

# Comfort in a Pandemic



Are you feeling lonely? Tired? Anxious? Depressed? Depleted?

**You are not alone.**

Are you turning to food for comfort? Emotional eating rather than eating for true physical hunger? Many of us are doing the same in these trying times. Eating can be a source of comfort, regardless of your reasons.

Please don't add worry about comfort eating to your list of concerns at this time. We are all in this together, and your "whole person" health is most important.

First, let's acknowledge a couple of new stresses related to food choices:

- How to get groceries safely; navigating lines to get into stores; ordering online
- An extreme focus on food safety; sanitizing hands and maybe even packages
- The task of preparing more meals and snacks at home, maybe more than usual; preparing food for your family/children, or perhaps just for you
- The challenge of making meals from foods you're not used to buying, or from what you have left in your pantry
- The change in or lack of routine; being home all day with easy access to the fridge and pantry
- Eating more or less than usual as a coping mechanism or because of household or grocery store shortages
- For some people, the effect of increased alcohol consumption, and its impact on food choices

And overall, not being able to connect together, physically, with friends and family over food.

Now, let's acknowledge that this is a difficult and uncertain time. Give yourself permission to be kind to yourself and nourish your body. While it's possible that we may gain a small amount of weight, we need to be gentle and gracious with ourselves during these trying times of isolation and stress.

Our team of health professionals are here for you now, if you would like to learn more about mindful eating - a practice by which you acknowledge the food you are eating, without judgement, in an attempt to improve your eating habits in time. We are also here for you in the future, to help reinstate healthy eating goals and/or focus on managing your chronic conditions, when the time is right.

Food is intended for both nourishment and comfort. Let's enjoy our food and practice daily self-care. The following checklist and tips can help support your self-care during these very trying times.



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# HOW IS FOOD MAKING YOU FEEL TODAY?

During this time, it may be difficult to cope with your emotions, feeling more stressed, anxious, or sad than usual.

We want you to know that your **feelings are valid** and you have permission to **nourish your body**.



## CHECK OUT THESE INSTAGRAM ACCOUNTS:



@chr1styharrison  
@beauty\_redefined  
@covid19eatingsupport  
@zachmiko  
@pixienutrition

## What can you do?

### FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL

- Eat to feel good
- Move your body to feel good
- Trust your body, it knows what it needs
- Be mindful of what you see online
- Avoid starting a diet
- Revisit an old hobby
- Start a journal
- Spend virtual time with family and friends
- Check-in with our Dietitians!

Eating is a behaviour that will look different for everyone. It changes in response to your hunger, schedule, food availability, and feelings!

### REMEMBER, IT IS NORMAL TO:

- ✓ Over eat at times, feeling stuffed.
- ✓ Under eat at times, wishing you had more time or more food.
- ✓ Eat because you are happy, sad, stressed or because it feels good.
- ✓ Save part of your meal or snack to enjoy tomorrow. Or, finish it all now because you are enjoying it!

-ELLYN SATTER



Seaway Valley  
Community Health Centre

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*Here is a list of our favourite 'comfort foods' that will nourish your body & delight your taste buds*

## Black Bean Taco Filling

**Makes:** 2-4 servings

**Prep time:** 5-10 mins

**Cook time:** 7 mins

### Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ½ large onion, diced
- 1 ½ teaspoons chili powder
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 (15 oz) can black beans, drained and rinsed
- ¼ cup water



### Instructions:

1. Heat the oil in a large skillet on medium-high heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring, until softened, about 2 minutes. Stir in spices. Add the beans and water.
2. Cover the pan and reduce the heat to a simmer. Cook for 5 minutes, or until the water is absorbed. Use the back of a fork to partially mash the beans, leaving about half whole. Taste and adjust the seasoning as needed.

### Tips:

- Can add a wide variety of toppings – tomatoes, lettuce, fresh peppers, (or whatever veggies you have) salsa, cheese, sour cream etc.
- Serve with taco shells or in wraps.

**Adapted from:** <https://www.thekitchn.com/recipe-10-minute-black-bean-tacos-233042>

# Instant Frozen Yogurt

**Makes:** 4 servings

**Prep time:** 5 mins

**Ingredients:**

- 2/3 cup frozen fruit
- 1 medium banana
- 1 tablespoons honey \*
- ¼ cup plain yogurt
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice



**Instructions:**

1. Put all ingredients in a food processor or blender.
2. Blend until smooth.
3. Serve immediately or freeze in a container with a lid.

This is a kid friendly recipe. Make some and serve with the Apple Dapple Cake.

**\*Children must be over 12 months to eat honey**

**Adapted from:**

<https://www.superhealthykids.com/recipes/healthy-instant-strawberry-banana-frozen-yogurt/>

# Apple Dapple Cake

**Cook time:** 20-25 mins

## Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cup flour
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 - 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp soda
- 2 eggs
- 2/3 cup plain yogurt
- 1/3 cup canola oil
- 1/2 tsp almond extract or vanilla
- 3 apples peeled, cored and sliced



## TOPPING

- 3 Tbsp sliced almonds
- 3 Tbsp brown sugar
- 1 tsp cinnamon

## Instructions:

1. Beat the eggs with the sugar and oil well
2. Add yogurt, almond or vanilla extract
3. Add flour, baking powder and soda
4. Pour into a 8" or 9" cake pan
5. Place apples on top and add topping
6. Bake at 350 degrees F for 20-25 minutes or until tester comes out clean.

## Tips:

- You can use any fruit you have in the house, including drained canned fruit.



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# Easiest Hummus

**Prep time:** 5 min

**Ingredients:**

- 1 can chickpeas, drained
- 1 -2 cloves garlic (or more if desired)
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp salt
- 3 Tbsp olive oil
- 3 Tbsp lemon juice – concentrate is fine or fresh squeezed

**Instructions:**

Blend up and add in more olive oil or lemon to make it smooth.

**Tips:**

- If you like things with more hot spices add in some hot sauce, or red pepper flakes.
- Eat with veggies, use on sandwiches for a tangy spread.



# Lentil Soup

**Cook time:** 30-45 mins

## Ingredients:

- 2 cups dry lentils
- 8 cups vegetable or chicken broth
- 1 onion, diced (can use dried onion flakes )
- ¼ cup tomato paste
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 Tbsp ground cumin



## Instructions:

1. In a large saucepan combine lentils, broth, onion, tomato paste, garlic and cumin.
2. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat, cover and simmer until lentils are soft, 30-45 minutes.

## Tips:

- Serve with a squeeze of lemon.



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# Chickpea Blondies

**Prep time:** 15 mins

**Cook time:** 20-25 mins

## Ingredients:

- 1 can (15 ounces) chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 1/2 cup all natural peanut butter or nut butter of choice
- 1/4 cup pure maple syrup
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 cup chocolate chips

## Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F and grease pan with olive oil.
2. In a food processor or with immersion blender, add all ingredients except chocolate chips and process until batter is smooth. Fold in chocolate chips.
3. Spread batter evenly in prepared pan. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean and edges are a tiny bit brown. The batter may look underdone, but you don't want them to dry out.
4. Cool pan for 20 minutes on wire rack. Makes 16 blondies. Store covered in the fridge for up to 3-5 days or can be frozen.

**Adapted from:** <https://www.ambitiouskitchen.com/flourless-chocolate-chip-chickpea-blondies-with-sea-salt-vegan-gluten-free-healthy/>



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# Apple Oat Bread

**Prep time:** 10 minutes

**Cook time:** 45 minutes

## Ingredients:

- 2 large eggs
- ½ cup of unsweetened apple sauce
- ½ cup of plain Greek or Icelandic style yogurt
- 3 Tbsp of maple syrup or sugar
- 1 tsp of vanilla extract
- ¾ cup of large flake oats
- 1 tsp of baking soda
- 1 tsp of ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp of ground nutmeg
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 cup white or whole wheat flour
- 1 medium sized apple, peeled, shredded and lightly squeezed to remove excess juice.

## Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F and lightly grease a 9 x 5 inch loaf pan.
2. In a large mixing bowl, lightly beat the eggs until the yolks break apart. Mix in the applesauce, yogurt, maple syrup/sugar and vanilla, mixing until smooth.
3. In a separate medium bowl, mix together the oats, baking powder, spices, flour and salt.
4. Add the dry to the wet ingredients and stir until just combined.
5. Mix in the shredded apple.
6. Transfer the mixture into the greased loaf pan.
7. Bake for 45 minutes or until knife comes out fairly clean.
8. Remove the bread from the oven and let cool for about 10 minutes before transferring to a cooling rack.

**Adapted from:**

<https://www.runningwithspoons.com/2016/09/14/one-bowl-greek-yogurt-apple-oat-bread/>



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# Oven Roasted Sweet Potato Fries

**Makes:** 4 servings

**Prep time:** 15 mins

**Cook time:** 40-45 mins

## Ingredients:

- 3-4 large sweet potatoes, skins washed well and cut into thin fries (keep skin on for more fibre!)
- 2 Tbsp of olive oil
- 1 tsp of ground cinnamon
- 1/8 tsp of ground cumin
- ¼ tsp of salt
- Dash of ground cayenne powder (optional) or freshly grated black pepper

## Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
2. Add sweet potatoes to a large bowl and drizzle with olive oil, cinnamon, cumin, cayenne (if using) or pepper and salt.
3. Spread potatoes on baking sheet and bake until crisp, flipping fries half way.



Adapted from: <https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/jamie-deen/oven-roasted-cinnamon-sweet-potato-fries-recipe-2064562>

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# Green Minestrone Soup

**Prep time:** 15-20 minutes

**Cook time:** 20-25 minutes

## Ingredients:

- 3 Tbsp of extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 stalks of celery, chopped
- 2 large cloves of garlic, sliced
- 2 bay leaves, dried
- 1 can of 'no salted added' white beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 can of 'no salted added' chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 8 cups of 'no salted added' chicken broth
- 1 cup of uncooked small pasta (eg. mini penne or fusilli pasta)
- 1 ½ cups of green beans, trimmed and cut into 1 inch pieces
- 4 cups of washed spinach, chopped and stems removed (or can use any other dark green leafy vegetable)
- ½ cup of freshly grated parmesan cheese
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 12-16 leaves of fresh basil, torn or shredded
- 4 slices of prosciutto, chopped (optional)

## Directions:

1. Heat a soup pot over medium high heat. Add 2 Tbsp of oil and sauté garlic for a couple minutes, until slightly golden.
2. Add celery and sauté for another minute.
3. Add white beans, chickpeas, broth and bay leaves to the pot.
4. Cover soup and bring to a boil. Add pasta and green beans to the soup and cook for 8 minutes or until pasta is just tender.
5. In the meantime, heat 1 Tbsp of oil over medium heat and sauté chopped prosciutto until slightly crisp. Set aside.
6. Stir spinach into soup pot and cook for about 1 minute, until wilted.
7. Stir in most of the grated parmesan cheese and ladle soup into bowls. The remainder of the cheese can be sprinkled on top of served soup.
8. Top soup with torn basil. If desired, sprinkle cooked prosciutto on top of soup as well.

## Tip:

- Could also add cooked ground turkey.

**Adapted from:**

<https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/rachael-ray/green-minestrone-recipe-1941232>



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