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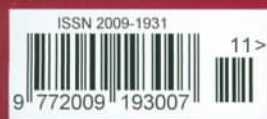
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GUIDE**



**IS YOUR
TODDLER A
FUSSY EATER?**

HOW TO
TELL YOUR BOSS
YOU'RE PREGNANT

Annabel Karmel's
festive recipes



A delicious Christmas!

Celebrate the festive season with some of Annabel Karmel's favourite recipes!

Remember when Christmas took forever to come? And now it's here before we know it! Little ones are full of excitable festive spirit as soon as December starts. With schools and nurseries finishing well before Father Christmas finally visits, cooking some lovely festive goodies together is a great way of channelling your child's eager Christmas anticipation.

Wishing you all a very merry and truly tasty Christmas!



Ginger Cookie Christmas Trees

The unbaked cookies can be frozen on baking sheets lined with baking parchment for 2-3 hours, until solid. Transfer to resealable boxes and store for up to one month. Bake from frozen, adding 1-2 minutes to the baking time.

Makes 2 cookie trees

225g plain flour plus extra for dusting
 1/4 tsp salt
 2 tsp ground ginger
 1/2 tsp baking powder
 50g butter
 100g dark brown sugar
 100g golden syrup
 1 egg yolk
 1 tbsp milk
 Approx 170g royal icing

You will also need a set of 6 star cutters in various sizes ranging from 2.5cm to 11.5cm

- Sift the flour, salt, ginger and baking powder into a large bowl. Put the butter, sugar and syrup into a pan and heat gently, stirring occasionally until the butter has melted. Remove from the heat and leave to cool slightly.
- Beat the egg and milk together and stir in the cooled butter and sugar, then pour the contents of the pan into the dry ingredients and stir to form a soft dough. Transfer onto a piece of clingfilm and wrap tightly, then refrigerate for 30 minutes to 1 hour or until firm.
- Preheat the oven to 180C/350F/Gas 4. Roll out the dough on a lightly floured surface to around 3mm thick. Cut out 4 cookies with the largest cutter, then 4 with the next largest and so on. Transfer the cookies to baking sheets, spacing them about 2.5cm apart and grouping the larger cookies and smaller cookies together on separate sheets.
- Re-roll the trimmings and cut more cookies as needed. Chill the cookies for 10 minutes in the freezer, then bake for 8-10 minutes for the small cookies and 11-12 minutes for the larger ones, until turning darker around the edges. Cool on the baking sheets for 10 minutes, then transfer to wire racks.
- To assemble the trees make up the royal icing according to the packet instructions. Take 2 of the largest cookies and sandwich them together with a little of the icing, making sure the tips of the stars are slightly askew. Carefully stack the remaining cookies, in descending size, on top of the base, securing in place with icing. Do the same for the second tree. Reserve the smallest stars for the tops of the trees, but leave to dry for one hour before adding the top stars. Stick them together with more icing and drizzle over any remaining icing as decoration. Leave to dry for 5-6 hours before serving. You can also decorate with icing sugar for snow.



Snowflake Cupcakes

These make fun Christmas cupcakes. You can buy snowflake cookie cutters with small diamond-shaped cutters that can be used to cut holes in the snow flakes, or just simply use snowflake shapes cut out from the white ready to roll icing. The cakes make great presents too – you can pop them into a gift box lined with tissue paper and tie it up with a big silver bow and some Christmas baubles.

Makes 9 cupcakes

85g plain flour
 1/2 tsp baking powder
 1/4 tsp salt
 85g butter, room temperature
 110g caster sugar
 1/4 tsp vanilla
 50ml milk
 2 egg whites
Icing:
 3 tsp strawberry jam
 100g vanilla buttercream
 250g white ready rolled regalice icing
 Edible silver balls

- Preheat the oven to 180C/350F/Gas 4.
- Sift together the flour, baking

powder and salt and set aside. Cream together the butter and vanilla until pale and fluffy. Mix in one-third of the flour mixture, then half the milk, followed by another third of flour, then the remaining milk and finishing with the remaining flour.

- Whisk the egg whites until foamy. Whisk in the sugar in a stream, then continue to whisk until you get glossy soft peaks. Fold one-third of the egg whites into the butter and flour, and then fold in the rest. Spoon into cupcake tins or cases and bake for 20-22 minutes until risen and just firm to the touch. Remove from the oven, cool for 10 minutes in the tin, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.
- Once the cupcakes are cool, spread one-third of a teaspoon of the jam over the top of each cake and then cover with 1 tbsp of the buttercream.
- Cut out circles the same size as the cake from the white icing, and also cut out snowflake designs using snowflake cutters. Place the circles of white icing on top of the cupcakes and then place the cut out snowflakes on top. You can also add some edible silver balls for decoration.

Cranberry and White Chocolate Cookies

These are not to be missed! They're probably my favourite cookies and so quick and easy to make. I like them on their own, but you could also sandwich them together with buttercream.

Makes 20 cookies

150g plain flour
1/2 tsp bicarbonate of soda
1/2 tsp salt
25g (1 oz) ground almonds
150g (5 oz) soft brown sugar
50g (2 oz) porridge oats
50g (2 oz) dried cranberries
40g white chocolate, cut into chunks
150g (5 oz) butter
1 large egg yolk or 2 small egg yolks

Buttercream filling:

75g softened butter
25g icing sugar, sifted
A few drops vanilla essence
2 tsp milk

- Pre-heat the oven to 190C/375F.
- Sieve together the flour, bicarbonate of soda and salt in a large bowl. Stir in the ground almonds, brown sugar and porridge oats.
- Melt the butter in a small pan and stir this into the dry ingredients together with the egg yolk.
- Stir in the chopped white chocolate or white chocolate chips
- Mix well, then using your hands, form into small walnut-sized balls and arrange on two large non-stick baking sheets. Gently press them down to flatten slightly in the centre, leaving space between them for the biscuits to spread.
- Bake in the oven for 12 minutes, remove and cool on the tray for a few minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.
- To make the buttercream filling, beat the softened butter until creamy. Sift the icing sugar into the bowl and beat together with the butter. Finally, beat in the vanilla and milk. Spread the buttercream over one of the cookies and place the second cookie on top.





Rudolph the Red Nosed Baked Potato

A great recipe for turning a baked potato into a delicious, mouth-watering treat for Christmas – and it's guaranteed to bring a smile to everyone's face!

Butternut squash is rich in Vitamin A which is important for healthy skin, eyes and fighting infection. Alternatively, for a simple version, scoop out the potato flesh, mash it with a little butter, milk and cheese, season and pile it back into the potatoes. Serves 4

4 medium baking potatoes (approx 225g each)
A little vegetable oil
1/2 medium butternut squash (approx 300g)
40g butter
1 tsp Dijon mustard
2 tbsp milk
40g freshly grated parmesan
40g grated Cheddar cheese

Decoration:
Cherry tomatoes
Twirly crisps
Peas for eyes

- Preheat the oven to 190C/
Fan 170C/Gas 5.

- Prick the potatoes in several places, place on a baking tray and brush all over with the oil. Bake for 60-75 minutes, or until they feel soft when pressed.
- Cut the butternut squash in half and scoop out the seeds. Place in a baking dish, skin side down. Melt a knob of the butter and brush it over the squash, then bake in the oven for about 40 minutes or until tender.
- When they are cool enough to handle, cut the tops off the baked potatoes and scoop out the flesh. Scoop the flesh of the cooked butternut squash off the skin and mash together with the baked potato flesh, mustard, parmesan, milk and remaining butter. Season with a little salt and pepper. Put the mixture back into the potato shells and top with the grated cheddar.
- Preheat the grill on the hottest setting. Place the potatoes on a baking tray or suitable dish and grill for a few minutes until the cheese is bubbling and golden.
- Add twirly crisps for antlers, peas for eyes and cherry tomatoes for the nose!



Annabel's Turkey Meatballs with Spaghetti

A delicious meal for the whole family. This is a pretty versatile recipe – you can make the meatballs from veal, chicken or beef. They also make good finger food served on their own and I find that small children are more tempted to eat food that they can pick up with their fingers. The apple gives the meatballs a good flavour and keeps them lovely and moist. I add apple because I could never get my son to eat chicken when he was little, but he loved fruit, so I came up with a recipe for chicken and apple balls and, hey presto – he couldn't get enough of them! The tomato sauce is good with pasta on its own without the meatballs, and for adults you can spice it up by adding more chilli flakes or add some chopped red chilli together with the garlic. Makes 2 adult and 2 child portions Suitable for freezing (I would freeze the meatballs in the sauce and cook the spaghetti fresh)

200g spaghetti
1 tbsp flour to dust hands
3 tbsp sunflower oil for frying
A little chopped parsley or basil

Meatballs:
2 tbsp olive oil
2 medium onions, finely chopped (approx 200g unpeeled weight)
40g white breadcrumbs
50ml milk
250g turkey mince

1 small apple, peeled & grated
1 tsp fresh thyme leaves
1/2 tsp salt and freshly ground black pepper

Tomato sauce:

Use half the onion from above
1 clove garlic, crushed
600g chopped tomatoes
100ml water or chicken stock
1 tbsp tomato puree
2 tsp sugar
1/4 tsp oregano
Pinch dried chilli flakes

- Heat the oil in a pan and fry the onions gently for about 10 minutes until softened. Use half the onions for the meatballs and half for the tomato sauce. Meanwhile soak the breadcrumbs in the milk for 10 minutes in a large bowl.
- To make the sauce, transfer half the sautéed onion to a pan. Add the crushed garlic and sauté for 1 minute. Add all the remaining ingredients and simmer covered for 7 minutes.
- To make the meatballs, add the mince, grated apple, thyme, sautéed onion, salt and black pepper to the soaked breadcrumbs and mix together.
- Using floured hands, form teaspoons of the mixture into small balls. Heat the sunflower oil in a frying pan and brown the meatballs. Transfer them to the pan of tomato sauce and simmer for 8-10 minutes uncovered.
- Cook the spaghetti according to the packet instructions. Drain and toss with the sauce. Sprinkle with a little chopped parsley or basil.

Is your child a fussy eater?



Anyone with children will know that when it comes to eating, fuss is often high on the menu. Whether it's turning up their noses at anything with green bits in it or only eating the same three things all the time, just remember that you're not alone.

In *The Fussy Eaters' Recipe Book*, baby and toddler nutrition expert Annabel Karmel MBE explains that, in their first year, babies grow more rapidly than at any other time in their life, so it's relatively easy to get them to eat new foods. But by the second year, your child is becoming his/her own person who'll soon figure out that refusing food is a great way of getting attention. Fortunately, nearly all children who have previously been 'good eaters' do go back to eating well. The bad news, though, is that this is usually on their terms – and on their timescale.

Children's eating habits have changed dramatically in recent years. According to a 2007 report, four million people in the UK now suffer from malnutrition, as a direct result of eating more junk food. It doesn't have to be like this for your children.

Some of the most difficult areas parents

face are getting their child to eat a good breakfast, facing up to fruit and veg, or just generally trying new things. Read on for some top tips to help you get your child eating better.

A breakthrough breakfast

As we all know, breakfast is really the most important meal of the day. Breaking your overnight fast can help alleviate the common symptoms of fasting such as irritability and fatigue, and it has also been shown to improve mental performance and concentration levels during morning activities. Children who have a good breakfast are less hyperactive at school and have better concentration levels. But is getting your child to eat something other than sugary cereals a battle?

While a bowl of cereal is a great option for a quick breakfast, be careful what you

choose as many are loaded with sugars. Slow-burning carbohydrates, such as Weetabix, muesli, porridge or wholemeal toast, are better options as they will keep your child fuller for longer. To liven up the taste of porridge, try adding some flavours such as honey, banana, berries, raisins or a sprinkle of cinnamon.

A smoothie, not only a fun 'treat' breakfast the kids will love, is also your opportunity to get some all-important fruit and dairy into their diet. Tasty options include strawberry and banana; pineapple; strawberry, blackberry and raspberries; blueberries and yoghurt; apple and cinnamon; or cherry and banana.

Eggs, a vital source of protein, are perfect for breakfast as they can be prepared in a multitude of ways to keep your child interested. Boiled with toast soldiers, scrambled on toast or as an omelette are

Annabel's top tip: Be positive! Try to make mealtimes a really positive experience. One of the most important things is to hide your frustration. Praise your child excessively when he or she eats well or tries something new. You may need to ignore some bad eating behaviour to refocus attention on good behaviour.

all interesting options for your little one – especially if he or she can help you prepare them or choose what is added (eg, cheese in the omelette).

Finally, breakfast muffins are perfect for on-to-go meals. Again, you can disguise a number of fruit and veg portions within them but your child will love what seems like a treat for breakfast. Some combinations to try include raisin; blueberry; a selection of dried fruit; raspberry; orange; ripe banana; raspberry and coconut; blueberry and lemon; carrot and courgette; granola; or apple and pecan.

"Be flexible," adds Annabel Karmel. "My children have been known to eat odd things for breakfast such as mini muffin pizzas or tomato soup! Something from last night's dinner might tempt them more than a bowl of cereal. As long as it's nutritious, it doesn't really matter what it is."

Yuck, it's green!

"Many children who don't like cooked vegetables will eat them raw," says Annabel. "Vegetables such as carrots, cucumber or sweet pepper sticks make great snacks at any time of the day and you can serve them with a dip like hummus."

The Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute (INDI) says that, on average, Irish people only eat three portions a day, rather than the recommended five, with children eating even less. By eating your recommended five portions every day you can reach your daily fibre target and also help to prevent many diseases such as heart disease, stroke and certain type of cancers. It is thought that by eating five-a-day the chance of getting these diseases is reduced by 20 per cent.

Many people think five portions means five of fruit and five of vegetables! No, it's a very manageable combination of both. You can include frozen and tinned vegetables as well as dried and tinned fruit – the combinations are endless! A portion is about 80g which is

Annabel's top tip:

Have a tea party! Invite your child's friends to tea – especially if they are good eaters, so that your child can see his or her friends eating happily. This also helps to keep meals fun and sociable.

roughly equal to an apple, orange, banana, or similarly-sized fruit; two plums, nectarines or similarly-sized fruit; a handful of grapes or berries; a tablespoon of raisins or other dried fruit; two serving spoons of cooked vegetables (frozen or fresh); a dessert bowl of salad; or a 150ml glass of fresh fruit juice or smoothie. Remember frozen vegetables are an excellent choice because their vitamins and goodness are locked in so keep the freezer well stocked for a quick choice to add as a side to your meal or mix into a stir fry, soup or casserole.

If your child is really averse to eating vegetables, hiding them may be the only way you can make sure they're included. "You can sneak vegetables into popular dishes such as wraps, cannelloni, lasagne, quesadillas or hide them under grated cheese in pizzas," advises Annabel. "Alternatively, children like eating with their fingers so serve vegetables such as whole corn on the cob with melted butter or baked potato wedges."

Wave goodbye to fuss!

"Variety is the spice of life," says Annabel, "so don't just stick to favourite meals. Offer a variety of healthy dishes and keep trying

new recipes. Offering only the foods that you are sure your child will eat can encourage extreme fussiness and may lead to a restricted and unbalanced diet."

Have fun with your food. This doesn't have to mean that you let the kids be silly, but there's nothing wrong with a little game to encourage eating well. For example, try cutting veggies into your child's favorite shapes and let them play with them as they eat. You could also occasionally try letting your child pick a colour for the day – for example red or yellow – and then eat foods in that colour at each mealtime. Finally, inventing games around food, like who can get the most peas on their fork, will make mealtimes more enjoyable and have veggies seem less scary for your child.

As with many other issues where you want to alter your child's natural behaviour, a reward chart or system will help. A star for each day your child tries something new, with a reward at the end of each week, will entice your child to make a little less fuss at mealtimes. Additionally, try getting him or her to help out in the kitchen – getting involved in preparing and cooking their food is a great way to break down the mental barriers children have about certain ingredients. As you show them how to cook different items, you can teach them the benefits of eating well and hopefully the result will be a fuss-free eater from now on!

TOP TIPS FROM THE INDI

Food refusal is particularly common in children up to the age of 5 years, but may occur at any age. This is a worrying time for parents. What can be done?

- * Offer regular meals and snacks, as this is better than letting children 'pick' throughout the whole day
- * Drinks should not be allowed to replace meals
- * Drinking fluids all the time will ruin a child's appetite for nutritious food
- * It is preferable that parents should eat at the same time as their child
- * Mealtimes should be an enjoyable occasion, not tense and fraught
- * Sit at the table if possible and use brightly coloured and attractive plates and cups
- * Try to eat in a calm and relaxed area, without the television as children are easily distracted
- * Try not to rush a meal, as some children may be slow to eat. Yet try not to let meals drag on for too long – half an hour is about right



RECOMMENDED READING:

The Fussy Eaters' Recipe Book, Annabel Karmel (Ebury Press) for over 100 delicious recipes that will tempt even the fussiest eater!
Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute factsheets on www.indi.ie