
Twelve Recipes

Each recipe serves four. “Strong on” tells you which blind spots the dish helps cover; no dish replaces a B12 source.

1. Overnight Oats With Soy Milk and Seeds (Europe)

Strong on: calcium, plus B12 and iodine if the milk is fortified; plant omega-3 from walnuts and flaxseed.

Ingredients: 200 g rolled oats; 800 ml soy milk fortified with calcium and B12 (and iodine if available); 4 tbsp chia seeds; 4 tbsp ground flaxseed; a handful of walnuts; seasonal fruit; a pinch of cinnamon.

Method:

1. The night before, mix the oats, milk, chia and cinnamon in a lidded container.
2. Leave in the fridge overnight.
3. In the morning, divide into four, sprinkle with flaxseed and walnuts, and add fruit.

Variation: lacto-ovo vegetarians can use cow’s milk or stir in yogurt. Keeps for three days in the fridge.

2. Silken Tofu With Mushroom Sauce (Southeast Asia)

Strong on: protein; calcium if the tofu is calcium-set.

Ingredients: 600 g silken tofu; 300 g mushrooms (fresh shiitake, straw or oyster); 2 tbsp soy sauce; 1 tsp sugar; 1 tbsp tapioca starch mixed with 4 tbsp water; 1 shallot, 2 garlic cloves; spring onions, pepper; cooking oil.

Method:

1. Cut the tofu into cubes, steam for five minutes to warm through, and arrange on a plate.
2. Fry the shallot and garlic until fragrant; add the mushrooms and cook until soft.

3. Add the soy sauce, sugar and 150 ml water; bring to the boil, then stir in the starch to thicken.
4. Pour the sauce over the tofu and finish with spring onions and pepper.

Variation: for Buddhist vegetarian cooking, leave out the shallot and garlic and use shredded ginger. Serve with rice and a plate of greens.

3. Tofu and Herb Noodle Salad With Peanuts (Southeast Asia)

Strong on: protein; iron from the tofu is better absorbed thanks to the vitamin C in lime and fresh herbs.

Ingredients: 400 g rice vermicelli; 400 g tofu; 1 lettuce, 1 bunch of herbs (Thai basil, perilla, mint), 2 cucumbers, 1 grated carrot; a handful of roasted peanuts; **dressing:** 4 tbsp soy sauce, 3 tbsp lime juice, 2 tbsp sugar, 1 garlic clove, chilli, 6 tbsp water.

Method:

1. Cut the tofu into pieces and pan-fry until golden on both sides.
2. Mix the dressing and taste for a balance of sour, sweet and salty.
3. Put the greens, noodles, cucumber and carrot in bowls; top with the tofu and crushed peanuts.
4. Pour over the dressing just before eating.

Variation: use tempeh instead of tofu. Packs well for work if the dressing goes in a separate jar.

4. Lentil Dal With Tomato, Spinach and Lemon (South Asia)

Strong on: iron and zinc from lentils; vitamin C from tomato and lemon helps iron absorption.

Ingredients: 300 g red lentils; 400 g tomatoes (fresh or canned); 200 g spinach; 1 onion, 3 garlic cloves, a piece of ginger; 1 tsp turmeric, 1 tsp cumin seeds, 1 tsp garam masala; half a lemon; iodised salt; cooking oil.

Method:

1. Rinse the lentils and simmer with 1 litre of water and the turmeric for about 20 minutes, until soft.
2. In another pan, fry the cumin seeds, onion, garlic and ginger; add the tomatoes and cook until thick.

3. Stir the tomato mixture into the lentils, add the garam masala and spinach, and simmer five more minutes.
4. Season with salt and squeeze over the lemon before serving.

Variation: lacto-ovo vegetarians can serve it with cucumber yogurt. Leave out the spinach and add more tomato for a simple lentils-in-tomato dish the whole family will eat.

5. Sambar With Lentils and Plenty of Vegetables (South Asia)

Strong on: protein and fibre; meal quality, because one pot holds both beans and many kinds of vegetables.

Ingredients: 200 g split pigeon peas (toor dal) or yellow lentils; 500 g mixed vegetables (pumpkin, aubergine, green beans, carrot, okra); 2 tomatoes; 1 tbsp tamarind paste; 2 tbsp sambar powder; 1 tsp mustard seeds, a few curry leaves; iodised salt; cooking oil.

Method:

1. Cook the dal in 800 ml water until very soft, then whisk until creamy.
2. Simmer the chopped vegetables with the tomatoes in a little water until just tender.
3. Add the dal, tamarind and sambar powder to the vegetables; simmer gently for ten minutes.
4. Fry the mustard seeds and curry leaves in hot oil and pour into the pot. Season with salt.

Variation: make it thicker, with more dal, the way Suresh does in Chapter 11. Serve with rice, or half rice and half millet.

6. Ginger Tofu With Bok Choy (East Asia)

Strong on: calcium, because bok choy is among the vegetables whose calcium is best absorbed (Chapter 7) and calcium-set tofu comes close to milk.

Ingredients: 600 g bok choy; 400 g firm calcium-set tofu; a large piece of ginger, shredded; 2 garlic cloves; 2 tbsp soy sauce; 1 tsp sesame oil; 1 tsp starch; cooking oil.

Method:

1. Cut the tofu into pieces, pan-fry until golden and set aside.

2. Fry the ginger and garlic; add the bok choy stems for a minute, then the leaves.
3. Return the tofu to the pan, add the soy sauce and starch mixed with a little water, and toss.
4. Off the heat, drizzle with sesame oil.

Variation: swap bok choy for broccoli or gai lan. For Buddhist vegetarian cooking, leave out the garlic and add more ginger.

7. Mushroom Miso Soup With Tofu and Wakame (East Asia)

Strong on: protein from tofu; a little iodine from wakame. The iodine in seaweed varies a great deal, so this dish does **not** replace iodised salt.

Ingredients: 1.2 litres water; 6 dried shiitake mushrooms; 300 g silken tofu; 1 tbsp dried wakame (a small pinch); 4 tbsp miso; spring onions.

Method:

1. Soak the shiitake in warm water for thirty minutes, then simmer the soaking water with the mushrooms for ten minutes to make a stock.
2. Add diced tofu and the wakame and simmer gently for two minutes.
3. Turn off the heat. Mix the miso with a ladle of stock, then stir it back into the pot; don't boil again.
4. Finish with spring onions.

Note: use mushroom stock, not kombu stock, because kombu (a kelp) contains very large amounts of iodine (Chapter 8). Miso is already salty; no extra salt needed.

8. White Bean and Kale Soup (Europe)

Strong on: calcium from kale; iron and fibre from white beans; vitamin C from tomatoes.

Ingredients: 2 cans white beans (about 500 g drained); 300 g kale, tough stems removed; 1 onion, 2 celery sticks, 2 carrots, 3 garlic cloves; 400 g canned tomatoes; 1.2 litres vegetable stock; 1 sprig rosemary; olive oil; iodised salt, pepper.

Method:

1. Gently fry the onion, celery, carrot and garlic in olive oil for ten minutes.
2. Add the tomatoes, stock, rosemary and beans; simmer for twenty minutes.
3. Mash a ladle of the beans and stir them back in to thicken the soup.
4. Add the shredded kale and cook five more minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

Variation: lacto-ovo vegetarians can add grated cheese. Serve with wholemeal bread.

9. Roasted Lentils and Squash (North America)

Strong on: iron and protein from lentils. A dish to bring to a shared meal, as Brooke does in Chapter 13.

Ingredients: 250 g green or brown lentils; 800 g squash or pumpkin, cubed; 2 red onions; 1 red pepper; a handful of pumpkin seeds; 2 tbsp olive oil; 1 tsp smoked paprika, 1 tsp cumin; **dressing:** 3 tbsp tahini, juice of 1 lemon, 1 tsp maple syrup, warm water; iodised salt.

Method:

1. Simmer the lentils for about 20 minutes, until tender but still holding their shape; drain.
2. Toss the squash, onions and pepper with oil, spices and salt; roast at 200°C for about 30 minutes.
3. Mix the lentils with the roasted vegetables in the tray.
4. Drizzle with the tahini dressing and scatter over the pumpkin seeds.

Variation: good hot or cold. Add baby spinach or kale before dressing.

10. Black Bean Chili With Tomato Salsa (Latin America)

Strong on: iron and zinc from black beans; vitamin C from the salsa, pepper and lime helps iron absorption.

Ingredients: 2 cans black beans (about 500 g drained), or dried beans soaked and cooked; 1 onion, 3 garlic cloves, 1 pepper; 400 g canned tomatoes; 1 tbsp chili powder, 1 tsp cumin, 1 tsp dried oregano; 1 corn cob (or 150 g corn kernels); **salsa:** 3 tomatoes, half a red onion, coriander, juice of 1 lime, fresh chilli; iodised salt.

Method:

1. Fry the onion, garlic and pepper; add the dried spices and stir for a minute.
2. Add the canned tomatoes, beans, corn and 200 ml water; simmer for 25 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, chop the salsa ingredients and mix with lime and salt.
4. Spoon the chili into bowls and top with salsa.

Note: if you use dried red kidney beans instead of black beans, follow the soak-and-boil rule at the start of the kitchen section. **Variation:** lacto-ovo vegetarians can add yogurt or cheese. Serve with brown rice or in tortillas.

11. Hummus, Wholemeal Flatbread and Chopped Salad (Middle East)

Strong on: calcium from tahini (ground sesame); iron from chickpeas; vitamin C from the salad and lemon.

Ingredients: **hummus:** 2 cans chickpeas (about 500 g drained), 5 tbsp tahini, juice of 1 lemon, 1 garlic clove, 3 tbsp olive oil, cold water, iodised salt; **salad:** 3 tomatoes, 2 cucumbers, 1 pepper, 1 bunch parsley, juice of half a lemon, olive oil; wholemeal flatbread.

Method:

1. Blend the chickpeas, tahini, lemon, garlic and salt, adding cold water a little at a time until smooth.
2. Dice the tomatoes, cucumbers and pepper; mix with parsley, lemon and oil.
3. Spread the hummus on a plate and drizzle with olive oil.
4. Serve with flatbread and the salad.

Variation: lacto-ovo vegetarians can add feta to the salad. Hummus keeps for four days in the fridge and makes a snack with vegetable sticks.

12. Peanut, Sweet Potato and Greens Stew (Africa)

Strong on: protein and zinc from peanuts and chickpeas; fibre.

Ingredients: 4 tbsp unsweetened peanut butter; 1 can chickpeas (about 250 g drained); 2 sweet potatoes, cubed; 200 g kale or spinach; 1 onion, 3 garlic cloves, a piece of ginger; 400 g canned tomatoes; 800

ml vegetable stock; fresh chilli; a handful of roasted peanuts; iodised salt.

Method:

1. Fry the onion, garlic, ginger and chilli.
2. Add the tomatoes, sweet potato and stock; simmer for 15 minutes.
3. Mix the peanut butter with a ladle of hot stock and stir into the pot with the chickpeas; cook 10 more minutes until the sweet potato is soft.
4. Add the greens and cook three minutes. Season with salt and scatter over roasted peanuts.

Note: if you're allergic to peanuts, use tahini or sunflower seed butter instead. Serve with millet, rice or bread.