

Food for THOUGHT

Many foods work synergistically to boost health and vitality – discover the right formula with delicious Neal's Yard recipes based on the principles of holistic healing

Over 2,000 years ago, ancient Greek physician Hippocrates declared: "Let food be thy medicine." These days, with our busy modern lives, we generally know what we *shouldn't* be eating – but do we really understand what foods are most beneficial to our health? And, just as importantly, how to turn healthy ingredients into satisfying meals that we actually want to eat?

London's leading holistic health centre Neal's Yard has come to the rescue, creating a cookbook with the feel-good – and the taste-good – factor. *Neal's Yard Healing Foods* is not just an A to Z of the best foods to buy, it also provides menus and scrumptious step-by-step recipes aimed at helping your body tackle common ailments.

"The food we eat has an over-reaching effect on our health and well-being, whether we are conscious of it or not," explains the book's co-author Susan Curtis, director for natural health at Neal's Yard Remedies.

"Becoming more aware of the healing properties of food will help you to make adjustments to meet the needs of your body, and it will do an enormous amount to maintain and improve your health."

After examining different eating habits around the world and how healthy the people who live in various regions are, the book's authors came to a perhaps unsurprising conclusion: our sugar and

processed food-heavy Western diet is not the most beneficial.

The famed Mediterranean diet – defined by the NHS as one largely based on vegetables, fruits, beans, whole grains, olive oil and fish – is the one that would benefit us Brits most.

"The healthiest diets are plant based, with meat reserved for feast days and occasional treats," explains Curtis. "They include plenty of oily fish so are rich in omega 3 fatty acid DHA. People who follow these diets rely on seasonal, fresh food produced without industrial chemicals."

And so, eating a tasty and healthy rainbow is a simple rule of the book. "Many of us eat the same food over and over again – and because of that, healthy food can seem bland," admits co-author Pat Thomas. A basic recommendation that's simple to follow: diversify your cooking with stir fries, casseroles and soups because they can include a range of fresh, varied ingredients.

And for anyone who still has doubts about the benefits of such a diet, the delicious, filling recipes from *Neal's Yard Healing Foods* on these pages – Sea Bass with Spinach and Mango, Almond and Raspberry Cake or dairy-free Banana and Cranberry ice cream, for example – show that when it comes to eating for health, the proof is in the pudding. ■

BLACKBERRY LEMONADE

Blackberries are a great medicine if you have a painful or swollen throat, mouth or gums. Their antioxidant, kidney-toning and detoxifying properties make them a must-have ingredient when in season. Collect the leaves, too, as a blackberry leaf infusion enhances the anti-inflammatory effects of this recipe further. Serve with ice or warm if you have a throat condition

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- 4 tsp dried blackberry leaves, or 12 fresh leaves
- 300g / 10oz blackberries, rinsed
- 2 lemons, juiced, plus a few thin slices for decoration (optional)
- 3 tbsp maple syrup

1 To make an infusion, boil 300ml/10fl oz of water, pour over the leaves, and leave for 10 minutes. Strain the mixture, reserving the liquid to use

in the lemonade. Discard the leaves.

2 Place the blackberries in a food processor or blender and blitz them to a pulp. If you don't like the gritty texture of the seeds in your drink, strain this through a colander and collect the smooth juice.

3 Pour the lemon juice, blackberry juice, and 250ml/9fl oz of the blackberry leaf infusion into a jug, add the maple syrup, and stir the mixture well. Pour into large glasses, decorate each with a slice of lemon and serve.

From detoxifying blackberries to circulation-boosting sardines, the best ingredients have the feel-good factor



Designed to help:

- soothe sore throats
- alleviate heavy periods
- support healthy kidney function
- remove toxins

POACHED EGGS AND SPINACH

Organic, free-range eggs when poached or soft boiled provide complete nutrition. Traditionally, egg yolks are considered nourishing to the liver, heart and kidneys, and they contain antioxidant amino acids that protect against heart disease. They can also help combat anaemia, diarrhoea, constipation and even insomnia. Eggs are combined here with iron-rich spinach.

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 4 shallots, finely chopped
- 1 chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
- 1 tsp ground turmeric
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 4 tbsp coconut cream
- 200g/7oz spinach, chopped
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tbsp white wine vinegar
- 4 chicken's or duck's eggs
- 4 slices of wholemeal toast, or some cooked millet, to serve
- a bunch of coriander leaves, finely chopped (optional)

1 Heat 1 tbsp of water with olive oil in a small saucepan. Add shallots

and chilli; cook over a low heat until the vegetables are soft. Stir in turmeric, then add garlic and coconut cream. Cook until coconut cream is heated through, and then add spinach. Stir the mixture until spinach wilts and remove from heat. Add a pinch of salt and a sprinkle of black pepper.

2 Heat a wide, shallow pan filled with water until tiny bubbles appear on the bottom. (Don't allow the water to boil before adding the eggs.) Add the vinegar to the water to help keep the egg protein from disintegrating, as the acid acts as a coagulant. Give the water a few swirls with a spoon, which will keep the eggs in the centre of the pan. Crack each egg into a small plate or ramekin dish and then slide it into the water just below the surface. The egg will sink to the bottom and then rise as it cooks. Poach for about 3 minutes.

3 Place a piece of wholemeal toast on each plate, or fill a cook's ring with a 2cm/¾in layer of cooked millet, and spoon some of the spinach on top. Remove the ring, if using. Place a poached egg on top of each stack and sprinkle some coriander leaves over it to taste. Season with a little black pepper and serve immediately.



Designed to help:

- strengthen heart, blood vessels
- boost iron stores
- promote peaceful sleep

ADZUKI BEAN SOUP

Adzuki beans eliminate toxins and reduce water retention; tangerine peel is thought to aid digestion.

Serves 4-6

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tangerine or orange
- 115g/4oz adzuki beans
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 4 shallots, finely chopped
- 1 medium leek, chopped
- 2 carrots, finely diced
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 celery sticks, finely diced
- 4 medium tomatoes, skinned and finely chopped
- 1 tsp tomato purée
- 750-900ml/1¼-1½ pints chicken or vegetable stock
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 courgettes, finely diced
- 2 tbsp finely chopped parsley
- salt, freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tbsp finely chopped basil leaves, to garnish

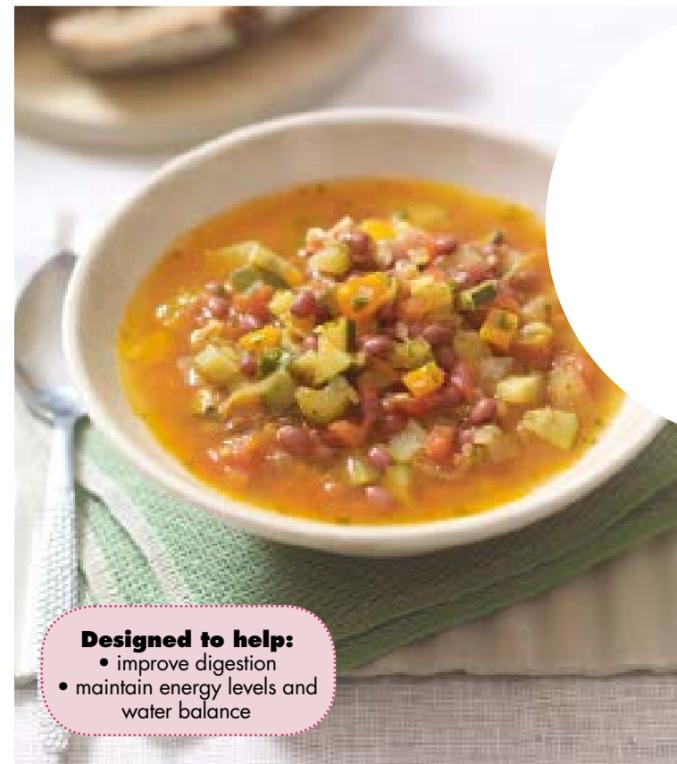
1 Use a potato peeler to remove peel from tangerine or orange. Arrange peel on baking tray; leave

in oven at a low temperature, 110°C, 225°F, Gas 1/4 for 1 hour or until dried. Grind peel to a powder in a pestle and mortar, or leave whole.

2 If using dried beans, soak according to packet instructions, then drain. Place beans in a saucepan, cover with fresh water, bring to the boil, simmer for 15 minutes and drain. If using canned, simply drain and rinse.

3 Heat olive oil in a large saucepan and sauté shallots over a low heat until softened. Add leek, carrots and garlic. Stir and cook for 2-3 minutes. Add celery, allow to soften, then add tomatoes and purée. Cook 5-10 minutes until soft. Add beans to mixture.

4 Pour in the stock, add bay leaves and dried peel. Bring to the boil. Reduce heat immediately to a slow simmer for 30 minutes, then add courgettes and parsley. Simmer for 10 minutes, then remove bay leaves (and whole peel, if using). Add salt and black pepper to taste, and serve in bowls garnished with basil. Serve with rye bread on the side.



Designed to help:

- improve digestion
- maintain energy levels and water balance



Designed to help:

- improve digestion
- ease rheumatic pain
- strengthen the immune system
- protect the heart and blood vessels

MUSHROOM FRITTATA WITH CHERRY TOMATOES AND BASIL

An ideal meal if you are convalescing. Like other mushrooms, morels (*Morchella esculenta*) are rich in the essential amino acids that the body needs to build protein, while shiitake and crimini mushrooms help improve digestion and have anti-inflammatory properties. Wash the morels thoroughly, as their sponge-like caps often contain soil and grit.

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- For the braised tomatoes
- ½ tbsp ghee, or clarified butter, for greasing
- 200g/7oz ripe cherry tomatoes
- salt and freshly ground

black pepper

- 1 tbsp freshly chopped basil leaves, to garnish

For the frittata

- 25g/scant 1oz dried morels, soaked in boiling water for 5 minutes to rehydrate, or 75g/2½ oz fresh morels, cleaned and finely chopped
- 100g/3½ oz shiitake mushrooms, sliced
- 100g/3½ oz crimini mushrooms, sliced
- 2 tbsp ghee
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tbsp finely chopped chives
- 8 eggs, beaten
- 3 tbsp crème fraîche

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C, 350°F, Gas 4. To braise the tomatoes, grease a baking tray with the ghee, add the cherry tomatoes, season with salt and black pepper, and place in the oven for 8-10 minutes or until tomatoes are cooked.

2 Place a large, non-stick frying pan over a medium heat and dry-fry all the mushrooms for 1-2 minutes to enhance their flavour and allow them to release some of their moisture. Add 1 tablespoon of ghee, allow to melt, and sauté mushrooms for 3-5 minutes, adding salt and black pepper to taste. Add half the chopped chives to the mushrooms, reserving the rest to use as a garnish.

Remove the mushrooms from the pan and set aside.

3 Beat together the eggs and crème fraîche in a medium bowl with a little more salt and black pepper to taste. Melt the remaining tablespoon of ghee in the pan and pour in the egg mixture. Cook for 2-3 minutes over a low heat until the base is firm, then add the mushrooms and cover with a lid to cook for 3-5 minutes, until the base and top of the frittata are set.

4 To serve, sprinkle the frittata with the rest of the chives, divide between 4 serving plates, and add the braised cherry tomatoes. Garnish the tomatoes with the basil and serve immediately.



SWISS CHARD AND SWEET POTATO

Designed to help: • improve digestion • protect eye health • maintain water balance and reduce dryness in the mouth, skin, nose and lungs • fight inflammation

A great side dish, here's a different way of serving leafy, fibre-rich Swiss chard, which is high in vitamin K and antioxidant carotenoids. Swiss chard's slightly bitter taste fades with cooking and marries well with the sweet potato in a dish that supports eye health, improves digestion and also relieves inflammation and improves the body's water balance.

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp olive oil, plus extra to drizzle
- 2 shallots, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 tsp coriander seeds, crushed
- 1 chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 large sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into cubes
- 250g/9oz Swiss chard, stalks removed and

finely chopped, and leaves finely sliced
• salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Heat the olive oil with a tablespoon of water in a medium saucepan with a lid. Add the shallots and coriander seeds and cook over a low heat, stirring occasionally, until the shallots have softened.

2 Add the chilli and garlic, and cook for 1 minute. Add the sweet potato and cook over a medium heat for about 5 minutes, adding a dash of water if necessary. Then add the chopped chard stalks, cover with the lid, and cook for 10 minutes.

3 When the sweet potato is almost cooked through, add the shredded chard leaves to the pan, cover, and let them wilt for about 3 minutes. Season the mixture with salt and black pepper, drizzle over a few drops of olive oil and serve.

TOP 10 HEALING FOODS

1 **LEAFY GREEN VEGETABLES** including kale or broccoli, which are high in vitamin C.

2 **TOMATOES** are a rich source of the antioxidant lycopene, found in the red colour of the skin and flesh, and beta-carotene, another antioxidant found in orange fruit and veg. Both are thought to boost your immune system. Tomatoes are great eaten raw or, even better, cooked, as lycopene is one of the few antioxidants that gets stronger with heat.

3 **APPLES** contain the nutrient pectin, which is good for reducing cholesterol and balancing blood sugar levels.

4 **OATS** are high in fibre and ideal for making porridge. Soak them overnight in apple juice, to provide even more nutrients.

5 **HONEY** has natural antibacterial properties, which means it's great for colds and stomach healing. It's one sweet food that's good for you.

6 **OILY FISH** are a rich source of essential fatty acids, including omega 3, thought to help reduce heart disease and ease joint inflammation. Oily fish include salmon, herrings, mackerel, sea bass, trout, sardines and tuna.

7 **BLUEBERRIES** are a powerful source of vitamin C, fibre and antioxidants called anthocyanins and are thought to help ease gastroenteritis. Look for organic, fresh berries and freeze so you can use them year round.

8 **EGGS** are a great source of protein and easy to incorporate into your daily diet as they are flexible and quick to cook. They are also a rich source of vitamin D, which your body needs to absorb calcium to keep bones strong.

9 **OLIVE OIL** Not all fats are bad for you – olive oil is a staple of the Mediterranean diet. It raises HDL cholesterol, which is thought to protect against heart disease, and is best used drizzled over foods or made into salad dressing. Cook with it only at low temperatures to preserve the phytonutrients.

10 **NUTS** are high in antioxidants and rich in fibre, healthy fats and vitamins. You can choose almonds, walnuts, cashews, pine nuts or chestnuts – whatever is seasonal and fresh – but avoid them if they are fried or cooked in oil.

'The food we eat has an over-reaching effect on our well-being, whether we are conscious of it or not'

GRILLED SARDINES WITH TOMATO SALSA

Designed to help: • improve circulation • supply oxygen to cells • strengthen tendons and bones • calm the nerves

Sardines boost circulation and help build red blood cells, which in turn increase the flow of oxygen around the body. Here, they are cooked with flavoursome ingredients including basil, which has a soothing and supporting action on the mind and cognitive processes, and rosemary, which has anti-inflammatory properties.

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- 6–8 large sprigs of rosemary
- 8 fresh sardines
- 1–2 tbsp olive oil
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1–2 lemons, cut into quarters, to serve

For the salsa

- 8 tomatoes, skinned, deseeded and finely diced
- 1 red chilli, deseeded and finely diced

- 3 spring onions, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp chopped basil leaves
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped (optional)
- 2 tbsp raspberry vinegar or red wine vinegar
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 To make the tomato salsa, mix all the ingredients well and season to taste.

2 Preheat the grill to a moderate heat. Arrange the large rosemary sprigs on a grill pan and lay the sardines on top. Drizzle with olive oil and season with sea salt and black pepper.

3 Grill sardines for 3–5 minutes on each side or until cooked. They should be opaque, but still firm.

4 Divide the sardines and salsa between 4 serving plates, place 1–2 lemon quarters on each. Serve with a green salad and boiled new potatoes.



SEA BASS WITH SPINACH AND MANGO

Oily fish and iron-rich spinach help lower blood pressure and prevent headaches and dizziness. Chilli, garlic and ginger promote healthy circulation and digestion and remove excess water from the body.

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- 4 sea bass, about 250g/9oz each
- a pinch of salt
- 15g/½ oz fresh root ginger, finely chopped
- 2 small chillies, deseeded and finely chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 lemon, cut in half; one half thinly sliced, the other half juiced
- 2 heaped tsp wholegrain mustard
- 6 tbsp olive oil
- 8 tbsp white wine
- 200g/7oz spinach leaves

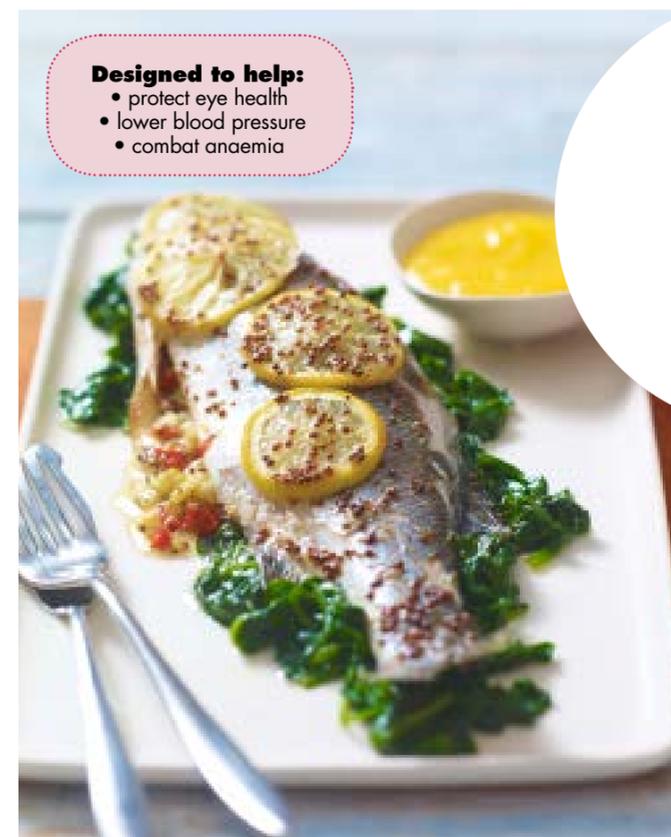
For the sauce

- 1 medium mango, peeled, stoned, and roughly chopped
- 2 tsp lime juice
- 1 tbsp olive oil

1 Soak fish in a large bowl of salted water (1 tbsp of salt to 1 litre/1¾ pints of water) half an hour before cooking to clean them thoroughly. Preheat oven to 180°C, 350°F, Gas 4. Pat fish dry with kitchen paper and place in a large ceramic baking dish. Sprinkle with salt and pack insides of fish with ginger, chilli and garlic. Arrange lemon slices on top of each fish. Blend mustard, lemon juice, olive oil and wine (or 8 tbsp of water) in a jug and pour over the fish. Cover with foil and bake 25–35 minutes, or until fish flakes easily with a fork.

2 To prepare sauce, put mango flesh, lime juice and olive oil in a food processor or blender, blitz briefly, and set aside.

3 Boil a large saucepan of water. Add spinach; cook for 30 seconds or until it wilts. Drain and quickly rinse spinach in cold water to halt the cooking process, and drain. Place sea bass on 4 serving plates. Divide spinach into 4 portions, arranging it around each fish. Drizzle mango sauce over the sea bass and serve the rest of the sauce in a small bowl on the side.



Designed to help:

- calm nerves • support healthy liver, kidneys • clear congestion
- protect eye health



ALMOND AND RASPBERRY CAKE

This gluten-free cake is made with ground almonds instead of flour. Almonds soothe and support the respiratory system, helping to remove phlegm. Raspberries have a tonic effect on the liver and a calming effect on the mind. Rich in antioxidants, they also support healthy vision. In traditional Chinese medicine, raspberries are used to treat impotence and infertility in men.

Serves **6**

INGREDIENTS

- 250g/9oz butter, plus extra for greasing
- 250g/9oz caster sugar
- 5 eggs, separated
- 250g/9oz ground almonds

- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 200g/7oz raspberries

1 Preheat oven to 140°C, 275°F, Gas 1. Grease a 25cm/10in springform cake tin with the butter and line the base with baking parchment, making sure paper is exactly same size as base.
2 Cream butter and sugar in a large bowl. Add an egg yolk, mix well, then add a little of the ground almonds and combine well. Repeat until all yolks and almonds have been added to the mix. Add vanilla extract and combine well.
3 In a separate large bowl, beat egg whites to stiff peaks with an electric hand whisk. Gently fold egg whites into the cake mix with a metal spoon to keep the mix as fluffy and light as possible. Keeping 6-12 raspberries aside to use

as decoration later, transfer half the mix to the prepared cake tin, arrange half the raspberries on top, then add the rest of the cake mix and finish with the rest of the raspberries. Don't combine the raspberries with the cake mix, as they will break up and discolour the cake.
4 Bake for 45-60 minutes until cooked through. To test if the cake is cooked, insert a clean skewer into the centre of the cake. If the skewer is clean when you take it out, remove the cake from the oven. If not, cook for a little longer and test again.
5 Place the cake on a wire rack and allow to cool. Once cool, carefully remove the springform tin and baking parchment. Decorate the top of the cake with the reserved raspberries and serve.

BANANA AND CRANBERRY ICE CREAM

Ice cream without any cream – ideal for those who are allergic to cow's milk. Ripe bananas promote bowel regularity and can help lower blood pressure, while cranberries have antibacterial properties that treat urinary tract infections (UTIs). In traditional Chinese medicine, cold food is thought to disrupt healthy digestion, so keep frozen foods for occasional treats.

Serves **4**

- 4 ripe bananas, sliced
- 200g /7oz cranberries
- 1 tbsp caster sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 50g /1 ¾ oz pistachio nuts, shelled and chopped

1 Put bananas and cranberries in freezer and remove when semi-frozen. (If completely frozen, allow to thaw slightly for about an hour.) Place in blender or food processor and blitz until fruits are coarsely combined. Divide between 4 freezer-proof serving bowls (enamel bowls are freezer-safe) and

place in the freezer for 3 hours. Alternatively, freeze ice cream in a clean plastic container.
2 Meanwhile, place sugar in a small saucepan over a low heat and add just enough water to wet the sugar. When sugar has dissolved completely, add vanilla extract and mix in pistachios, then remove from the heat and allow to cool.
3 Remove ice cream from freezer and allow it to sit at room temperature for a short while, then use an ice cream scoop to divide it between 4 serving bowls. Drizzle the sugar solution and nuts over the top of each portion and serve.

TIP If you have a weak digestive system, add a few drops of freshly squeezed ginger juice, instead of water, to the sugar to dissolve it. Grate fresh ginger root, wrap in a piece of muslin, squeeze and collect the juice. Children may also benefit from ginger juice, but make sure they enjoy the taste of ginger before you include it! Also, if you can't find fresh or frozen cranberries, use blueberries which freeze well and taste just as good.

Designed to help:

- fight urinary tract infections
- ease constipation • lower blood pressure



BUCKWHEAT PANCAKES WITH FRESH BERRY SAUCE

Antioxidant-rich and full of fibre.

Serves **4-6**

- 175g/6oz fresh berries
- 225g/8oz organic buckwheat flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp rou gui or 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- a pinch of salt
- 275ml/9 1/2 fl oz rice milk or milk
- 1 large egg
- 1-2 tbsp ghee
- 3 tbsp maple syrup, to serve

1. Place berries, except blueberries if using, in food processor or blender and blitz until smooth. Strain sauce through a fine sieve; set aside.
2 Mix together buckwheat flour, baking powder, rou gui or cinnamon and salt.

In another bowl, whisk rice milk and egg. Gradually pour egg mixture into dry ingredients, whisking to form a smooth batter.
3 Heat a frying pan and brush with ghee. Ladle some pancake mixture into the pan to make a thin pancake. Fry for 2-3 minutes, then turn pancake and cook other side.
4 Stir the blueberries, if using, into the berry sauce. Drizzle pancakes with maple syrup and serve with the berry sauce.

TIP Grinding your own flour is a healthier choice. Simply blitz a few handfuls of buckwheat grain at a time in a coffee grinder, powerful food processor or blender.



All recipes are taken from Neal's Yard Healing Foods (Dorling Kindersley, £16.99) written by Susan Curtis, Pat Thomas and Dragana Vilinac

