in the back of your cupboard might be more nutritious than you think. Try using up old tins of:

- lentils, beans and chickpeas
- soups
- tomatoes
- coconut milk
- fish such as salmon, mackerel and tuna
- baked beans

Vitamin D

Vitamin D helps your body to absorb calcium and keep your bones, muscles and teeth healthy. It's found in oily fish, eggs, meat, milk, margarine and fortified breakfast cereals and yoghurts.

Rules for Batch Cooking & Freezing

Adapted from:

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/rules-of-batch-cooking_n_8401718?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAHMao-fQz5J7NwLO7H-ndK4EGxEvPe3bjetzRiBn-yuByMcfAX9GCJmXBPLXnqpygMeVmKUuDh-7uoqEliftXtu3OR4klKg0sY7Ak4ph3GYruOqA6Krbm4kk24ja4eniPqDgAFD2nqvNuW8OGXDq5sosMg2VAVFVlfedezMec-n

Freeze this, not that!

Most things freeze beautifully, including rice, meatballs, oatmeal, quinoa, sauces, soups, breads, fruit, beans, casseroles, chili, muffins and pies.

But there are some things that don't freeze well at all. Mayonnaise, low-fat cream cheese, uncooked potatoes and lettuce all get funky in the freezer.

Use muffin tins for perfect portions

Store food in the freezer as individual servings. Using smaller portions makes food quicker to reheat and helps you waste less. And embrace muffin tins! They're perfect for freezing individual portions food items such as soup.

Give yourself headspace

Before you can freeze anything, you must make sure that it's wrapped carefully and that you squeeze out any excess air. Doing both prevents the enemy of batch cooking, freezer burn. And when you freeze soup, give yourself what's called "headspace," a little room (generally half an inch to an inch) between the soup and the lid for expansion.

Cooking more doesn't need to be complicated.

Cook what you would cook normally, but more of it. Double, triple or, depending on the size of your family and your saucepans, quadruple it.

Don't be "old school" when defrosting

If left too long, bacteria can grow and produce toxins. Defrost perishable food slowly and safely in the fridge, or by submerging it in cold water (making frequent water changes).

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/rules-of-batch-cooking_n_8401718?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAHMao-fQz5J7NwLO7H-ndK4EGxEvPe3bjetzRiBn-yuByMcfAX9GCJmXBPLXnqpygMeVmKUuDh-7uoqEliftXtu3OR4klKg0sY7Ak4ph3GYruOqA6Krbm4kk24ja4eniPqDgAFD2nqvNuW8OGXDq5sosMg2VAVFVlfedezMec-n

Store Cupboard Heroes

Stuck for ways to make tasty, hearty meals from your store cupboard ingredients? Jamie's got you covered:

<https://www.jamieoliver.com/features/store-cupboard-heroes-4-ways-with-chillies/>

<https://www.jamieoliver.com/features/store-cupboard-heroes-and-maximising-flavour>

<https://www.jamieoliver.com/features/leftover-heroes-stale-bread/>

Sweet Treat Recipe: Vegan & gluten free banana bread

So you've got a little extra time on your hands... Why not put it to good use and try your hand at baking this delicious vegan banana bread, which is also free from gluten and refined sugar? Perfect for those with dietary restrictions, it's a delicious and healthy treat for everyone and a fun activity for novice and advanced bakers alike.

Pro tip: This works best with really overripe, almost black bananas, so it's the perfect way to use up that fruit you left sitting for too long... Overripe bananas also freeze really well – just thaw them before use in this recipe.

Ingredients

130g Gram Flour

70g Ground Almonds

1 tsp Gluten Free Baking Powder

½ tsp Bicarbonate of Soda

Pinch Salt

2 Ripe Bananas

3 Medjool Dates

1 tbsp Maple Syrup

1 tbsp Coconut oil

70g Raisins

30g Flaked Almonds

Method

- Pre-heat the oven to 180 degrees Celsius and prepare a medium-sized loaf tin by greasing it with a little coconut oil.
- Place the flour, ground almonds, baking powder, bicarb and salt in a bowl and whisk together.
 - Soak the medjool dates for 10 minutes in warm water.
 - Meanwhile, mash the bananas with the back of a fork to form a smooth puree.
- Remove the stone from the dates and place in a small chopper or hand blender along with the maple syrup and blitz to form a thick, sticky paste.
- Melt the coconut oil in a small pan on the hob ... this will take mere seconds, be sure not to let it boil.
- Whisk the pureed banana, date paste and melted coconut oil together, along with two tablespoons of water, until thoroughly combined.
 - Stir the raisins into the flour, ensuring they are evenly dispersed.
- Make a well in the centre of the flour and pour in the banana mixture. Fold gently until everything is combined before transferring to the loaf tin. The batter will be quite thick so spread it out using a spatula before sprinkling over the flaked almonds.

Bake for 30-35 minutes. Let it cool for 10 minutes before removing from the tin. Place on a cooling rack for a further 30 minutes. Cut into thick slices and serve.

Adapted from: <https://www.ainecarlin.com/ainecarlin/2015/04/27/gluten-free-banana-bread>

Cheap & Healthy Recipes

Roasted aubergine & tomato curry

600g baby aubergines, sliced into rounds

3 tbsp olive oil

2 onions, finely sliced

2 garlic cloves, crushed

1 tsp garam masala

1 tsp turmeric 1 tsp ground coriander

400ml can chopped tomatoes

400ml can coconut milk pinch of sugar (optional)

½ small pack coriander, roughly chopped rice or chapatis, to serve

Method Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Toss the aubergines in a roasting tin with 2 tbsp olive oil, season well and spread out. Roast for 20 mins or until dark golden and soft. Heat the remaining oil in an ovenproof pan or flameproof casserole dish and cook the onions over a medium heat for 5-6 mins until softening.

Stir in the garlic and spices, for a few mins until the spices release their aromas. Tip in the tomatoes, coconut milk and roasted aubergines, and bring to a gentle simmer. Simmer for 20-25 mins, removing the lid for the final 5 mins to thicken the sauce.

Add a little seasoning if you like, and a pinch of sugar if it needs it. Stir through most of the coriander. Serve over rice or with chapatis, scattering with the remaining coriander.

Herby rice with roasted veg, chickpeas & halloumi

2 red onions, cut into chunky wedges

3 peppers, sliced (we used green, red and yellow)

3 courgettes (about 600g), cut into batons

5 tbsp olive oil

200g brown basmati rice

small pack flat-leaf parsley

85g cashew nuts

1 garlic clove, crushed

400g can chickpeas, drained and rinsed

200g halloumi, cut into chunky cubes

Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Put the red onions, peppers and courgettes in a large roasting tin, toss in 2 tbsp oil and season. (You may need to do this in 2 tins.) Pop in the oven and cook for 25 mins until the veg is tender and beginning to turn golden.

Meanwhile, cook the rice following pack instructions. Whizz together the parsley, cashew nuts, remaining oil, the garlic and seasoning to make a pesto. Stir the chickpeas and halloumi into the roasted veg and cook for 10 mins more. Fork the parsley pesto through the rice, spoon over the veg and serve.

Lentil & sweet potato curry

- 2 tbsp vegetable or olive oil
- 1 red onion, chopped
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 tsp mustard seeds (any colour)
- 1 tbsp medium curry powder
- 100g red or green lentil, or a mixture
- 2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
- 500ml vegetable stock
- 400g can chopped tomato
- 400g can chickpea, drained
- ¼ small pack coriander (optional)
- natural yogurt and naan bread, to serve

Heat 2 tbsp vegetable or olive oil in a large pan, add 1 chopped red onion and cook for a few mins until softened.

Add 1 tsp cumin seeds, 1 tsp mustard seeds and 1 tbsp medium curry powder and cook for 1 min more, then stir in 100g red or green lentils (or a mixture), 2 medium sweet potatoes, cut into chunks, 500ml vegetable stock and a 400g can chopped tomatoes.

Bring to the boil, then cover and simmer for 20 mins until the lentils and sweet potatoes are tender. Add a drained 400g can chickpeas, then heat through.

Season, sprinkle with ¼ small pack coriander, if you like, and serve with seasoned yogurt and naan bread.

Staying Healthy & Active

While you may not be able to stick to your normal routine—you know, of going to work, going shopping, meeting friends for coffee and doing your usual physical activities - you can create a new routine at home which includes alternative ways to keep active. As tempting as it may be to stay in bed and work in your PJs, in the long run this is bound to have a detrimental effect on your overall mood.

Walk More

When it comes to staying active without the gym, walking is one of the easiest, most convenient activities you can do. To burn calories, all you have to do is walk faster and devote more time to each walk. For the most benefit, use a pedometer to keep track of how much you're walking, and slowly work up to 10,000 steps a day. Brisk walking can burn more than 200 calories in 30 minutes, depending on your weight and the intensity of your workout. Make sure you maintain appropriate social distancing and try to walk in your local area rather than travelling to 'beauty spots' which can quickly become overcrowded in the circumstances.

Walk the Dog

Pets need activity, and actually can be your own accountability friend to get at least a short walk in daily. Even if the dog only forces you to get up and let it out without going for a walk, you will have burned more calories than if you sat in front of the television all day. Like walking by yourself, walking a dog can help burn around 200 calories for every half-hour of exercise.

Home Workout

Dig out your old Davina McCall workout DVD and stick it on the television, or, if you don't have any DVDs, try one of Joe Wicks's many at-home workouts. There are hundreds to choose from on his YouTube channel, totally free of charge and tailored for different ages and abilities, so there's no need to feel overwhelmed or like you don't know which one to go for.

Clean Your House

Cleaning your home regularly is another way to ensure that you stay active during the week. Cleaning your house can incorporate a variety of muscle groups without you even realizing it. Dragging around a heavy vacuum isn't an easy task, especially if you are going up and down stairs. A 150-pound person can burn 85 calories per half hour through light cleaning, while vigorous cleaning burns 102 calories in 30 minutes.

Cook at Home

Most people don't think of cooking as exercise, but preparing food at home certainly burns more calories — and usually causes you to consume fewer calories — than eating out or ordering in. The best way to control what goes in your mouth is to plan ahead and have a home-cooked meal. Plus, thanks to activity such as standing, light lifting, and chopping, a 150-pound person can blast 78 calories in 30 minutes of cooking.

Alternative @Home Activities

- Embroidery
- Sewing
- Pickling
- Crocheting
- Making music

- Restoring furniture
- Pottery
- Origami
- Candle making
- Flower pressing
- Baking
- Reading
- Writing
- Scrapbooking

Stay in Touch...

Keep in regular phone contact with friends and family. Making an extra effort during this difficult time will not only keep everyone connected, but will help you not to feel as if you're losing touch with the outside world. Talking to others also helps to maintain cognition and prevent depression. This is especially important for the over 70s who will potentially be isolated for a long period of time, so make sure to check in with any grandparents, parents or other friends and relatives who fall into this category at least once every other day.

Recipe Ideas

Still stuck for quick, healthy recipe ideas? Try some of these links:

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/quick-and-healthy>

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/cheap-and-healthy>

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/healthy-vegan>

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/healthy-vegetarian>

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/student>

<https://realfood.tesco.com/student-recipes.html>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/how-to-prepare-and-cook-food-safely/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/20-tips-to-eat-well-for-less/>