

Nourish your body

One of the joys of a yoga retreat can be lavishing your body with delicious, healthy food.

Try to cook with fresh and organic produce where possible, says therapeutic chef and clinical nutritionist Samantha Gowing, who runs the wellness company Gowings Food Health Wealth from Byron Bay, NSW.

“These give your body the best possible chance of not only cleansing, but of replenishing itself without preservatives or chemicals,” Gowing says.

You may like to prepare some of your dishes in advance and keep them in the fridge until mealtimes. If you'd rather not prepare a different meal each time, double the quantities of one and keep the leftovers for the next day. You may also like to prepare a fresh-fruit salad in advance, to have as an extra snack after a meal.

Alternatively, you may like to use the act of cooking itself as a meditation, focusing in on every small action from chopping ingredients to garnishing.

When it comes to enjoying your food, don't rush—your stomach will thank you. “Chew your food until it turns to liquid in your mouth,” recommends McIntyre.



DETOX TIP As soon as you wake, drink a glass of warm water with half a lemon squeezed into it, to cleanse your liver. Then keep a thermos of herbal tea handy and sip throughout the day, to hydrate as well as fend off sugar cravings.

meal plan

	Breakfast	Snack	Lunch	Snack	Dinner
Day 1	Bircher Muesli Mix equal portions of oats, milk and yoghurt with a handful of sultanas and almonds. Refrigerate overnight. In the morning add grated apple, berries and sliced banana. Add honey to taste, and more milk or yoghurt if required.	Turmeric, Papaya and Lime Juice Process 1 tsp fresh grated turmeric, 1 cup papaya cubes, 1 tsp raw honey and the juice of 1 lime in a blender with ice or a little water until smooth.	Fetta and Watermelon Salad Combine cubed watermelon and fetta, sliced green olives and assorted sprouts. Top with a dressing of balsamic vinegar, olive oil and basil leaves.	Gowing's Bliss Balls Combine 1 cup of raw almonds, 1/2 cup sunflower seeds, 1/4 cup pitted dates, 1/4 cup sultanas, 2 tablespoons of raw honey, 1 tsp fresh minced ginger, 1/2 tsp cinnamon and 1 tbsp tahini in a blender and process briefly. Form small balls and roll in shredded coconut. Makes 2 servings.	Coconut Fish Cakes Process 1/4 red capsicum, 1 cm piece of ginger, 1 clove garlic, and 1 red chilli. Add 1 tsp tamari, 250g chopped white fish fillets, 50ml coconut cream, juice and zest of 1 lime, 1 tbsp coriander, 3 spring onions and 1/2 egg. Season. Combine gently to form small patties. Pan-fry for 7 minutes each side.
Day 2	Ricotta Hotcakes with Berries See recipe on opposite page	Tamari Toasted Seeds Toast equal portions of brown sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds and chopped almonds in oven for 5-10 minutes. Add tamari to coat. Store in an airtight container.	Shiitake Mushroom and Asparagus Frittata See recipe on opposite page.	Gowing's Bliss Balls Use second serve from Day 1.	Quinoa with Smoked Tofu See recipe on opposite page.

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Shiitake Mushroom and Asparagus Frittata

SERVES 1

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 3 sprigs of fresh asparagus, trimmed and cut into 2cm pieces
- 60g fresh shiitake or Swiss brown mushrooms, wiped and sliced
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp water
- 1/2 tsp chopped fresh thyme
- 2 tsp freshly grated parmesan cheese

- 1 Heat olive oil in an ovenproof frying pan over high heat. Add asparagus and mushrooms, and cook until tender.
- 2 In a medium bowl, whisk together eggs, water and thyme. Pour into pan, and cook until eggs start to set.
- 3 Top the mixture with parmesan cheese and grill lightly until cheese is lightly browned.

Ricotta Hotcakes with Berries

SERVES 1

- 2/3 cup ricotta cheese
- 1/3 cup low-fat milk
- 2 large eggs, separated
- 1/2 cup rye flour, sifted
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- Pinch salt
- Coconut or safflower oil for cooking
- 1 cup of fresh berries

- 1 Add ricotta, milk and egg yolks into a bowl and mix well to combine. Stir in the sifted flour, baking powder and salt, and gently whisk to make a smooth batter.
- 2 Whisk egg whites until they become foamy, fold them into the ricotta mixture.
- 3 Heat oil in a large frying pan. Gently add 2 tbsp batter. Cook for about 1 minute until golden, then flip and cook for 1 minute. Keep the cooked hotcakes warm by tenting them with foil on a large warmed plate. Serve with fresh berries of your choice.

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Quinoa with Smoked Tofu

SERVES 1

- 3/4 cup water
- 1/2 cup quinoa
- 50g smoked tofu
- 50g green olives, chopped
- 50g walnuts, chopped
- 10g small capers
- zest and juice of 1/2 lemon
- 1 tsp mint, chopped

DRESSING

- pinch cayenne pepper (more, if desired)
- 1/4 tsp fresh ginger, minced
- 2 tsp unrefined extra virgin olive oil
- juice of 1/2 orange

- 1 Bring water to the boil, add quinoa. Reduce heat and simmer for about 20 minutes until husks split from the seeds. Set aside and allow to cool.
- 2 Slice smoked tofu into 3cm batons.

Combine quinoa with olives, walnuts, capers, lemon zest and juice and chopped mint. Add the smoked tofu carefully, so as not to break it up, and arrange on serving plates

- 3 Combine the cayenne with the ginger, oil and orange juice and toss through the quinoa lightly and serve.

Recipes by Samantha Gowing
(www.foodhealthwealth.com) ❖

Helen Hawkes is a Byron Bay-based freelance journalist and author of The Slow Guide to Sydney. She has practised Iyengar yoga for 12 years and is a firm believer in the re-energising power of home retreats.

