



The Balanced  
Nutritionist  
Tailored Sustainable Real

# A MERRY AND BALANCED CHRISTMAS



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THE BALANCED NUTRITIONIST

## CHRISTMAS IS FOR....

*Long, lazy evenings on the porch eating delicious salads and BBQ'd seafood and meats.....*



*Waking up with family, walking the family pets and then putting together a beautiful spread alongside a morning glass of champas.....*



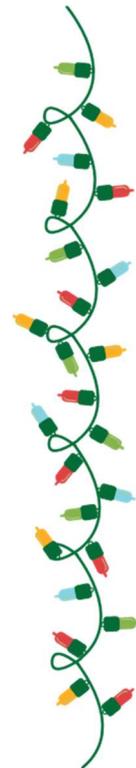
*Enjoying beautiful seasonal fruits, salads and some more indulgent proteins. Think Christmas ham, turkey, pork and seafood....*

*Sharing easy, but delicious food with friends or even better... giving edible gifts!*

*Food. Laughter. Love.*



*Merry Christmas. Thank you for your support in 2018.*



# BREAKFASTS!



My granola makes a great edible gift and 'the' egg dish has been a Christmas dish in my family for years.



# Granola

- 4 cups of wholegrain rolled oats
- 2 cups of raw nuts of your choice\*
- 2 cups of sunflower or pepita seeds or a combo of both
- 1/3 of a cup of honey
- 1/3 of a cup macadamia oil or coconut oil\*
- 2 heaped teaspoons of cinnamon\*

Makes a huge batch and keeps for weeks and weeks!



Prep time: about 15 minutes

Cook time: about 15-20 minutes



\*the best nuts to use include walnuts, pepitas, macadamia nuts, almonds and brazil nuts. You can either roughly chop these or leave them whole. You will achieve different flavours by using different types and combinations of nuts. Don't over think it – use what you have available in your cupboard or buy a bag of raw nuts and use that.

METHOD: Preheat your oven to 190 degrees.

Combine the nuts and seeds in a large bowl with the cinnamon and stir well to combine.

Melt the oil and the honey together in a small saucepan or in the microwave.

Pour the honey / oil mixture over the dry ingredients and stir quickly to combine.

Place the mixture on a large baking tray lined with baking powder and spread it out evenly.

Bake in the hot oven about 10 minutes, then remove and stir the mixture around so that it is evenly toasted. Return it to the oven for about another 5-10 minutes until it's just starting to brown.

Remove, allow to cool and then store in airtight glass jars or containers for up to 4 weeks. It will keep even longer in the fridge.

Serve as you would muesli / store bought granola – with natural yoghurt and fresh fruit. Use as a crunchy topper on smoothies and chia puddings or even scattered across a platter of freshly chopped fruit on Christmas day. Give some away as gifts in jars with a ribbon. Or simply munch it as is, as a snack.

Flavour Variations: consider this a base recipe and other possibilities are endless:

-If you like spice, add a pinch of nutmeg and all spice as well as the cinnamon

-if you love coconut, stick with the coconut oil option and toss through shredded coconut halfway through cooking

-For a chocolatey variation, you can stir through 2 tablespoons of cacao powder with the cinnamon and you can add some cacao nibs to the cooled mixture

*Store bought granolas and mueslis can be full of sugar... not to mention other additives. Once you've got the hang of this recipe, you will realize its super easy and it might be something you make year round. You may pay \$25 - \$30 a bag for a similar product in a health food shop so this could save you money as an added bonus.*

*This is also a much lower sugar / higher healthy fat option for those with health conditions characterized by insulin resistance including diabetics and women with PCOS.*



# 'The' Egg Dish

*Laugh all you like but 'the' egg dish has been in my family for years. Despite it being super simple we only make it at Christmas, so it 'tastes' like Christmas to me.*

*This is a slightly healthier version than the one my Mum makes which may be a little more calorific but this one is still delicious.*

Serves 6 as a light breakfast OR  
Cut up into smaller squares as a  
Christmas morning canape



2 – 3 slices of bread (preferable wholegrain, sourdough does work fine)  
100g of either goats cream cheese (chevre) or mozzarella or cheddar cheese

Prep time: about 15 minutes

Cook time: 50 minutes



1/2 a cup of finely chopped shallots

1/2 a small red capsicum roughly chopped

1/2 a small green capsicum roughly chopped

8 jumbo eggs lightly whisked in a small bowl

1 and 1/3 cup of full fat or Guernsey milk

1 heaped teaspoon of Dijon mustard and 1 heaped teaspoon of whole egg mayonnaise (just use an ordinary teaspoon from the cutlery drawer)



At least a dozen fresh basil leaves roughly chopped

*This recipe is BEST prepared the day before consumption. This allows the flavours to really soak through the bread overnight. It still works though if you cook it on the same day you prepare it.*

**METHOD:** take a medium sized casserole dish (at least 25cm long, 7cm deep and 15cm wide) and grease the surface and sides generously with a bit of butter or oil.

Take the bread, crusts and all and form a layer of bread on the bottom of the casserole dish. You will need to cut some of your bread into smaller pieces to fill gaps etc. Depending on the size of the slices you will need between 2 and 3 whole slices to cover the entire surface of the dish.

On top of the bread, place the chopped shallots, capsicum and basil leaves. Then crumble your goats cheese OR grate your mozzarella / cheddar cheese over the top of the chopped vegetables.

Combine your eggs, milk, mustard and mayonnaise together and whisk with a fork.

Pour the wet mixture slowly over the top of all the other ingredients. The vegetables may rise to the top as this happens – that's fine. It's all fine if some of the egg mixture gets through the cracks in your bread at the bottom of the dish. All normal.

Leave to rest in the fridge and cook the dish the next day. To bake, preheat the oven to 140 degrees and bake for 45 minutes minimum until the dish is set and firm to touch. Cooking at this lower temperature for longer really makes this dish extra special so don't be tempted to crank it up to speed up the process.

*Entertaining a crowd for Christmas day? This one is a good one to double and cook long and slow in a warm oven for a couple of hours on Christmas morning. It's so convenient because it can be prepared the day before.*

*Need to use up some leftover ham or want to make this recipe super indulgent? Add 100g of chopped Christmas ham or precooked bacon pieces. This should be added on top of the vegetables just before you add the cheese.*



# Cherry and Cacao Cups

A small packet of cacao nibs (ALDI / Woolies / Coles – health food aisle)

Some fresh cherries

Fresh banana

Natural, full fat yoghurt or Natural Greek yoghurt

Some fresh mint leaves

Optional: some homemade granola to top

Prep time: 10 minutes or more if you are making a variety of combinations. This is a great one for little helpers to assist you to put together!



\*There's really nothing groundbreaking about this simple little recipe. In fact, it's hard to call it a recipe... it's really just an 'idea.' However, they look really cute and they are mega simple to prepare, there are a ton of variations you can make AND they are good for you but still a little indulgent! The cacao nibs make them a bit spesh and who doesn't love a good cherry! But the natural yoghurt means you sneak some protein and fermented goodness into your family and provide a filling nibbly for brunch which may deter people from binging later on in the day.

METHOD: You need some little shot glasses or smallish jars for this recipe. The quantities of ingredients that you need aren't listed exactly because it will depend on how big or small you would like to make these.

For the example pictured:

- a few slices of fresh banana at the bottom of your small jar
- a generous pinch of cacao nibs on top
- A big generous dollop of yoghurt
- A couple of fresh cherries on top of this, pits removed
- Then another generous pinch of cacao nibs
- Then a dollop of yoghurt
- Top with 1 cherry, a couple of mint leaves and a pinch of homemade granola if you have some.

Flavour variations:

- depending on the size of your jar, you could add additional layers
- you may like to do a variation that included fresh mango instead of fresh cherries. I'd suggest topping this with a generous pinch of shredded coconut. You can definitely still include the granola topping if you have some.
- You could also substitute blueberries or raspberries in as other fruits that would work
- You could have a little rainbow of different options ☺
- Don't make these the day before, the fruit may go soggy. They should be made no more than a few hours before consumption.

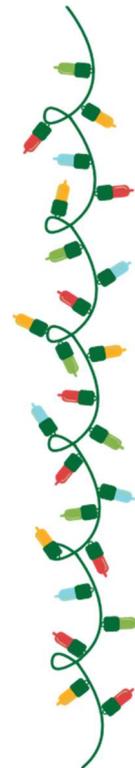




How gorgeous to have a few different versions of these scattered over the dining table on Christmas morning! Also delicious and healthy as well.....

Moving right along....

## **INDULGENT PROTEINS**



# The Easiest Pulled Pork

*Pork is super popular at Christmas time. This pulled pork requires 5-10 minutes prep time. If its prepared on the weekend, it can be made into a couple of different variations in order to use up the leftovers.*

*The recipe below used a 1kg collar butt cut of pork and made 6 meals. If you use a large cut of meat, say 1.5-1.8kg for a bigger family, please double the spice rub and extend the cooking time to 6-8 hours.*

*If you're ever in doubt about cooking times or the best cut, ask your butcher! I used a collar butt for this recipe but other cuts of pork would also yield the same result.*

1kg pork collarbutt or other boneless pork cut suitable for slow cooking

1 heaped teaspoon of ground cumin

1 heaped teaspoon of ground coriander

1 small red chilli finely chopped

A generous pinch of ground pepper

A teaspoon of sea salt

Some fresh rosemary roughly chopped – about a tablespoon (optional)

1/2 a cup of stock

**METHOD:** Preheat your oven to 150 degrees.

Place the pork into a casserole dish or roasting pan.

Mix all of the spices, rosemary, chili, salt and pepper together in a small bowl. Nothing that I simply used a teaspoon out of my cutlery drawer and measured out the spices like this – you don't need to be exact – a little over a teaspoon of the cumin and coriander is needed.

Rub the pork all over with the spice rub. Then, gently pour the stock into the bottom of the casserole dish or roasting pan so that it surrounds your pork. Cover your dish or pan tightly with foil and place the pork in a middle shelf in the oven.

Enjoy the aroma that wafts out for the next few hours.

After about 3 hours, you should check your pork. At this stage, it should be well and truly cooked and feel 'soft' to touch with your cooking utensils. There should be plenty of liquid still remaining around the pork too. If you are using a piece of pork that is about a kilo, you will return it to the oven for about another hour after which time, the pork will 'pull' nicely when you go to it with a fork.

A larger cut of pork may take 6-8 hours depending on the size; again, consult your butcher!

Once it's done, allow it to rest uncovered for 5-10 minutes. Then, with 2 forks, pull all of the pork roughly, mixing the meat into the spicy stocky mixture that has been surrounding the pork for the last few hours. The pork will soak all of this goodness up.

Now it's ready to serve. There are endless possibilities for a pulled pork. It's especially good in wraps with lots of salad either warm or cold. 3 other serving suggestions are as follows:

-Make the easy peasy slaw recipe and serve it alongside that

-make the mango salad recipe and serve it with that

-Stir fry 500g of beans and a bunch of asparagus in a little oil and sea salt. Make the sticky nectarines outlined in the 'simple flavours' section. Serve the pork atop the greens with a tablespoon of sticky nectarine on top.

Yields 6 serves of protein and will need to be paired with vegetables for a proper meal.



# Spicy Fish Rub

Serves 4 with a simple side salad or vegetables



4 pieces dense white fish – swordfish is ideal

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 ½ tablespoons ground turmeric

2 garlic cloves crushed

1 tablespoon mustard powder

1 tablespoon sweet paprika

1 tablespoon dried Italian herbs

1 tablespoon ground fennel

A pinch of chilli powder

2 teaspoons of salt

Small jar of the best tomato chutney you can find



**METHOD:** Combine all of the spices, crushed garlic, chili, salt, herbs and olive oil in 1 bowl and stir well.

Press the spice rub into both sides of all 4 pieces of fish.

Heat up a large, shallow fry pan with a little olive oil in it.

Cook the fish over medium to high heat until almost cooked through, then flip to finish off on the other side so the fish is cooked completely.

Serve with a heaped teaspoon of the best tomato chutney you can find and a basic salad.

*Grab a tomato chutney in which you can recognize all of the ingredients. Something that literally must have originated in someone's kitchen. Little delicacies like this are fun to hunt down at local IGAs and also your local markets. Hunt down the quintessential couple at the Sunday markets who do their own pickling and sauces and you won't look back.*



# Simple Salmon with Dill and Lemon

*My advice when it comes to seafood is to know where it came from. Buy local, support the fresh seafood shops and trawlers whilst we still have them. The truth is in the taste.*

*The best salmon you will find in Brisbane in my opinion is from Davy Jones Seafood who happen to have a permanent spot at the Rocklea markets. They've also got loads of education around the quality of salmon we get in Brisbane over on their website*

2 pieces of salmon. About 150g each should suffice

4 thin slices of lemon

1 tablespoon of fresh dill roughly chopped

Sea salt

**METHOD:** Preheat your oven to 190 degrees.

Place the salmon pieces in a small baking tray where they can sit snugly side by side.

Sprinkle the dill over the top and the sea salt.

Lay 2 slices of lemon atop each piece of salmon.

Place into the oven and bake for approximately 15 minutes or until the fish is cooked through, but ideally still a little pink inside.

*Seafood should be fresh and beautiful without much done to it.*

*Baking the salmon this way, should give your lemon a little color on its skin, almost a slight caramelization.*

*Serve it straight out of the casserole tray, lemon and all with a simple salad (like one of the many options in this book) or some stir fried vegetables.*

*Please note that good salmon should be naturally very oily. This type of fat is omega 3 fatty acids and it's incredibly good for you; especially your brain. If you are skeptical that your salmon may not be of a really good quality I suggest you do not bake this uncovered. Instead, tightly wrap foil over the top of the baking dish to keep the moisture locked in.*

*You could also prepare your salmon like this and pop it on a hot BBQ plate. Nothing says Australian Christmas like fish on the Barbie!*



Serves 2.



Prep time 5 minutes, cook time 15 minutes





## **SALADS TO ACCOMPANY**



# Easy Peasy Slaw

*Red and green cabbage combine mean the colours of Christmas!  
That store bought coleslaw you grab in the supermarkets is not full  
of good stuff..... try this one at your next BBQ!*

Serves 4



Prep time 5 minutes, cook time  
15 minutes

- 1 cup of finely chopped red cabbage
- 1 cup of finely chopped green cabbage (sugarloaf)
- 1/2 a cup of mint leaves, shredded
- 1 carrot grated
- 1 Granny Smith Apple chopped finely
- 1 heaped tablespoon of whole egg mayo
- 1 heaped tablespoon of natural yoghurt
- 2 tablespoons of olive oil
- Sea salt



## METHOD:

Combine the shredded cabbage, grated carrot, chopped apple and mint leaves in a salad bowl and toss to combine.

In a small jar, combine the mayo, yoghurt and the olive oil and shake. Pour the dressing over the salad, seasoning it with sea salt. Add a touch more olive oil if required.

Serve and enjoy, pairs especially well with the pulled por.



# Thai Mango Salad

Serves 6



Prep time 5 minutes, cook time 15 minutes

- 1 mango diced
- 3 big handfuls of lettuce of your choice or spinach leaves
- 1 bunch of asparagus, woody ends removed
- 1/4 of a cucumber chopped into bite sized pieces
- Roughly 70g of brown rice vermicelli noodles (Asian aisle of supermarket)
- 1/3 cup of coriander leaves chopped roughly
- 1/3 of a cup of mint leaves chopped roughly
- 1/2 a cup of unsalted, unroasted peanuts, chopped roughly
- 1 heaped teaspoon of finely grated ginger
- 2 cloves of garlic crushed
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/4 cup of olive oil
- 2 tablespoons of tamari or soy sauce
- 1/2 - 1 finely chopped red chili to your spice preference



## METHOD:

Brown rice vermicelli noodles are available in 200g packets in the supermarket- use roughly 1/3 of a packet. To prepare, simply pour boiling water over the noodles until they are completely covered. Allow to soak for 5 minutes then rinse well under cold water and drain them off.

Whilst the noodles are soaking, chop the asparagus into bite sized pieces and stir fry these over high heat in a small pan with a little olive oil and sea salt. They will only need about 5 minutes - they should remain a bright, vibrant green. Then place these on a plate to cool off.

While both the noodles and asparagus cool off, combine the peanuts, lettuce or spinach, mango and the fresh herbs in a large salad bowl.

Once the noodles and asparagus are sufficiently cooled toss these on top as well.

Combine the chopped chili, ginger, crushed garlic, tamari, lemon juice and olive oil in a small jar and mix to combine.

Pour the dressing over the salad and serve.

Works really well with seafood.

NOTE: I love this salad dressing and I recommend preparing at least double batch as it works well over any basic salad.

If you have any lovely ripe avocados 1/2 a chopped avo is another great ingredient to include in this salad.



# Beetroot and Feta Salad

Serves 6



6 smallish beetroot peeled and chopped into bite size pieces (see not below) Prep time 5 minutes, cook time 15 minutes

100g of rocket leaves

1 large red onion cut roughly into wedges.

100g of feta cheese of your choice

1/2 a cup of macadamia nuts chopped roughly

1/4 cup of olive oil

2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

1 tablespoon mustard

2 tablespoons of honey

2 cloves of garlic crushed



## METHOD:

**PUT ON AN APRON!** Working with raw beetroot gets messy!

You will need to peel the beetroot and chop it as directed. Then toss the beetroot and the chopped red onion in olive oil and sea salt and place it all in a covered casserole dish in a hot oven – 180 degrees. Roast for 40 minutes or until tender.

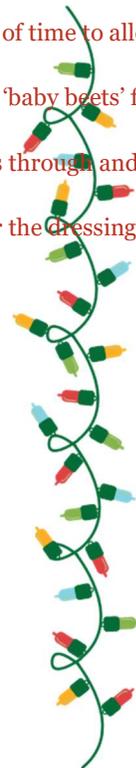
This is the most time consuming part of this salad and really should be done ahead of time to allow to cool.

If you don't have time for this step you can purchase the already cooked, cryovaced 'baby beets' from a supermarket or IGA near you.

Place the beetroot and red onion in a salad bowl once cooled. Toss the rocket leaves through and the crumbled feta cheese as well as the chopped macadamia nuts.

In a small jar combine the oil, balsamic, mustard, honey and garlic and shake. Pour the Dressing over the top and enjoy the salad.

*Now you know how to prepare raw beetroot!*



## SIMPLE DELIGHTS



*When you purchase fresh, seasonal produce this should be the hero of your dish.*

*What follows are just a couple of little ideas to really enjoy some of the beautiful produce we have available to us at this time of year.*

*These little delights may inspire other recipes.*



## Basic Pesto



1 cup of tightly packed basil leaves

1 cup of tightly packed dill leaves

1/3 of a cup of oil

Sea salt

Juice of half a lemon



### METHOD:

Rinse your herbs under cold water then combine your herbs and oil in a food processor and simply blitz until smooth.

Add the sea salt as it will help to chop through the sharpness of the lemon juice.

This is the MOST basic pesto recipe – you can make it creamier and richer by adding in feta or parmesan cheese and even some pine nuts. I like a really simple pesto to simply dollop on good proteins throughout the week, or throw on some sourdough toast with an egg or toss through salads with some extra oil to make it into a dressing.

Store in a glass jar in the fridge for up to 1 week.

Use this recipe merely as a base and vary your herbs for a combination of flavours.



## Beautiful Balsamic Tomatoes

300g small, cherry tomatoes – really fresh, quality ones

2 tablespoons of balsamic vinegar

1 tablespoon of olive oil

Sea salt

### METHOD:

Place your tomatoes into a small oven proof dish and pour over the oil, balsamic and sprinkle the sea salt on top. Roast in a hot oven (190 degrees) for 15-20 minutes until the skin is crinkly and starting to brown.

Toss these through any basic salad OR simply enjoy as on the side of other vegetables and a nice protein.

Variation: add a flat teaspoon of dried oregano over the top before roasting for a really Italian flavor.





## Sticky Nectarines

2 ripe nectarines roughly chopped, seed removed, skin stays on

1 heaped teaspoon of butter

### METHOD:

Heat up a small frypan over high heat.

Melt the butter and wait til its sizzling.

Add the chopped, delicious, juicy nectarines into the fry pan and toss in the butter. Cook for a few minutes until starting to brown.

Serve a dollop of the beautiful buttery, sweet nectarine atop a protein – works especially well with pork.

This would also be lovely on top of granola and natural yoghurt!



# EVERYONE LOVES A CHAMPAGNE BUT....



*Try not to get too carried away with alcohol this festive season. Try to aim to have more alcohol free nights than the opposite.*



*Always have 1 glass of water after each drink you consume.*

*Watch the soft drink intake when it comes to the kids.*

*Here are a couple of little 'swaps' that might help this season.....*



## Kombu-tail 😊

It's a kombucha cocktail... in case you couldn't work that one out!

Kombucha – you select a flavor you like although the sweetener ones work better with this combo than the ginger based options.

Soda water

A few mint leaves

A handful of berries or cherries (frozen if possible)

### METHOD:

Place a few frozen cherries or berries into the bottom of a champagne or wine glass.

Fill the champagne or wine glass 2/3 of the way with kombucha

Top up with soda water

Top with a few mint leaves.

Sip and enjoy guilt free.



## Mango Yoghurt Pops

6 small ice block containers

1 large mango chopped roughly

1 cup of natural yoghurt

### METHOD:

You will find little ice block containers in any kitchen shop or even reject shops.

Simple blend the mango and yoghurt in a food processor until smooth.

Pour the mixture into the moulds and freeze.

Let the kids (and the adults) enjoy these as healthy dessert during the Christmas season.

Banana may also work well or a combination of mango and banana. You could also add some shredded coconut for a tropical touch.



*This Christmas, choose local, fresh ingredients and prepare food simply. Just as it should be.*



**MERRY CHRISTMAS  
WITH LOVE.**

