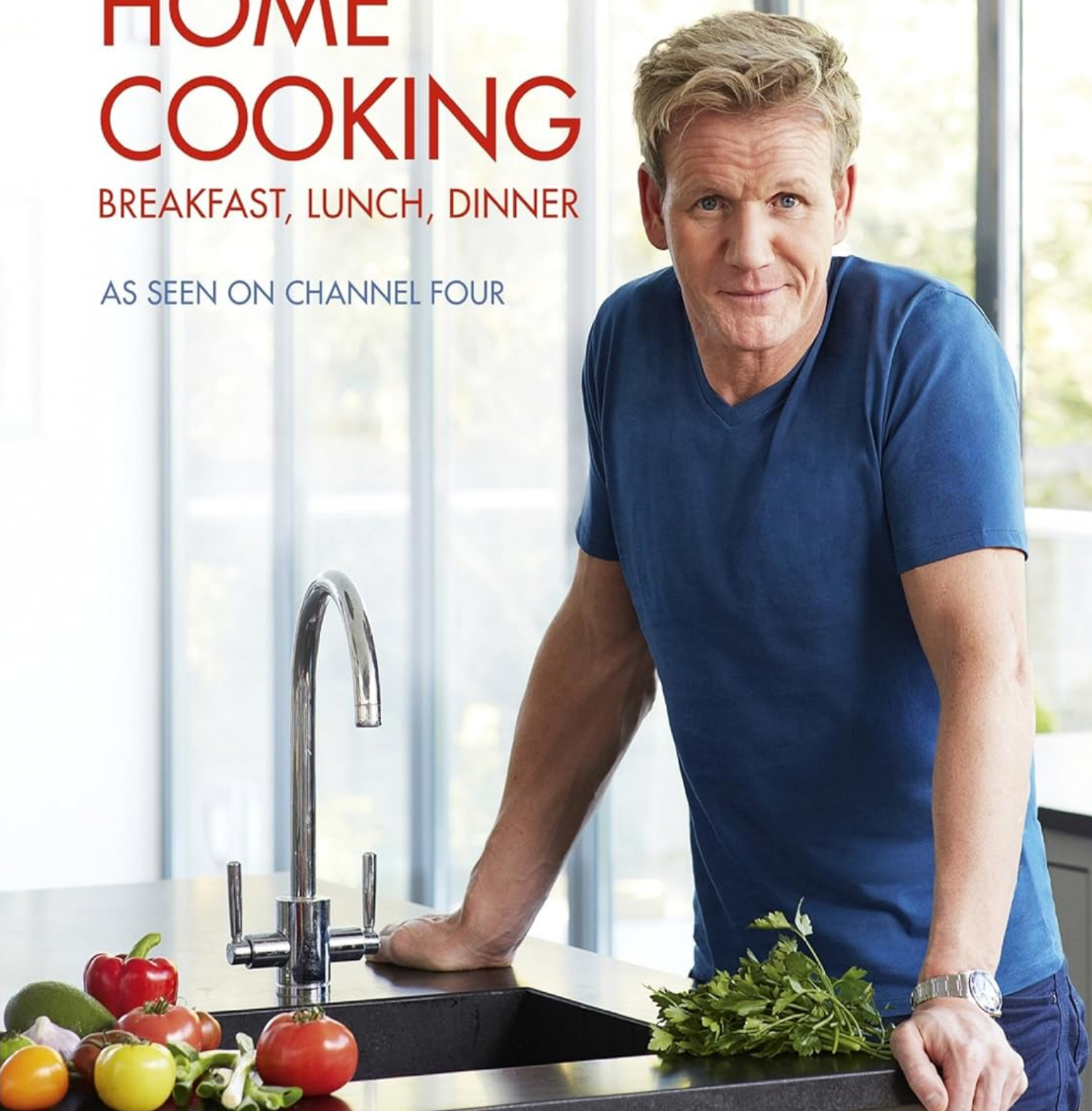


GORDON RAMSAY'S ULTIMATE HOME COOKING

BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

AS SEEN ON CHANNEL FOUR



GORDON RAMSAY'S ULTIMATE HOME COOKING



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CONTENTS

COVER

TITLE PAGE

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INTRODUCTION

BREAKFAST AND BRUNCH

Home-made granola

Quick Bircher muesli

Spiced baked porridge

Tangy fruit salad

Crispy filo with honeyed yoghurt

Cinnamon eggy bread with quick stewed apple

Eggs Benedict with crispy Parma ham

Boiled eggs with anchovy soldiers

Spiced egg and spinach breakfast wrap

Fennel sausage frittata

Merguez-sausage-and-Fontina-stuffed croissants

Smoked haddock and spinach baked eggs

Home-made baked beans with potato cakes

Hash brown baked eggs with candied bacon

Baked spicy Mexican eggs

SOUPS, BREADS AND SANDWICHES

Creamy tomato soup with sundried tomato pesto

Gazpacho

Spiced Mexican soup
Home-made tortilla chips with pico de gallo dip
Smoky bacon, sweetcorn and potato soup
American-style cheese biscuits
Steamed mussels with cherry tomatoes and pancetta
Saffron flat breads
Spicy clam noodles
Welsh rarebit
Avocado and black sesame sprinkle on sourdough
Pear, goat's cheese and walnut tartine
Prawn tostada
Courgette and ricotta bruschette
Pan Bagnat
Ploughman's salad
Beer bread
Chip butty

SALAD FOR LUNCH

Anchovy dip with crudités
Burrata with quick balsamic fig jam and crostini
Big Caesar salad
Halloumi, courgette and herb cakes
Slow-roasted tomato and watercress salad
Orzo pasta salad
Grilled sardines with gremolata
Tuna Niçoise salad
Carrot, cumin and orange salad
Mackerel ceviche with shaved fennel and grapefruit
Quinoa salad
Feta, watermelon, cucumber and mint salad
Griddled chicken thighs with chickpeas, piquillo peppers and lemony dressing
Prawn and cucumber salad with spicy yoghurt dressing

Scotch eggs

Beetroot, coriander seed and orange-cured salmon with apple and celeriac salad

Teriyaki salmon

Soba noodle salad

AFTERNOON PICK-ME-UPS

Lemon and poppy seed madeleines

Pear and crunchy granola muffins

Peanut butter and jam cookies

Dulce de Leche biscuits

Cranberry, marshmallow and peanut chocolate fridge cake

Lemon and pistachio baklava

Chocolate and mint caramel cake

Salted caramel popcorn

KITCHEN SUPPERS

Griddled polenta with roasted vine tomatoes and goat's curd

Bloody Mary linguine

Lamb koftas with mint and yoghurt dressing

Beetroot houmous with Za'atar sprinkle

Buttermilk-fried chicken

Quick sweet pickled celery

Home-made fish fingers

Sausage and caramelised red onion hotpot

Potato and beetroot gratin

Shepherd's pie with cheese champ topping

Braised peas and carrots with mint butter

Chilli-minted mushy peas

Ginger beer-battered fish

Beef stew with mustard suet dumplings

Twice-baked bubble and squeak jacket potatoes
Roasted beetroot and thyme risotto
Roast chicken with chickpea stuffing and big green salad
Crispy roast duck with Chinese pancakes and dipping sauce
Hoisin and cucumber salad
Barbecue-style slow-roasted beef brisket
Crunchy light coleslaw
Spiced sweet potato wedges

FRIENDS FOR DINNER

Slow-braised beef cheeks with pappardelle
Chicken fricassée
Sautéed potatoes
Herby butter bean salad with crispy pitta bread
Pomegranate molasses-marinated spatchcock quail
Salt-crust sea bream
Braised leeks with hazelnuts
Chinese braised oxtail
Radish salad
Grilled lobster with chilli, garlic and parsley butter
Beef fillet with salsa verde
Baked new potatoes with truffle and Parmesan
Sticky spiced chicken wings
Stir-fried green beans with soy and peanut dressing
Thai rice with curry paste and green herbs
Slow-cooked smoky pulled pork butt with chipotle mayo
Crushed potatoes with spring onions and cheese
Broccoli slaw
Stuffed rib of beef
Horseradish Yorkshire puddings
Aromatic lamb chops with minty yoghurt
Chargrilled broccoli and bulgur salad

PUDDINGS

Pineapple carpaccio with pomegranate and vanilla salt

Aperol spritz jelly

Lemon and basil granita

Banana and coconut fritters

Spiced banana tarte tatin

Lavendar crème caramel

Espresso panna cotta with cinnamon hazelnut brittle

Eton mess bombe

Pear and ginger galette

Mango parfait pots with macerated berries

White chocolate and lime mousse

Apple compote with a creamy whip

Steamed date pudding with butterscotch sauce

Hazelnut meringue tower

Chilli poached pears with star anise dust

Chocolate and pistachio semifreddo

INDEX

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION



EVERYTHING I KNOW ABOUT COOKING
I'VE LEARNT THROUGH HARD WORK,
DRIVE AND PASSION.



From the age of 17 I made food my life, and it's fair to say that since then food has been the making of me. But the sort of cooking I made my name with – intricate dishes made with the world's finest ingredients – is a million miles from the food I cook at home. When I'm with friends and family I want things to be much more relaxed. I still want to use great ingredients, and to get the most from them, but my cooking becomes more rustic and easy-going.

That's not to say I'm not still using the techniques I apply in professional kitchens. The skills I learnt under some of the world's finest chefs, from Albert Roux to Guy Savoy, will stay with me for the rest of my life and I'd no more abandon them than I would open a greasy spoon. When you are a professional chef you apply all your knowledge instinctively – it's just that you have to apply it differently, because cooking at home throws up a different set of challenges. Hopefully your diners, be they friends or family, won't be

expecting Michelin-quality cooking (if they are, they'll be sorely disappointed round at mine), but they can still be among the most demanding people to cook for, never afraid to tell you what they think.

So what do they and you want from home cooking? That's the first question to ask, and I think my answer is probably the same as it is in every house. With a busy family – there's me and Tana and our four children, Megan, Jack, Holly and Tilly – I want to be able to provide healthy food throughout the day, from breakfast to dinner, as quickly and efficiently as possible. I want it to be the kind of food that gets everyone excited, so there needs to be lots of variety. I want it to pack a punch, so I love big bold flavours. Above all, I want it to be the sort of food that will draw the whole family together. It really depresses me how many families don't eat as a unit any more, because, for me, sitting around a table sharing food and conversation is *the* biggest pleasure in life and a family that doesn't have that is all the poorer. But enough of the theory. Let's get on to the practice. How do you achieve all this? I've divided this book into chapters to see you through the whole day, from weekday breakfasts through to Saturday night dinners, and hopefully you will find plenty of recipes that will become family favourites. But before we get on to those, let me share some general tips to make cooking a pleasure.

BE ORGANISED. After a lifetime in kitchens, this, I realise, is the golden rule. Nine times out of ten, if something goes wrong, it's your preparation that was at fault. Get your ingredients out, prep the vegetables, have all your pans ready and in easy reach. Not only will it make your cooking more efficient, it will also make it far less stressful. I might add that it also makes it easier to tidy up as you go along, another great skill that professional kitchens have taught me.

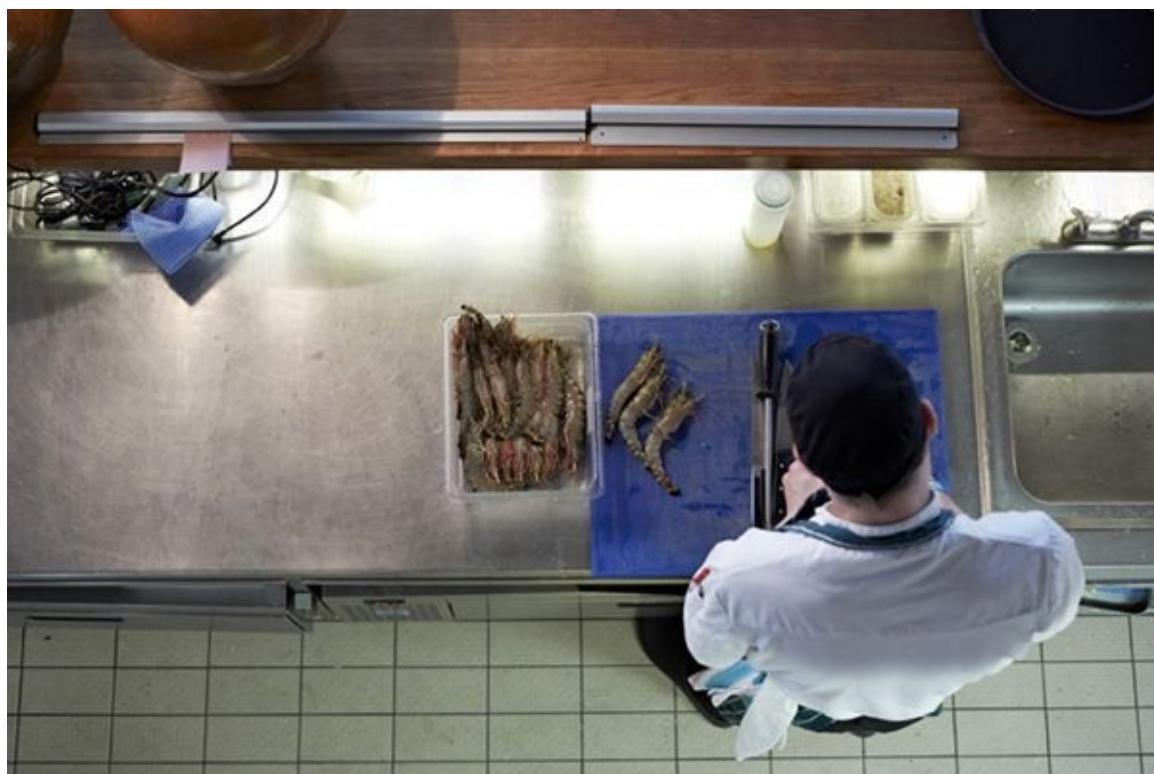
BE ADVENTUROUS. Great home cooking is built around the classics, but cooking the same old dishes can soon become a chore. The secret is to not let them go stale. Make sure you keep your cooking exciting by tweaking and adapting it. Over the past 20 years I've really noticed a big change in people's attitudes to what they will and won't eat. People are much more adventurous these days. They love trying new flavours, new ingredients and new cooking techniques, so take inspiration from around the world. Try your hand at Asian noodles or Mexican tacos, make some spicy Middle Eastern meatballs. Even a classic like roast beef and Yorkshire pudding can be given the occasional makeover. It will make a great change for you and your family and give you all renewed enthusiasm.

BE BOLD. One thing cooking has to do is to stand up and be noticed. It doesn't matter if a dish is light and delicate or full-on and gutsy, the flavours should be distinct and clear. You don't want wishy-washy. And that means getting the maximum from your ingredients. The two things I notice home cooks don't use confidently enough are heat and seasoning. Get your pans properly hot before adding your ingredients and don't be afraid to get a good colour on meat and sometimes vegetables, as this will translate into extra flavour. Similarly, season well and early on to bring out the flavour of your ingredients, tasting as you go along.

BE REALISTIC. A little ambition is a good thing, but it's always good to know your limits. Not so much in the complexity of what you make – there's nothing in this book that will be beyond a reasonable cook – but in terms of your menu choice. This is mainly down to good planning. Don't make a meal that requires four dishes to be stir-fried at the last minute, or try making a frozen pudding after you get back from work for dinner that evening. Remember also that practice makes perfect.

BE RELAXED. If you worry that something will go wrong, it probably will, so try not to stress yourself out. Remember, recipes are only there as a guideline and most of the time a little bit too much of this or too little of that is not going to cause a catastrophe. Get the children or your guests involved. Have them chop or stir or lay the table and make the whole process a more social occasion. That way you'll all have a good time – and if something does go wrong, you'll have someone else to blame!

But above all, have fun. Happy cooking!



BREAKFAST AND BRUNCH



CHEFS HAVE A DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIP WITH BREAKFAST.



In truth it's the meal they least like to be on duty for – not just because they're likely to have been at work until 1 a.m. the night before, but also because it involves a lot of last-minute work. With most meals you live or die by your *mise-en-place* (all the preparation you do in the hours before service, getting the vegetables chopped and part cooked, the stocks reduced, the garnishes ready), which leaves you free to concentrate on the main element of the dish. With breakfast, though, it doesn't work like that and there's not much you can do in advance. Inevitably it means more hard work when your guests have already sat down and made their choices – short-order cooking, we call it.

It's easier at home, of course, because you are presumably not giving your friends or family a choice (if you are, you need to stop that right now!), but there is still a danger you'll spend your time chained to the stove, so it's important to plan even a breakfast or brunch carefully and do

all you can to make it easy for yourself. The first rule is to choose the right dishes. This will depend in large part on how many you are catering for: pancakes for two is easy; pancakes for 12 is a nightmare. Scrambled eggs and omelettes won't hang around and must be served straight away. Poached eggs, on the other hand, can be cooked in advance and reheated in boiling water.

If your house is like mine, weekday breakfasts are a bit of a write-off. They are a functional business – a quick bowl of cereal, a piece of toast, a hunt for Jack's school tie, and out of the door – but that doesn't mean you can't still have a couple of things on standby. Being a good Scot, I was brought up on porridge, but these days I tend to see that more as a weekend treat, especially my spiced and baked version. Recently, though, I've become a convert to Bircher muesli, a cross between porridge and muesli that makes a fantastically healthy start to the day. You simply soak oats in yoghurt and apple juice, ideally overnight, and top them with toasted nuts, seeds and grated apple the next morning. Another popular dish is home-made granola – a combination of oats, bran and puffed wheat baked with honey and seeds. It will keep for weeks in an airtight jar. By the way, if you are a fan of traditional porridge and need to make it in a hurry, you should either use rolled oats, which have been steamed and flattened into flakes so they cook more quickly, or you can use a trick of my mum's: she soaked more flavoursome pinhead oats in cold water overnight, about 2 parts water to 1 part oats, then cooked them in the usual way the next morning.

For a more leisurely weekend brunch you can get more adventurous. There's the classic repertoire of English dishes, from boiled egg and soldiers, Eggs Benedict or smoked haddock to the full English, but don't limit yourself to these shores. America has a strong brunch tradition and hash browns and proper home-made baked beans are both brilliant in the morning. You can also go down the spice route to reinvigorate jaded palates. Mexican eggs or even a chilli-flecked Asian fruit salad will perk up your guests in the same way as a spicy Bloody Mary can. And don't forget that French classic, pain perdu, or eggy bread as we always call it. It's brilliant as a savoury accompaniment to baked beans and bacon, but even better dusted with cinnamon and icing sugar and served with stewed apples. After that, you'll be ready to face the day, I promise. Here's my list of breakfast essentials.



BACON

Buy the best you can, traditional dry-cured British out of preference. Ensure it is at room temperature and start with a hot pan. Slices of Parma ham make a quick, super-crispy alternative.

POACHED EGGS

Add a splash of vinegar to a deep pot of simmering water. Crack very fresh eggs into a tea cup, stir the water to create a vortex and then very gently lower into the water. Cook for a couple of minutes, then ‘shock’ them in iced water, to be reheated in simmering water for 1 minute when needed.

PORRIDGE OATS

Coarser pinhead oats typical of Ireland have a nuttier flavour, but rolled

jumbo oats cook more quickly.

SCRAMBLED EGGS

The secrets of soft, rich scrambled eggs are to start with a cold heavy-based pan, only beat the eggs once they're in the pan, and to add cold butter before stirring constantly with a plastic spatula to get right into the corners. If the eggs start sticking, take the pan off the heat for a moment.

HOME-MADE GRANOLA

QUICK BIRCHER MUESLI

SPICED BAKED PORRIDGE

TANGY FRUIT SALAD

CRISPY FILO WITH HONEYED YOGHURT

CINNAMON EGGY BREAD WITH QUICK STEWED APPLE

EGGS BENEDICT WITH CRISPY PARMA HAM

BOILED EGGS WITH ANCHOVY SOLDIERS

SPICED EGG AND SPINACH BREAKFAST WRAP

FENNEL SAUSAGE FRITTATA

MERGUEZ-SAUSAGE-AND-FONTINA STUFFED CROISSANTS

SMOKED HADDOCK AND SPINACH BAKED EGGS

HOME-MADE BAKED BEANS WITH POTATO CAKES

HASH BROWN BAKED EGGS WITH CANDIED BACON

BAKED SPICY MEXICAN EGGS

HOME-MADE GRANOLA

SERVES 4

If you've never made your own granola, do try it. It's really healthy and so much cheaper and tastier than the versions you can buy in the shops. You can add any mix of seeds and nuts you like, even a bit of spice such as cinnamon. Goji berries are one of nature's superfoods and are full of vitamins and antioxidants.

200g runny honey
1 vanilla pod, split open and seeds scraped out
300g jumbo rolled oats
100g sugar-free puffed rice
4 tbsp wheat bran or oat bran
100g whole almonds, blanched
75g pumpkin seeds
75g sunflower seeds
50g linseeds
Pinch of sea salt
50g goji berries
50g dried cranberries

- 1.** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas 4. Line a shallow baking tin with baking parchment.
- 2.** Put the honey and vanilla seeds in a small pan and heat gently, stirring to combine.
- 3.** Place the oats, puffed rice, bran, almonds and seeds in a mixing bowl. Pour in the honey mixture and stir well. Transfer to the prepared tin, sprinkle with a pinch of salt and bake for 25–30 minutes, stirring now and again to ensure even toasting, until crisp and golden.
- 4.** Once cooked, set aside to cool slightly, then break into small pieces if necessary. Stir in the berries and, once cold, store in an airtight container until wanted.



HOME-MADE GRANOLA

QUICK BIRCHER MUESLI

SERVES 4

Bircher muesli is like a cross between porridge and regular muesli in which oats are softened, sometimes overnight, in yoghurt, apple juice, milk or a mix of any of the three. It's a great start to the day and one of those simple recipes where you can make it up according to what's to hand – you can add extra seeds, nuts and fruit as you see fit. I always include grated apple for the vitamin C and toast any nuts in a dry pan for extra crunch.

200–250ml yoghurt (flavoured yoghurt, e.g. blackberry or vanilla, is great)

4 tbsp apple juice

200g jumbo rolled oats

4 tbsp flaked almonds

½ apple, grated, to garnish (optional)

150g blackberries

- 1.** Whisk the yoghurt and apple juice together in a bowl until well combined, then stir in two-thirds of the oats. If you wish, you can set the mixture aside for up to an hour so the oats soften; otherwise, use it immediately.
- 2.** Once you are ready to serve, toast the almonds in a dry frying pan until golden.
- 3.** Mix the remaining oats. Top the muesli with the blackberries, grated apple (if using) and toasted almonds and serve.



QUICK BIRCHER MUESLI

SPICED BAKED PORRIDGE

SERVES 4-6

As a Scot, I have to include porridge, don't I? It is sometimes seen as a bit of an austere breakfast, and made in the traditional way, with just water and salt, it can be. But this is porridge like I never had as a child, enriched with cream, nuts and spices. Cooking it in the oven takes away the pain of having to stir it constantly on the hob, and caramelising the sugar under the grill at the last minute turns it into a kind of healthy crème brûlée.

150g jumbo rolled oats
Seeds from 1 vanilla pod

1 tsp ground cinnamon

½ tsp freshly grated nutmeg, plus a little extra to sprinkle

50g whole blanched almonds

50g blanched hazelnuts

75g raisins

1 ripe pear, peeled, cored and chopped into small chunks

500ml milk, plus extra for serving

200ml double cream

2 tbsp demerara sugar

- 1.** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas 4.
- 2.** Combine the oats and vanilla seeds in a mixing bowl – use your fingers to rub the seeds through the oats. Add the spices, nuts, raisins and pear and mix well. Stir in the milk and cream, then pour the mixture into a baking dish. Dust with a little extra grated nutmeg.
- 3.** Place in the oven and bake for 30–35 minutes, or until the oats are completely softened and the liquid absorbed.
- 4.** Heat the grill on its highest setting. Sprinkle the top of the porridge with the sugar and place under the grill for 3–4 minutes, or until the sugar has melted and created a crust.
- 5.** Serve warm, with a little extra milk on the side if desired.



SPICED BAKED PORRIDGE

TANGY FRUIT SALAD

SERVES 4

I've travelled around the Far East quite a bit over recent years, and as you'd expect, it's opened my eyes to the possibilities of spice. One of the most surprising dishes I came back with is this chilli-spiked fruit salad. It makes a light, refreshing pudding, but I've developed a real taste for it first thing in the morning too. The secret is to make sure your fruit isn't too ripe, so the salad stays crisp and tangy and gives a proper kick-start to your day.

1 small pineapple, peeled, cored and cut into bite-sized pieces
2 crunchy green apples, quartered, cored and cut into bite-sized chunks
2 pears, not too ripe, cored and cut into bite-sized pieces
1 mango, not overly ripe, peeled and cut into bite-sized pieces
½ cucumber, peeled, deseeded and cut into bite-sized chunks

FOR THE DRESSING

1 ½ tbsp tamarind paste
Zest and juice of 1 lime
2–3 tbsp palm or brown sugar
½–1 red chilli, finely sliced, to taste

3 tbsp skinless unsalted peanuts

Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

- 1.** First make the dressing. Mix the tamarind paste, lime zest and juice, sugar and chilli, then season with a little salt and pepper. Mix well, taste and adjust the seasoning as necessary.
- 2.** Toast the peanuts in a dry frying pan with a small pinch of salt until golden and toasted. Wrap the nuts in a clean tea towel and run a rolling pin over them to crush them.
- 3.** Mix the crushed peanuts into the dressing. Taste and add a little more sugar and/or salt if needed.
- 4.** Combine the fruits and cucumber in a serving bowl. Add half the dressing and toss well. Taste and add the remaining dressing if needed.

USING TAMARIND

Tamarind's tangy flavour makes it a very useful addition to salads, and it's definitely worth tracking down a jar if you can. Adding a little extra lime juice can sometimes be a good substitute, though you may find the salad will lack a certain fruity sharpness. Tamarind paste can also be used in pad thai and Asian fish dishes, chicken curries and my Sticky Spiced Chicken Wings.



TANGY FRUIT SALAD

CRISPY FILO WITH HONEYED YOGHURT

SERVES 4

The combination of pastry, Parmesan, honey and yoghurt may sound strange, but do give these a try. The Greeks often eat feta and filo triangles drizzled with thyme honey and sesame seeds as a snack, so I decided to rework them with Parmesan and added some luxurious thick yoghurt. It's the perfect combination of savoury and sweet and works particularly well for brunch.

50g butter

Small bunch of thyme, leaves only

75g Parmesan or pecorino cheese

4 sheets of filo pastry, each trimmed to a large square

Olive oil, for frying

Freshly ground black pepper

TO SERVE

250g Greek or thick yoghurt

2 tbsp runny honey

1. Melt the butter in a small saucepan. Meanwhile, put the thyme leaves in a bowl and mix with a good pinch of pepper.
2. Place a square of filo on a work surface. Brush with a little of the melted butter, sprinkle over a quarter of the thyme leaves and grate over a quarter of the cheese. Brush the edges with butter, fold the square into a triangle and press the edges to seal. Slice the triangle in half, creating two smaller triangles, brush the cut edges with butter and press to seal. Repeat with the remaining pieces of filo until you have 8 triangles in total.
3. Heat a large heavy-based frying pan over a medium heat. Brush the pan with a little oil or any leftover melted butter and fry a few triangles at a time for 1–2 minutes on either side, until crisp and golden. Set aside and keep warm while cooking the remaining triangles.
4. Mix together the yoghurt and honey and serve alongside the crispy filo parcels.

HOW TO HANDLE HONEY

Sticky ingredients, such as honey, treacle and golden syrup, can be a mess to measure out, so rub the spoon first with a neutral oil, like grapeseed. The ingredient will slide off easily.



CRISPY FILO WITH HONEYED YOGHURT

CINNAMON EGGY BREAD WITH QUICK STEWED APPLE

SERVES 4

Like most families we often have some slightly stale bread knocking around, and this, along with bread and butter pudding, is a great way of using it up. Normally recipes call for the cinnamon and sugar to be sprinkled on only at the end, but I like to add them to the egg mix so that the sugar caramelises slightly as you cook it. A few stewed apples make the perfect accompaniment.

3 free-range eggs, beaten