

# CONSCIOUS TRIBE: NOURISH YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM



## SIMPLE IMMUNE BOOSTING MEAL PLAN

Following functional medicine health practitioner, Susie Rucker's brilliant talk on immune boosting foods we have put together this simple meal plan to help you start to build your immunity in the most natural way possible. In short Susie recommended the following, which we have used as the springboard for our ideas:

- Starting your day with eggs - simple protein rich breakfasts
- The benefits and many uses of bone broth
- Boosting your ginger and turmeric intake
- Increasing your intake of foods rich in magnesium and zinc
- Some interesting food supplements to try and incorporate into your diet;
  - Medicinal mushrooms (e.g. reishi, maitake, shiitake)
  - Haskap berries / acai
  - Maca root

### ZINC RICH FOODS:

Meat (particularly red meat)  
Shellfish  
Beans  
Leafy greens  
Pumpkin and other seeds and nuts  
Good quality grass fed dairy  
Eggs  
Whole grains  
Sweet potato  
Dark chocolate

### MAGNESIUM RICH FOODS:

Leafy greens  
Whole grains  
Beans  
Nuts  
Fish



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## PANTRY TOOLKIT

Before we start getting into the meal plan, I want to talk to you about creating a simple pantry toolkit. This toolkit consists of two versions of one of my favourite things to keep in my store cupboard; a nut crumb.

I started making versions of these nut crumbs years ago as I wanted to have something bursting with flavour and lovely texture on hand that I knew would elevate and make special even the simplest plate of eggs, a sliced avocado, salad, soup, dip or a plate of roasted vegetables, with just a simple sprinkle. A mixture of roasted nuts and seeds, spices and herbs, these nut crumbs became a pantry staple that I still make most weeks for their versatility and sheer deliciousness.

I make different nut crumb versions all the time, not worrying about straying from a particular recipe, and have added Moroccan inspired versions with ras el hanout and Indian inspired ones with garam masala, and many more, according to my whims and tastes.

The health benefits of the nuts, seeds and spices were certainly in my mind when I was creating these nut crumbs. However, I have realised that alongside their amazing versatility in the kitchen they can go way beyond this to become a really targeted health tool. By adding beneficial ingredients and food supplements you can create something that feeds your immune system, brain power, skin and hair, or whatever else you are keen to work on.

Here we create two versions of my favourite nut crumbs that target your immune health - whether you are looking to elevate something savoury or sweet. These will become the constant in your Meal Plan - popping up to save you time at breakfast, lunch and supper - and most importantly giving you that all important immune boosting lift that we all need at this time of year.

## PANTRY TOOLKIT

### BASIC ROASTED NUTS AND SEEDS

- Roast a large tray of mixed nuts and seeds at 180C (fan) for 10 minutes, checking and tossing a couple of times (remove as soon as they start to look golden and smell appealing).
- I like a simple mixture of cashews, almonds, pumpkin and sunflower seeds but any whole raw nuts and seeds will do.
- Split the nut and seed mix and use one half for your sweet recipe and the other for your savoury recipe.



### VANILLA NUT AND SEED CRUMB WITH MACA AND ACAI

- In a mini food processor place your roasted nut and seed mix with a pinch of salt, a teaspoon or so of the following; coconut sugar, vanilla powder, maca root powder, freeze dried acai powder, ground cinnamon (the vanilla helps with the feeling of 'sweetness' and cinnamon helps regulate your blood sugar)
- Pulse in short bursts watching carefully to make sure you get a nice uneven rubbly texture (this has the most flavour and interest as well as being a pleasing texture).
  - You can also use a ninja or nutribullet but as they are super powerful be really careful when pulsing as it can easily turn to a powder!
- Once you are happy with your rubble, taste and adjust the flavours to your liking - sharpness from the acai, sweetness from the coconut sugar, maltiness from the maca.
- Then to up the nutrition content I like to add a few more small seeds like hulled hemp and toasted black and white sesame seeds, as well as a couple of teaspoons of bee pollen. These also add to the wonderful texture of the crumb.
- Store in an airtight jar and pull out anytime you want to elevate a bowl of porridge, top a bircher, sprinkle over yogurt, icecream, fresh fruit (great in a crumble topping too!).
- Will last for a couple of months in your store cupboard if required



## PANTRY TOOLKIT CONT...

### SPICED NUT AND SEED CRUMB WITH REISHI AND SEAWEED

- In a mini food processor place your roasted nut and seed mix with a good pinch of salt, a grind of black pepper and a half teaspoon or so of the following; toasted cumin and coriander seeds, Aleppo chilli flakes, dried nori or other seaweed sheets, dried maca powder, dried medicinal mushroom powder (mine included reishi, maitake and shitake - go easy as they can be bitter).
- Pulse in short bursts watching carefully to make sure you get a nice uneven rubbly texture (this has the most flavour and interest as well as being a pleasing texture).
- You can also use a ninja or nutribullet but as they are super powerful be really careful when pulsing as it can easily turn to a powder!
- Once you are happy with your rubble, taste and adjust the flavours to your liking - this wants to have a lovely satisfying saltiness and a little heat from the chilli to bring out the other flavours.
- Store in an airtight jar and pull out anytime you want to elevate a savoury dish.
- Will last for a couple of months in your store cupboard if required.



## BREAKFAST

In the morning I find it's enough to crawl out of bed and put the coffee on - let alone consider the complex nutritional balance of my first meal of the day. This is where a little forward planning comes in handy.

A box of eggs, a few make ahead preparations and some leftovers are all you need to make breakfast simple and seriously nutritious.

### OVERNIGHT FRENCH TOAST WITH DARK BERRIES AND VANILLA NUT AND SEED CRUMB

- Everyone has tried overnight oats, but did you know you can make french toast in one dish overnight as well?
- The night before, simply butter an oven proof dish and arrange in your desired bread in no more than a couple of layers (otherwise your french toast will dry out).
- Then make a flavourful egg custard whisked with a little dairy or non-dairy milk, vanilla extract, a pinch of salt, a sprinkle of coconut sugar and half a teaspoon of ground cinnamon.
- Pour this over your bread making sure all the pieces are nicely soaked (I used 4-5 small pieces of bread to 3 eggs), dot each piece with butter, cover and place in the fridge overnight.
- The next morning, before you do anything else, turn the oven to 180C (fan) and remove the french toast from the fridge to come up to room temperature (this helps with cutting down cooking time).
- Then once the coffee is made and the oven has reached temperature, scatter blueberries and/or blackberries over the french toast, place the dish in the top half of the oven and bake for 15-20 mins, or until nicely puffed and golden.
- Serve the french toast with yogurt, maple syrup and a sprinkling of your Vanilla Nut and Seed Crumb.
- Any leftovers can be refreshed with a little more milk to soak into the bread and re-baked at 160C (fan) for 10 mins or so covered with a bit of foil so it doesn't dry out. Ensure it's piping hot before serving



## BREAKFAST CONT...

### LEFTOVER GREENS AND HARISSA EGG SCRAMBLE WITH SPICED NUT CRUMB

- If you aren't in the habit of using leftovers then it's time to get started - I regularly make a little extra of things so that I know I will definitely have something lovely to use the next day!
- Scrambled eggs take two seconds to make - especially if you make the egg mix the night before and use leftovers from last night's supper too.
- Simply make a scramble mix using a splash of dairy / non-dairy milk, whisking in a little jarred harissa to the mix too. Cover and place in the fridge overnight.
- The following morning, melt some butter in a heavy based frying pan and once foamy, slide in your harissa eggs and whichever chopped leftover greens you have on hand.
- Move the eggs around in the pan only gently - you want to achieve soft ribbons of eggs - not over work and dry them out completely in the pan.
- Slide the quivering eggs onto some hot buttered sourdough toast and scatter with your Spiced Nut Crumb.



### FRIED EGGS AND AVOCADO WITH SPICED NUT CRUMB

- Everyone knows how to fry an egg, but getting the perfect sunny side up egg can be tricky...
- My trick is to place the freshest eggs into hot oil and let them sizzle over a medium/high heat (I like a little caramelised bottom on my fried eggs) then sprinkle in a little water into the pan and quickly cover with a lid.
- After a minute or so, lift the lid and the steam from the water should have cooked the egg so that no uncooked white remains (this method uses less oil than the traditional sunny side up technique).
- If not, then replace the lid and cook for a little longer.
- Whilst that is happening, slice the avocado in half and remove the stone.
- Cut the avocado into quarters and gently peel off the skin from each piece, being careful to keep them intact.
- Place some of the Spiced Nut Crumb in a small flat dish and then roll the rounded side of the avocado in the nut crumb (this looks wonderfully appealing but if you don't have time then just scatter the eggs and avo with the crumb instead!)
- Serve on sourdough with a little extra dried Aleppo chilli flakes, salt and pepper, a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil and a squeeze of lemon, if you like.



## LUNCH AND SUPPER

We don't eat meat that often in our house, so when I do buy it I make sure I buy the best high welfare and sustainable that I can. Wherever possible I also like to use every part of the meat and bones. In doing so I find that just one chicken can feed you and boost your health with delicious lunch and supper ideas over the course of a week.

A good sized organic chicken and its cooking broth can stretch a remarkably long way. We find we get a meal for my family of four and then one further meal for two from just the meat and both. The various stocks you can then make from the leftover bones and carcass are bursting with health boosting collagen and nutrients and the basis for many more delicious dishes, making the price you pay for that bird worth every penny - and some!

## SUPPER

### SIMPLE SOOTHING CHICKEN BROTH

- This is real comfort food - for a reason. Dubbed 'Jewish penicillin' this is a proper healer for body and soul.
- Simply place a whole raw chicken in your largest lidded pan (make sure the lid fits properly on top when the chicken is inside!).
- Cover the chicken with cold water and place in a few aromatics; bay leaf, thyme sprigs, roughly chopped carrot and celery, whole black peppercorns, fresh ginger and turmeric, garlic, whole chilli (don't worry these will give a lovely gentle background note to the broth rather than having any pronounced flavour).
- Bring to the boil then turn to the merest bubble and cover with a lid and allow to cook for at least an hour and up to 75 or 90 minutes depending on the size of your bird.
- Check your bird regularly but don't be tempted to prod or move things about (this alongside the gentle poaching will help ensure a nice clear broth).
- When you think your cooking time is up, gently wiggle the leg - if it feels loose in the socket then it's cooked (you can also check that the juices run clear when you pierce the thickest part of the thigh).
- Remove the chicken from the broth and cover with a few layers of foil and tea towels to keep warm - a whole bird will stay happily warm like this while you cook everything else.
- Strain the broth through a fine sieve into another deep saucepan - don't be tempted to press down on the aromatics - no harm will come from it but you risk losing the beautiful clarity of the both that you have worked so hard to create.



*cont' overleaf...*

## SIMPLE SOOTHING CHICKEN BROTH CONT...

- If you haven't already, now is a good time to season your broth, then throw in any vegetables that you like to have with your chicken for supper - I like leeks, potatoes, sweet potatoes and some dark greens thrown in at the end.
- If you prefer you can also use the broth to cook some grains or rice - I like pearl barley or short grain brown rice.
- To up the protein and get another plant based source of magnesium and zinc you could also throw in a can of cannellini or butter beans.
- Check the seasoning and make sure it's just right and serve the broth and vegetables over the sliced chicken (favouring the breast meat as I find the leg and thigh meat work better for leftovers).
- If you like you can grate some lemon zest over the top and drizzle with extra virgin olive oil.

## LUNCH

The next day you have the wherewithal for myriad lunch options. Some ideas to consider:

- **Miso Glazed Chicken:** Shredded leftover chicken meat sauteed in a pan with miso and a little maple syrup served over wilted greens and warmed through grains (always make sure things are piping hot!).
- **Harissa and Spinach Hash:** Cubed leftover potatoes / roots and shredded chicken sauteed till crispy and finished with harissa, wilted spinach and yogurt.
- **Chicken Salad:** Sliced leftover chicken meat with bitter leaves, julienned carrots, avocado, sherry vinegar and Spiced Nut Crumb.
- **Bean and Root Hummus:** Blitz your leftover roots and bean with a garlic clove, olive oil, lemon juice, tahini and salt and pepper till you get a lovely smooth hummus. Use to fill a wrap or pocket with some leftover chicken and leaves.
- **Simple Vegetable Soup:** Use any leftover veg and stock to make a velvety smooth blitzed soup. Scatter with Spiced Nut Crumb and serve with crusty bread.



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## FREEZER: BONE BROTH 2, 3, 4...

- Add your leftover bones, carcass, skin and cartilage and to the same large pot you cooked your chicken in.
- Cover with cold water and aromatics as before and cook gently in the same way for at least an hour.
- This time however add a teaspoon or two of apple cider or white vinegar to the cooking liquor as well - this helps draw the collagen and health giving nutrients from the bones.
- Strain the stock through a fine mesh sieve as before, being careful not to disturb or press the bones in order to keep the clarity of your stock.
- You can keep using your bones like this until they literally fall apart.
- You can also mix the bones with other meat bones and freeze them in between if you don't have time or want to make your stock at a later date.
- Always label and date things as they go into the freezer so you know what they are - trust me you will forget!

## SUPPER

### DEEPLY FLAVOURED SPICED NOODLE BROTH

There are some many wonderful things you can do with this stock. However, here is one of my favourites - so versatile and easy to change up the flavours - we literally never get bored!

- Defrost your stock if frozen and place in a deep saucepan - you want enough to make a substantial soup base for two people.
- Now it's time to deepen the Infusion of flavours - I like lots of sliced fresh ginger and turmeric, spring onions, chilli and garlic, (+lemongrass and lime leaves if you have them). No need to peel anything - just chuck it in as you will be straining it off as before.
- Let the stock simmer till everything becomes really heady with the aromas - around 20 mins should be fine.
- Then strain off the aromatics and replace the now well flavoured stock into a deep saucepan.
- Now it's time to decide if you want to keep this as a broth or add coconut milk to create greater depth and richness - if so throw in a whole can of coconut milk.
- Taste your soup - it should be really savoury with lots of background depth and flavour - make sure the seasoning is just right
- If you are using coconut milk then check the balance of flavours - you want to balance the richness with some sharpness from lime juice, add a tiny bit of coconut sugar if it needs extra sweetness, fish sauce or salt if it needs extra seasoning.
- Serve with noodles, plenty of greens, shredded carrot and sweet potato, chilli oil, herbs
- Amp up the protein with gochujang (Korean spicy bean paste)/miso fried mixed mushrooms (the most unusual and varied you can find)
- Or throw in some salmon or white fish (poach in the broth or use up any leftover roast salmon)



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