

Roasted carrot, red lentil, coconut and ginger soup

Makes enough for the week, takes about 40 minutes

Autumnal, hearty and delicately spiced, this is a filling and simple soup. Roasting the carrots beforehand makes all the difference to the flavour. Serve with a crunchy salad (radishes are a good addition) and a few crackers.

- * Carrots - about 10, topped and roughly chopped
- * Sesame oil - a couple of glugs
- * Ground coriander - 2 tsp
- * Onion - 1 large, peeled and diced
- * Ginger - 3 thumb sized pieces, peeled and diced
- * Fresh coriander - a bunch, roughly chopped
- * Garlic - 3 cloves, peeled and diced
- * Vegetable stock** - 4 cups (about 1 litre)
- * Coconut milk - 500ml
- * Salt - 1.5 tbsp (if using unsalted stock - otherwise skip and taste for seasoning at the end)
- * Split red lentils - 1.5 cups

To serve

- * Toasted sesame seeds, sesame oil, coriander. Extra ginger for grating.

Preheat the oven to 210 degrees C.

Lay the carrots out in a roasting tray with a drizzle of sesame oil, 1 tsp of ground coriander and plenty of salt and pepper. Roast in the oven for 25 minutes, or until golden and tender.

In a large pan, fry the onion, ginger, 1 tsp coriander, fresh coriander stalks and a glug of sesame oil over a medium heat. Add a splash of water to stop things sticking. Once the onions have softened a little, add the garlic.

Add the lentils and stir well to coat them in the spices.

Add the stock, coconut milk and salt, bring to a simmer and cook for 20 minutes.

Add the cooked carrots along with the fresh coriander leaves to the pot, and then use a hand blender to blend into a smooth soup. Add extra coconut milk or water if the soup is too thick, or when reheating during the week.

Serve with a drizzle of sesame oil and a sprinkling of toasted sesame seeds and coriander leaves. I like to grate some extra ginger into the bowl, too.

** I'm into making my own vegetable stock at the moment. Save your onion and garlic skins and tops and tails, along with stalky bits of cabbage, butternut skins, seeds and stems, cauliflower leaves, carrot tops, parsley stems....any of the bits you'd normally throw away. Once you have enough to fill a pan, fill up with water and boil for an hour. Drain and voila, home made stock.

Carrot, sesame, almond and oat crackers

Serves 4 - 6, takes 25 minutes

These are virtuous and moreish. They'd also be delicious with any type of dip or as with cheese (post detox).

- * Carrot - 1 large, finely grated
- * Ground almonds - 75g
- * Porridge oats - 50g

- * *Toasted sesame seeds - 2 tbsp*
- * *Coriander seeds - 1 tbsp, crushed (or 1 tbsp ground coriander)*
- * *Salt - 1/2 tsp*
- * *Pepper - a few cracks*

Preheat the oven to 180 degrees C.

Mix all the ingredients together in a bowl with your hands to make a sticky dough.

Place the dough between two sheets of baking paper, flatten a little with your hand and then roll out into as much of a rectangular shape as you can. The dough should be about 1/2cm thick.

Use a sharp knife to score 4 x 4cm squares onto the top layer of baking paper. This will help you to snap off square shaped cookies when they're cooked. Don't worry about uneven edges; no one will judge you and they will be perfect as croutons.

Carefully peel off the top layer of paper and bake in the oven for 15 minutes.

The outer crackers should now be turning golden brown. Following your carefully scored lines, cut off the ones which have coloured, then pop the rest back in the oven for a few more minutes.

Leave to cool a little before cutting the rest of the crackers.

Store in an airtight box for up to a week.

Spicy ginger vegetable and quinoa bowl

Takes 15 minutes, serves 3

Use up all sorts of veggies in this fragrant and satisfying bowl of goodness. I had carrots, romanesco and savoy cabbage. Broccoli, beans, spinach, cauliflower, red or white cabbage, kale, pak choi and mushrooms would all work as well. You could of course use noodles instead of quinoa for a more classically Eastern dish.

- * *Quinoa - 2/3 cup*

For the stir fry

- * *Red onion - 1, peeled and diced*
- * *Sesame oil - a glug*
- * *Ginger - 1 thumb sized piece, peeled and finely chopped*
- * *Garlic - 1 clove, peeled and sliced*
- * *Carrots - 2, finely sliced*
- * *Romanesco - 1/2, thinly sliced*
- * *Savoy cabbage - about 1/6 of a large cabbage, finely sliced*
- * *Fresh coriander - a couple of handfuls, chopped*

For the sauce

- * *Sesame oil - 2 tbsp*
- * *Olive oil - 1 tbsp*
- * *Lime - juice and zest of 1*
- * *Soy sauce - 2 tbsp*
- * *Mirin - 1 tbsp (or runny honey)*
- * *Hot sauce - 1 tsp*

To serve

- * *Peanuts or cashews - a handful, chopped*

Bring the quinoa to a healthy simmer in a small saucepan with 1 and 1/3 cups of water. Cover and leave for 15 minutes.

In a large frying pan, fry the onion and ginger in a glug of sesame oil over a high heat, stirring often. Add the garlic, carrots and romanesco (or whichever crunchy vegetables you are using) and stir well. Add a splash of water to the pan, cover and leave to steam for a few minutes.

Meanwhile make the sauce. Combine all the ingredients in a small bowl and stir well.

Add the cabbage or whichever leafy veggies you are using to the pan, stir again, cover, and leave to steam for a few more minutes.

Add the sauce to the pan and mix well.

Check that the quinoa is cooked (all the water should have been absorbed). Add to the frying pan with the chopped coriander and mix everything together.

Serve with a sprinkling of nuts.