

# Dinner ideas

Completing your day in style



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To get us through to bedtime, have the energy to watch TV in the evening or continue to work, dinner is the last important meal of your day.

What is different here, is unlike our breakfast and lunch, to a point, we can make this meal from scratch. Use fresh ingredients and prepare it as healthily as possible. Here are just a few of my favourites.

- Fennel bake - dish of the week

I had not heard of this root vegetable until my mother-in-law made me a fennel bake. It is a great dish. Nutritional and so cheap to make.

In a saucepan, place one peeled, chopped onion with 175g of split red lentils and 400ml of unsalted vegetable stock. Add a bayleaf for taste. Simmer for 20-30 minutes until soft and golden beige. Liquidise having removed the bayleaf. Add lemon juice and salt (maybe try without) and pepper.

Wash and trim the fennel (450g) bulbs. Cut white parts into chunky pieces and cook in water until just tender. Place in well greased overproof tray. Pour the lentil mixture over the fennel. Add a small amount of bread crumbs and low fat grated, cheese over the top of the bake. Bake for 30-40 minutes until crunchy and bubbling underneath. There will be plenty for lunch the next day.

A very low calorie dish. Eat with plenty of veg. Fennel provides a good source of fibre, reducing cholesterol levels and potassium that reduces blood pressure.

- Mackerel

I have loved to enjoy this dish, even though I never look forward to it. Served with boiled or steamed carrots, peas and corn.

What is so important about mackerel is it provides us with Omega 3.

Omega 3 is an essential fatty acid that the body cannot synthesize itself. Omega 3 benefits your cardiovascular system and reduces cholesterol levels.

Remove the skin, after frying the mackerel in a little butter. Don't often recommend frying or butter. Fry for two minutes both side.

- Salmon

Another white meat and another source of protein. A little on the expensive side but a nice dish to have. Not a great energy source but not a fatty dish either. A great dish if you need to increase your protein intake and simple to make. Please eat with plenty of vegetables. See the eat well plate

- Jacket potato

Now why would any reputable nutrition and weight management advisor recommend a dish like a jacket potato? It converts into sugar and is high on the glycemic index?

However, it is cheap and offers a superb source of energy if you are active and enjoy working out at an intensive level. It is quick to make too.

The one thing we must watch out for is not to eat too many of them. One a week maximum. If you like potato you can swap your potato with a sweet potato. I like to add humous, a little pesto, a little grated cheese and some ham to bring the meal together. Goes well with tuna too.

- Spaghetti Bolognese

Another potentially dodgy food recommendation but eaten occasionally there is no issue. Pasta converts into sugar if it is not burnt-off or too much is consumed.

Only use lean meat, cook in a saucepan and use low fat products like extra virgin oil.

A great meal to eat before a workout (evening before) or even afterwards. The pasta will give you carbohydrate prior to your workout and the meat will give you protein to aid recovery and muscle development. Eat well in advance of a workout. Three to four hours.

- Stir-fry

A great way to have your noodles and veg. Carrots, peppers, bean sprouts, mushrooms, broccoli. The list goes on. You can add some chicken or pork to add to the meal's taste or exclude if you are a vegetarian. A low fat sauce can be added too. Again, another simple dish to make, a tummy filler and cheap too.

- Yoghurt & Fruit

To finish off your evening, why not indulge in a low-fat yoghurt and some fruit too. Mix it up a bit. Use different fruits and switch between different makes of yoghurts.

The Onken vanilla flavour is amazing and goes perfectly with banana, raspberries, and strawberries. I like the Muller light pots too.

Yeo Valley and Rachel's are also good yoghurt brands. Please make sure they are low in fat too. You should be looking at 80-120 calories per 100g for these types of yoghurts. Anything higher the yoghurt is not low fat. Low fat is anything under 3% fat. Please check the label.

These dinner ideas are just the start. There are plenty more recipes to try out which I'll be taking you through over the coming weeks. The plan will always be to keep things simple each week. This way we stand a better chance of you trying these meals and taking it all in.

Try out the recipes to see if you like them. Remember you have a choice of quick, cardio and recovery meals to choose from. Next week we'll be looking at healthy snacks to eat during the day.