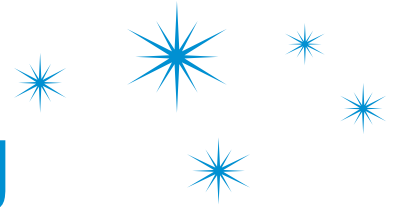




RACHEL DE THAMPLE

JAPANESE FEAST MENU



SPICED ALFALFA, AVOCADO & CASHEW SUSHI

I've been dabbling with sushi making and this by far is my favourite roll. It's the easiest and healthiest one ever to make. If you like, serve with a little dish of mirin or soy sauce for dipping.

Prep: 20 mins

Cook: nil

Serves 6

1 portion of veg per serving

Ingredients:

- 200g alfalfa sprouts
- 1 tbsp freshly grated ginger
- A few shakes of soy sauce
- 8-10 sheets nori seaweed
- 1 large or 2 small ripe avocados
- A pinch of chilli flakes (optional)
- 4 tbsp cashews, toasted

Method:

Have a little dish of water at the ready for your sushi. You'll use this to help dampen the edges of your seaweed, which will help seal your sushi rolls.

Mix the sprouts, ginger and a few shakes of soy sauce in a large bowl. Taste. Add a little more soy or ginger, to your liking.

Lay a sheet of nori on a chopping board. Brush with water. Lay another sheet of nori on top, giving a double layer of seaweed.

Dip your index finger in the water. Run it along the top and bottom 1cm of the nori sheet. Pile a mound of the sprouts in the centre. Spread it out to create a 1cm thick layer, leaving a 1cm boarder at the top and bottom.

Halve and stone the avocado. Remove the peel. Thinly slice. Arrange the avocado slices in a line, in the bottom third of the roll. Scatter a little pinch of chilli flakes and a line of cashews beneath the avocado.

Gently roll up, using your fingers to help keep everything firmly tucked in as you roll the filled nori sheet from bottom (the side nearest you) to top. If the filling starts to spill out, just pinch it out or tuck it back in. Keep going until you've got a log-like shape. Dab extra water on the seam to seal, if needed.

With the roll seam-side down, cut into 3-4cm-thick rolls (a serrated knife like a bread knife works well here). You should get 5-6 for each sheet of nori. Repeat until all the nori sheets and filling are used up.

LITTLE TURNIP PICKLES

These little pickles are like a milder version of pickles ginger. Such a brilliant way to adding a little extra veg and the perfect recipe for spring violet turnips.

Prep: 10 mins

Marinate: 1hr

Serves 6

0.5 portion of veg per serving

Ingredients:

- 240g turnips (or radishes)
- 3 strips of lemon zest
- 1 tsp sea salt

Method:

Slice your turnips (or radishes) as thinly as possible – if using turnips, quarter them first before slicing. Mix in a bowl with the lemon zest and sea salt.

Really scrunch everything together with your hands for about 5 mins. Liquid will start to come out of the turnips and the veg will start to soften. Drain off the liquid. Place a plate or bowl with a large flat surface on the base on top. Weight it down with a tin or jar of something heavy. Let it sit for 1 hr.

Place your soaking pickles in a sieve or colander and rinse well in cold water. Pile into a little dish and serve with your sushi.

ENGLISH EDAMAME WITH LEMON SEA SALT & SESAME

Of course, if you can get a hold of some fresh podded edamame, use them but swapping for seasonal sugar snap peas is even sweeter and you can eat the whole thing, skin and all. No need for a side bowl.



Prep: 5 mins

Cook: 5 mins

Serves 6

1 portion of veg per person

Ingredients:

- 500g sugar snap peas*
- 1 lemon
- A pinch of sea salt
- 1 tbsp sesame seeds

Method:

Get a large frying pan hot. Rinse your peas. Toss them in the hot pan while they still have a little water clinging to them.

Sizzle until they're just tender, bright green and a little charred.

Add a grating of lemon zest, a squeeze of juice and a pinch of salt. Toss the sesame seeds in. Toast for a second.

Tumble the peas onto a serving tray. Eat hot.

*Garden peas still in the pod or young, tender broad beans can also be used. Eat them like edamame, tugging the beans/peas out of their pods with your teeth.

WILD MUSHROOMS & GREENS RICE HOT POT

One of the most delicious things I've ever eaten, a dish that will forever linger in my memory, is the crab rice hot pot served at a Japanese restaurant in London called Roka.

While I've never seen their recipe, this is my nod utterly morish and comforting Japanese-style hot pots. Mine is far from authentic but it's really easy to make and it hits all those lovely flavour and texture notes beautifully.

Prep: 15 mins

Cook: 30 mins

Serves 4 as a main on its own, or 6 as part of the Japanese feast

1.5 portions of veg

Ingredients:

- 1 litre veg stock
- A few splashes of olive or sesame oil
- 2 white onions or 12-16 spring onions, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 red chilli, finely chopped (more or less, to taste)
- 4 tbsp freshly grated ginger
- 200g risotto rice
- A few shakes of soy sauce
- 500g mushrooms, torn or thinly sliced*
- A large handful of wild garlic or chives, roughly chopped

Method:

Pour your stock in a saucepan, place over a medium heat and bring to a gentle simmer.

Heat a second pan and add a gloss of oil and the onions. Lower heat. Cook until translucent and tender.

Mix the garlic, chilli and ginger in a bowl. Remove a good-sized pinch of it, which you'll cook with your mushrooms. Swirl the rest through the onions. Cook till softened.

Add the rice. Toast for a moment. Add a few shakes of soy sauce.

Pour a ladle of your simmering stock to the rice. Set a timer for 20 mins. Continue to feed the stock to the rice, little by little, stirring often, until the timer goes off and till the rice is tender.

While the rice cooks, sizzle your mushrooms in a frying pan with a little oil till golden. Swirl in the reserved chilli/ginger/garlic. Cook a moment. Splash in a little soy, to coat. Set aside.

When the rice is ready, fold the mushrooms through the rice or serve them perched on top. Swirl in most of your wild garlic or chives, saving a handful of greens to scatter over the dish right before you serve it.

*A wild mix of spring mushrooms is a delight in this dish but any variety from button mushrooms to shitakes to portobellos will work. My favourite is morels, but they're not cheap if you're buying vs foraging them, so you can always mix a handful of more exotic mushrooms with the cheaper varieties

SAUCY MISO SPINACH WITH TOASTED SESAME

Prep: 10 mins

Cook: 10 mins

Serves 6

Ingredients:

- 4 tbsp sesame seeds
- 1 tbsp miso paste (any kind, a richer, dark miso is ideal)
- 1 tbsp water
- 1 tsp honey
- 1 tsp freshly grated ginger
- 500g baby or smaller, tender spinach leaves
- A few chilli flakes, to garnish (optional)

Method:

Heat a large frying pan and add the sesame seeds. Lower the heat and toast gently until golden. Tip into dish and set aside.

Whisk the miso paste, water, honey and ginger together until fairly smooth and fully mixed.

Rinse the spinach thoroughly. Return the empty frying pan to the heat. Add the spinach and gently fold through the pan, to just wilt it. Swirl the miso paste through until it's melting into the spinach.

Pile onto a serving dish. Scatter your toasted sesame seeds over, along with a pinch of chilli flakes, if you like.

GINGER CHICKEN & SPRING ONION YAKITORI SKEWERS

Everyone loves a dish on skewers. For a vegan option, swap the chicken for parboiled or steamed hunks of squash or tofu (roughly in 3cm cubes).

Prep: 15 mins

Cook: 15 mins

Serves 4 as a main on its own, or 6 as part of the Japanese feast

0.5 portions of veg per serving

Ingredients:

- 5 tbsp mirin*
- 3 tbsp soy sauce
- 2 tbsp honey, maple syrup, sugar (or your favourite sweetener)
- 500g diced chicken (breasts, thighs or leg meat) that meets a credible certification standards, such as RSPCA assured, free-range or organic.
- 1 tbsp finely grated ginger
- 150g spring onions
- 12 skewers (soak them if using bamboo skewers)
- 2 tbsp sesame seeds, toasted

*If you can't find mirin swap for 2 tbsp soy sauce mixed with 2 tbsp water, 1/2 tsp cider or rice vinegar and 1/2 tsp sweetener (honey, sugar, etc.).

Method:

Preheat the grill to high or oven to 220°C/Gas 7. Place a grill pan or baking sheet in the oven to heat up.

Mix the mirin with the soy sauce and your sweetener of choice.

Tumble the diced chicken into a bowl. Pour the mirin marinade over and fold in the ginger. Leave to marinade for as long as you can – at least 15 mins or as long as overnight.

Rinse your spring onions and trim off the root ends off. Cut both the whites and greens into 3cm hunks.

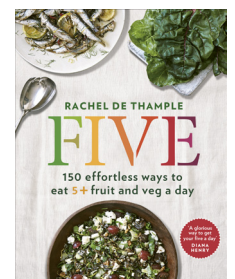
Thread the marinated chicken and spring onions on your skewers, alternating between the two (adding 3-4 hunks of onions for each 1 hunk of chicken). Save any marinade left from the chicken.

Grill or cook the skewers on the preheated pan, on the top shelf, for 5-10 minutes on each side, or until nicely browned and cooked through. Gloss with the remaining marinade a couple of times during cooking.

Scatter toasted sesame seeds over just before serving.



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Recipes by Rachel de Thample, extracted from
FIVE: 150+ effortless ways to eat 5+ fruit and
veg a day (Ebury; £14.99)