



Carrot soup with yellow split peas

This soup is packed full of nutrients and is a good source of protein for vegetarians

Ingredients:

225g (8oz) split yellow peas

25g (1oz) butter

350g (12oz) carrots, peeled and sliced

100g (4oz) washed and sliced leeks

1.2 litres (2pints)

1 onion, peeled and chopped

1 bay leaf

1 clove garlic, crushed

2tbsp crème fraîche

1 tbsp fresh chopped parsley, salt and freshly ground black pepper

Method:

Soak the split peas in cold water overnight. Melt the butter in a large saucepan and sauté the carrots, onion, bay leaf and garlic for 3-4 minutes. Stir in the leek and split peas. Pour in the vegetable stock, cover and bring to the boil and simmer for 40mins. Remove the bay leaf and liquidise in a food processor. Stir in the crème fraîche and parsley and season to taste.



Thai Style Chicken Curry

Ingredients:

1tbsp vegetable oil
2 large chicken breasts (approx. 300g/10oz)
150g (5oz) new potatoes, thinly sliced
1 x 400ml (14fl oz) can coconut cream
75g (3oz) French beans, trimmed
75g (3oz) baby corn
100g (4oz) broccoli florets, chopped
12 cherry tomatoes, halved
1tsp caster sugar
1tsp lime or lemon juice
2tsp green Thai curry paste
600ml (1 pint) chicken stock

Method:

Heat the oil in a wok or large frying pan and fry the chicken and potatoes until the chicken turns opaque (3-4mins). Stir in the coconut cream, Thai curry paste and chicken stock. Bring to the simmer and cook for 5-6mins, then add the beans, baby corn and broccoli. Simmer until the vegetables are tender (a further 8-10mins). Stir in the cherry tomatoes, sugar and lime or lemon juice.



Pilau Rice

This rice has a wonderful flavour and the turmeric turns the rice a rich yellow colour, which is very attractive.

Ingredients:

200g (7oz) basmati rice
15g (½ oz) butter
½tsp turmeric
2cardamom pods
2 cloves
½ cinnamon stick
350ml (11 floz) boiling water
Salt

Method:

Place the rice in a large bowl and cover with cold water and leave to soak for about 20 mins. Drain the water and rinse the rice until the water runs clear through a seive. In a medium saucepan, melt the butter and stir in the rice and spices until evenly coated in butter. Stir in the boiling water and a pinch of salt. Cover and leave to cook on the lowest heat for 10minutes. Remove from the heat and leave in the pan, without stirring, for 10 minutes. Remove the cardamom, cinnamon stick and cloves and fluff up with a fork.



Pasta with Gruyere, Spinach and Sweetcorn

Spinach has a quite strong taste on its own, but blends well with a cheese sauce and the sweetcorn adds a slightly sweet taste that babies like.

2 tbsp small pasta shapes
85g (3 ½ oz) fresh spinach (English spinach)
or 40g (½ oz frozen spinach
15g (½ oz) unsalted butter
150 ml (5 fl oz) your baby's usual milk
40g (1 ½ oz) of cooked frozen sweetcorn
40g (1 ½ oz) grated gruyere cheese

Cook the pasta according to the instructions on the packet. Melt the butter, store in the flour and cook for 30 seconds. Gradually whisk in the milk to make a smooth white sauce. Bring to the boil and then simmer for 1 to 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the cheese until melted. If using fresh spinach carefully wash it and put in a saucepan, sprinkle with a little water and cook until tender (about 3 minutes). Squeeze out all of the water. Combine the spinach (fresh or frozen) with the cheese sauce and puree in a mouli. Stir the cooked pasta and sweetcorn into the spinach and cheese sauce.



Penne with Chicken in a Creamy Mushroom and Cheese Sauce

Since pasta is generally so popular with children, in a good way to get them to eat other nutritious foods is to combine them with pasta

200g (7oz) penne
2 tbsp olive oil
75ml (2 ½ fl oz) chicken stock
1 clove garlic, crushed
salt and freshly ground black pepper
200g (7oz) mascarpone cheese
100g (4 oz) Gruyere cheese, grated
150g (5 oz) button mushrooms, sliced
2 chicken breasts, cut into bite sized pieces

Cook the penne in a large pan of lightly salted water according to the packet instructions. Heat the olive oil and sauté the mushrooms and garlic for 3minutes. Add the chicken and simmer until the cheese has melted and the sauce has thickened slightly (about 4 minutes). Season to taste and stir in the penne.



Summer Fruit Yoghurt Ice Cream

This creamy frozen yoghurt tastes wonderful and it's made with good healthy ingredients. You could also make it using fresh summer fruits.

Ingredients:

300g (10oz) mixed frozen summer fruits e.g raspberries, blackberries, blueberries,
400ml (14 floz) mild natural yoghurt
200ml (7floz) double (thickened) cream
75g (3oz) caster sugar plus 1tbsp

Method:

Puree and sieve half the summer fruits. Stir in the yoghurt if it is set yoghurt and lightly whisk the cream until it forms soft peaks. Mix together the yoghurt, cream, 75g (3oz) of the caster sugar and the summer fruit puree. Freeze in an ice cream-making machine. When frozen, mix the remaining summer fruits with the remaining tablespoon of aster sugar and stir into the ice cream mixture.

Alternatively, spoon into a suitable container and put in the freezer. When half frozen, beat well until smooth, either with a hand-held electric whisk or in a food processor to break down the ice crystals that form. Mix the rest of the fruit with the tablespoon of caster sugar and stir into the yoghurt ice cream. Return to the freezer and stir one or two more times during the freezing process to get a smooth ice cream.



Dark and White Chocolate Refrigerator Cake

200g (7 oz) plain chocolate, broken into chunks
100g (4oz) butter, roughly cut into pieces
2 tbsp freshly squeezed orange juice
150g (5 oz) digestive (oatmeal) biscuits
50g (2oz) raisins
75g (2oz) semi –dried apricots, chopped
60g (2 ½ oz) white chocolate, roughly chopped

Put the plain chocolate, butter and orange juice into a heat-proof bowl, place over a pan of simmering water, stirring occasionally until melted, then set aside to cool down. Break the digestive biscuits into pieces then stirring these into the melted chocolate together with the raisins, apricots and white chocolate. Transfer to an 18 or 20 cm (7- or 8in) square, greaseproof –lined tin. Flatten the top gently with a potato masher or the back of a spoon and set aside in the fridge to set. Cut into squares to serve.