

Breakfast: think outside the cornflake box!



Six energy-boosting breakfasts

by Rita Carmichael, registered nutritional therapist

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What's your idea of breakfast - a quick cup of coffee or tea before dashing out or a leisurely meal taken at the table? Which one do you think will keep you going until lunchtime?

If you skip breakfast, the chances are that you'll feel hungry by 10 o'clock - not surprising if you haven't had anything to eat since the night before! Furthermore, research shows that people who eat breakfast aren't tempted to grab sugary snacks mid-morning and are less likely to put on weight.

Breakfast doesn't have to be the same old boring cereal every day. Take a look at the small print on the box and see how much energy-robbing sugar is in your favourite brand. It may slip down easily but does it sustain you until lunchtime? I'm guessing that the answer is a resounding "no".

To help you to combat that mid-morning dip, here are some satisfying and healthy breakfast ideas based on excellent sources of protein, good fats, vegetables, nuts and fruit to keep you fuller for longer.

There are gluten- and dairy-free alternatives and vegetarian options; everyone can find a breakfast to enjoy.

If you're not a regular breakfaster, make it a daily habit to start with good food – it'll set you up for the day and will make a big difference to your long-term health and energy.

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Healthy Cooking Tips

Choose good quality ingredients from trusted sources. Local, organic produce is widely available these days and is often reasonably priced, especially if you look for seasonal offers.

Buy unsweetened products; check labels - the white stuff gets everywhere.

If you are following a gluten-free diet, check labels for added wheat, barley and rye.

Most of the recipes in this e-book are gluten-free with dairy-free options. The recipes are sweetened with natural sugars from fruit - there's not a grain of sugar in sight.

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Boiled Eggs



A boiled egg is the original fast food ready in minutes. It's a shame that eggs have fallen out of favour. They are highly nutritious and a great way to get some satisfying protein to see you through until lunchtime.

1 or 2 eggs per person

Toast choices: rye bread, wholegrain bread, gluten-free bread

Cover eggs with water in a pan and bring to the boil. Simmer for 3 minutes for a soft egg that's not too runny.

Serve with buttered toast or asparagus spears when in season.

One of my [gluten-free savoury muffins](#) or [a slice of flaxseed bread](#) go nicely with an egg or two.

For a leisurely weekend brunch, grill some mushrooms and tomatoes and have with scrambled eggs. Add good quality, organic sausage or bacon for a great British breakfast.

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Swiss-style Muesli (serves 2)



Olives table linen courtesy of www.frenchshopping.co.uk

This delicious muesli is packed with satisfying oats, nuts and seeds to keep you going until lunchtime. Unlike commercially available muesli, there's no added sugar. Instead, the sweetness comes from fruit. Notice the higher ratio of nuts and seeds to fruit than in shop-bought varieties to give this recipe a satisfying protein boost. You could go nuts and make your own [almond milk](#) to pour over your muesli.

85 grams/3oz jumbo oats (gluten-free oats are widely available)

1 dessertspoon chopped nuts e.g. pecans, walnuts, hazelnuts, almonds or cashews

1 dessertspoon pumpkin and/or sunflower seeds

3 or 4 chopped dried organic apricots (unsulphured) or prunes

150ml/5 fl oz coconut or [almond milk](#)

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

A handful of berries e.g. raspberries, strawberries, blueberries

Plain natural yoghurt or coconut yoghurt (optional)

1 or 2 teaspoons of ground flaxseeds (optional)

Soak the oats, nuts, pumpkin and/or sunflower seeds and dried fruit in water overnight - just enough to cover the mixture - and keep refrigerated. The water helps to make the nuts and oats easier to digest. Just before serving, add the almond or coconut milk and sprinkle on some cinnamon and ground flaxseeds, if using. Throw in a handful of fresh or frozen berries and stir in a dollop of yoghurt before serving, if liked.

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Granola



Make a jarful of this crunchy, nutty [granola](#) to last for several breakfasts. Serve with your choice of milk or yoghurt. It doubles as a luxury topping for a fruity dessert - try it with stewed apples or plums.

Porridge (serves 2)

When it's cold and you fancy something warming for breakfast, use jumbo or gluten-free oats to make steaming bowl of porridge. The addition of ground almonds increases the protein content to help to keep you fuller for longer.

80 grams/3 oz jumbo or gluten-free oats

500ml/17 fl oz water or your choice of milk e.g. cow's, sheep's, goat's, [almond](#), coconut, oat

1 tablespoon ground almonds

1 teaspoon cinnamon

A few twists of sea salt (optional)

Fruity toppings: A handful of berries in season e.g. blueberries, raspberries, strawberries or 3 or 4 prunes or unsulphured apricots per person (cook prunes and apricots in water for 10 minutes to make them juicy).

Put oats and water or milk into a pan and bring to the boil, stirring all the time. Lower the heat and simmer for 3-5 minutes until the oats have thickened. Add more water if you like a thinner consistency. Stir in the ground almonds. Add some sea salt for a traditional Scottish touch. Sprinkle on the cinnamon and serve with the fruit of your choice.

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Kippers

Kippers, a traditional breakfast dish, seem to have dropped off the menu. They're an inexpensive and nourishing source of essential fats and protein. I recently rediscovered kippers for breakfast and this delicious fishy dish has become a firm favourite.

A traditional way of cooking kippers is to steep them in a jug of hot water for about seven minutes (cover the jug with a plate to keep the heat in) and serve with a squeeze of lemon juice and grilled tomatoes. Kippers go well with bread and butter. Choose from rye, wholegrain or gluten-free bread. If you like baking, try your hand at [my gluten-free savoury muffins](#) or [gluten-free flaxseed bread](#) (both freeze well).

You can also grill kippers - about 3 minutes each side under a hot grill should be sufficient to heat them through.



picture courtesy of Wednesday Whimsy

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Rainbow Breakfast Smoothie

This quick and easy smoothie packs a punch with protein provided by tahini or peanut butter, good fats from the avocado and fibre from the oats.

You'll need a blender – a NutriBullet is ideal.

This recipe makes a 200ml smoothie (approximately):



Half a small ripe avocado, peeled and pitted

1 small carrot peeled and cut into chunks

1 tablespoon tahini (sesame seed paste) or peanut butter (no added sugar variety)

150 ml rice, oat, [almond](#) or coconut milk

A handful of fresh or frozen berries e.g. raspberries, blueberries, strawberries

1 cm piece of root ginger

1 heaped tablespoon jumbo, porridge or gluten-free oats

1 teaspoon cinnamon

Optional extras:

2 teaspoons ground flaxseeds

1 teaspoon chia seeds

1 teaspoon cocoa powder

2 tablespoons plain, natural yoghurt or coconut yoghurt

Blend the avocado, carrot, ginger, berries, oats, tahini or peanut butter, seeds, if using) milk and yoghurt (if using) until smooth. Add water if you like a thinner consistency. Sprinkle on cocoa and drink within a few hours for a maximum hit of goodness.



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About the author

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Rita Carmichael is an experienced, registered nutritional therapist with a foundation degree and diploma in nutritional therapy. She is a member of the British Association for Applied Nutrition and Nutritional Therapy (BANT) and is registered with the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC).

Her blog, [Nutri Natters](#), is packed with recipes and tips for people who want to eat well and feel great.

Rita is a coach for the [Metabolic Balance®](#) all-natural weight management programme and works as a facilitator for Penny Brohn Cancer Care's "Living Well with Cancer" course.

Nutritional therapy

Our bodies need the right balance of nutrients to function well. Often, our individual requirements are not met by the typical everyday diet. Many chronic illnesses have been linked to poor nutrition, so ensuring that we get the nutrients we need to feel well physically, mentally and emotionally is an important step towards better health.

Rita Carmichael holds regular nutritional therapy clinics in Nottingham.

[Contact Rita](#) to find out how nutritional therapy can help you to look and feel the best you can.

Find out more

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The author cannot accept responsibility for any injury or loss, arising from the use of the materials provided in this work.

Please introduce any changes to your diet gradually – food is a powerful medicine.

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