

easy

simple &
delicious

sonia cabano



PHOTOGRAPHY BY RYNO

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Published in 2010 by Struik Lifestyle
(an imprint of Random House Struik (Pty) Ltd)
Company Reg. No. 1966/003153/07
Wembley Square, First Floor, Solan Road, Gardens, Cape Town, 8001
PO Box 1144, Cape Town, 8000, South Africa

www.randomstruik.co.za

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Copyright © in text: Sonia Cabano 2010
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Publisher: Linda de Villiers
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Proofreader: Laetitia Sullivan

ISBN 9781770078284 (print) | ISBN 9781432303600 (epub) | ISBN 9781432303617 (PDF)

The publishers wish to thank Dastakari for the loan of props for the photography.



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fresh





fresh

detox and recharge with easy recipes for everyday vitality

Most people seem to think healthy eating entails boredom and deprivation. I beg to differ! Besides providing fuel for energy, food should taste **good**, and every mealtime should be a celebration. Making little adjustments to your diet as you go along will mean more in the long run than trying to stick to radical regimes, and you're more likely to stick to the changes if you enjoy your food. Try to lessen your dependency on animal protein and cut back on saturated fats, refined sugars and salt. I use lavish amounts of fresh and dried herbs and spices to flavour my cooking, plenty of olive oil, ginger, chilli and garlic, and try to make the most of colours and textures to add plate appeal. Grains are good for you, as are fibre-rich beans, juicy fruits and vegetables, served with plenty of leafy greens, nuts and seeds for their essential mineral content. Alcohol and caffeine give false energy, so you're better off without them. Pretty soon you'll discover that without artificial additives, colourants and preservatives your food will taste fresher and lighter, and you will positively sparkle with vitality. It's worth the expense to invest in a juice extractor and food processor, some non-stick pans and natural, organic produce where at all possible. The time saved leaves you free to use your new-found energy elsewhere!

Citrus zinger salad with mint and pomegranate

A sparkling citrus treat to brighten up winter-dulled palates.

Ingredients

2 ruby grapefruit, 2 oranges and 2 tangerines,
all with peel and pith removed and sliced
horizontally. Work over a bowl and save any
juices that run out.



handful of fresh mint leaves
2–4 T (30–60 ml) pomegranate kernels

Method

1. Roughly chop the fruit into a serving bowl and tear in the mint leaves.
2. Add the reserved juices and pomegranate kernels and serve cold. Seedless green grapes make a good addition.

Serves 4

Rosy C-soother

A refreshing tonic against summer blazes – chill the fruit and semi-freeze the juice for a slushy effect.

Ingredients

juice of 2 limes or 1 lemon
2 cups (500 ml) cubed watermelon, green exterior
rind removed



400 g strawberries, hulled
2 cups (500 ml) diced fresh pineapple
3 cups (750 ml) cranberry juice
2 t (10 ml) grated fresh ginger

Method

1. Place all the ingredients in a food processor and liquidise until smooth.
2. Pour into glasses and serve chilled.

Serves 2–4

Toasted oat and berry breakfast trifle with vanilla yoghurt

Oats are a wonder food for anyone prone to energy crashes. This is a super-fast shortcut to muesli and good with any fruit you have at hand, especially stewed dried apricots and peaches.

Ingredients

50 g slivered almonds, finely chopped	•	1 t (5 ml) vanilla essence
1 T (15 ml) sesame seeds	•	2 T (30 ml) honey
1 T (15 ml) desiccated coconut	•	300 ml chilled Greek yoghurt
75 g oat bran	•	2 cups (500 ml) mixed fresh berries or any other diced fresh or stewed fruit

Method

1. Mix the almonds, sesame seeds, coconut and oat bran together and toast in a dry frying pan over a medium heat, stirring continuously, until golden brown. Remove from the heat and allow to cool.
2. Stir the vanilla essence and honey into the yoghurt.
3. Spoon the berries into serving glasses or bowls, top with the yoghurt and some toasted slivered almonds and serve.

Serves 3–4



Thai-chilli beef and noodle salad with cucumber, spring onion and peanuts

Use fillet if you can afford it, otherwise a nicely matured rump will do.

Ingredients

- 3 T (45 ml) soft brown sugar
- ½ t (2.5 ml) cayenne pepper
- ¼ cup (60 ml) Thai fish sauce
- 500 g fillet or rump steak
- 1 t (5 ml) oil for grilling
- 2 medium cucumbers, peeled, deseeded and thickly sliced
- 6 spring onions, thickly sliced
- 1 red onion, peeled and thinly sliced
- 4 red chillies, deseeded and minced
- ½ cup (125 ml) fresh mint leaves
- ½ cup (125 ml) fresh coriander leaves
- 100 g rice vermicelli noodles, soaked in warm water until soft
- ½ cup (125 ml) unsalted peanuts, coarsely chopped

Dressing

- 1–2 t (5–10 ml) deseeded and very finely minced green chilli
- 2 t (10 ml) grated fresh ginger
- 1 t (5 ml) crushed garlic
- 6 T (90 ml) lime or lemon juice
- 2 T (30 ml) Thai fish sauce
- 1 T (15 ml) soy sauce
- 1 T (15 ml) honey or soft brown sugar
- 1 T (15 ml) sesame oil (optional)

Method

1. Dissolve the soft brown sugar and cayenne pepper in the Thai fish sauce and brush over the steak. Leave for 15 minutes.
2. For the dressing, whisk together all the dressing ingredients in a jug and set aside.
3. Heat the oil in a frying pan over a high heat and grill the marinated steak to how you would like it done (for best results the steak should still be pink in the middle). Leave for 10 minutes and slice thinly.
4. Place the steak slices in a large bowl and add the remaining ingredients, except the peanuts. Add the dressing and toss to coat.
5. Transfer to a serving dish, sprinkle with the peanuts and serve immediately.

Serves 4

Marina's minty lemon and chilli-grilled halloumi

My Greek friend Marina loves grilled halloumi as much as I do and this is her delicious take on the classic *saganaki*. Serve straight up for a snack or on dressed leaves for a classy starter.

Ingredients

Approx. 500 g halloumi, sliced into roughly 1.5 cm-thick slices	•	2 T (30 ml) olive oil
2 red chillies, deseeded and finely diced	•	1 T (15 ml) mint sauce
grated zest of 1 lemon	•	3 T (45 ml) extra-virgin olive oil
	•	salt and pepper to taste
	•	120 g rocket leaves

Method

1. Place the sliced halloumi on a tray. In a small jug, combine the chillies, lemon zest and olive oil and drizzle over the halloumi. Make sure each piece is properly coated on both sides.
2. Leave to marinate for at least 30 minutes, preferably overnight. When ready to cook, drain the halloumi but reserve the leftover marinade for later.
3. Heat a cast-iron pan over a high heat and fry the halloumi slices until golden brown on each side, 1–2 minutes (no extra oil is necessary). When cooked, remove the slices and set aside.
4. In a bowl, whisk the mint sauce and extra-virgin olive oil with 1 T (15 ml) of the leftover marinade and season well with salt and pepper.
5. Arrange the rocket leaves on individual plates and place the halloumi slices on top. Drizzle with the dressing and serve straightaway.

Serves 4–6



Red onion, black olive, orange and rocket salad

This classic Middle Eastern salad is ideal for mid-winter when fresh vegetables and leaves are hard to find. The rocket is not essential but adds a nice peppery bite. This is fantastic served with barbecued meat or fish.

Ingredients

4 oranges, peel and pith removed and sliced horizontally	3 T (45 ml) extra-virgin olive oil
1 cup (250 ml) pitted black olives	2 t (10 ml) red wine vinegar
1 large red onion, peeled and very thinly sliced	pinch of ground cumin
	salt and pepper to taste
	large handful of rocket leaves, torn into pieces

Method

1. Chop the orange slices into chunks and place in a large bowl.
2. Add the rest of the ingredients, toss and leave for 15 minutes (no longer) for the flavours to marry. Transfer to a serving dish and serve immediately.

Serves 4–6

French potato salad with olives, anchovies and tuna

Potatoes are greedy oil guzzlers, a problem this classic recipe neatly circumvents by using a stock-based dressing. The spuds are tasty enough alone without the combined ingredients, which add up to a classic Salade Niçoise.

Ingredients

500 g baby potatoes	½ cup (125 ml) extra-virgin olive oil
3 T (45 ml) prepared chicken or vegetable stock	salad leaves to serve
1 T (15 ml) Dijon or grain mustard	1 x 170 g can tuna
3 T (45 ml) tarragon white wine vinegar	12 anchovy fillets
salt and pepper to taste	1 cup (250 ml) halved baby tomatoes
3 T (45 ml) chopped fresh parsley or basil	6 marinated artichokes, quartered (optional)
	1 cup (250 ml) pitted black olives

Method

1. Cook the potatoes in a saucepan of well-salted water until just tender. Drain and halve.
2. Mix the stock, mustard, vinegar, salt and pepper with the herbs and pour over the hot potatoes. Leave to soften for 20 minutes, then stir through the oil.
3. To serve, place the potatoes on a bed of salad leaves and scatter over the remaining ingredients. Keeps well in the refrigerator for up to two days.

Serves 4–6

Beetroot, avocado, pea and feta salad on baby spinach with honey-mustard dressing

Using shop-bought cooked beetroot makes this salad a speedy treat, lovely as a side with any grilled meat or fish.

Ingredients

- 1 cup (250 ml) frozen baby peas
- 4 handfuls of baby spinach, watercress and rocket leaf mix, about 110 g
- 8 small cooked beetroot, chopped
- 2 ripe avocados, pitted, peeled and chopped
- 2 rounds feta, chopped

Honey-mustard dressing

(Makes 175 ml)

- 2 T (30 ml) honey
- 5 t (25 ml) red wine vinegar
- ¼ t (1 ml) salt
- 2 t (10 ml) Dijon or grain mustard
- 1 T (15 ml) finely minced onion
- black pepper to taste
- 6 T (90 ml) olive oil

Method

1. Place the frozen peas in a saucepan and cover with boiling water. Drain and repeat, this time leaving the peas in the water for 15 minutes before draining again.
2. Place the leaves on four plates and arrange the beetroot, avocado, feta and peas on top.
3. In a jug, whisk together all the dressing ingredients until emulsified, then drizzle over the individual salads. Serve immediately.

Serves 4

Spa salad with red peppers, broccoli and asparagus

This is a gorgeous crunchy, munchy salad – add prawns or grilled chicken strips instead of cottage cheese for a more substantial meal. Use juicy sugarsnap peas, green beans or a cup of cooked sweetcorn instead of asparagus.

Ingredients

- 2 cups (500 ml) broccoli florets
- 170 g thin or fat green asparagus spears, cut into 3 cm chunks
- 200 g low-fat chunky cottage cheese, any flavour
- 1 T (15 ml) chopped fresh herbs
- 3 spring onions, finely sliced
- 4 handfuls of mixed salad leaves, about 120 g
- 1 large red pepper, deseeded and sliced
- 1 cup (250 ml) rosa tomatoes
- 2 carrots, peeled and cut into strips
- 1 T (15 ml) each of pumpkin, sunflower and sesame seeds

Dressing

- 1 t (5 ml) grated fresh ginger
- 2 T (30 ml) soy sauce
- 2 T (30 ml) sesame oil
- 2 T (30 ml) extra-virgin olive oil
- black pepper to taste

Method

1. Steam the broccoli and asparagus in a sieve over a saucepan of rapidly boiling water until just tender – about 4 minutes. They must be bright green and still crunchy. Remove and allow to cool.
2. In a bowl, combine the cottage cheese with the herbs and spring onions.
3. In a separate bowl, whisk together the dressing ingredients.
4. Arrange the salad leaves on four plates, place a large scoop of the cottage cheese mixture on top of each and scatter over the broccoli, asparagus, red pepper, tomatoes, carrots and seeds. Drizzle with the dressing and serve straightaway.

Serves 4

Tomato soup with basil oil

A really good homemade tomato soup is a beautiful thing to eat. Perfectly balanced between tantalising tartness and mellow sweetness, rounded to a glossy crimson by slow simmering, it needs little besides a slick of basil oil or some grated Cheddar stirred in at the last minute. Mince the vegetables and herbs in a food processor to save time.

Ingredients

6 T (90 ml) extra-virgin olive oil	2 x 410 g cans chopped peeled tomatoes
1 large onion, peeled and minced	1 x 410 g can tomato purée or passata
1 medium leek, white stem only, rinsed thoroughly and minced	6 T (90 ml) tomato concentrate
1 celery stick, minced	2–3 t (10–15 ml) salt
1 large carrot, peeled and diced	4–6 T (60–90 ml) sugar
1 t (5 ml) minced garlic	1 T (15 ml) soy sauce
½ cup (125 ml) chopped fresh parsley	6 cups (1.5 litres) good-quality chicken or vegetable stock (use 3 cubes)
1 t (5 ml) chopped fresh marjoram	salt and pepper to taste
1 large potato, peeled and coarsely grated	1 cup (250 ml) grated mature Cheddar or basil oil (see opposite)

Method

1. Heat the oil in a large heavy-bottomed saucepan over a medium heat.
2. Add the onion, leek, celery, carrot, garlic and herbs and sweat with the lid on for about 15 minutes. Stir frequently until softened, but not browned.
3. Now add the remaining ingredients, except the salt, pepper and cheese, stir briskly and bring to a rolling boil. Stir again and lower the heat to a very gentle simmer.
4. Leaving the lid off, let the soup quietly bubble away for about 40 minutes, stirring every 15 minutes to prevent the vegetables scorching on the bottom of the pan.
5. Remove from the heat when everything is meltingly soft and leave to cool for 5 minutes before processing until smooth. (Using a stick blender makes this infinitely easier.)
6. Season to taste and serve with grated Cheddar on the side or add a dash of basil oil at the last minute. Grated Gruyère cheese, rosemary or coriander pesto, fresh herbs and croutons all make equally good accompaniments to this soup.

Serves 8–10