

Springtime glory : distinctive aromatic flavours / Compass Group.

Contributors

Compass Group.

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Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

LIFESTYLE

APRIL

SPRINGTIME GLORY

DISTINCTIVE, AROMATIC FLAVOURS



RAW POWER

In a nutshell, raw and living foods are uncooked vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds and sprouted grains - virtually everything edible that grows from the earth that has not been cooked. Raw food excludes any foods that have been chemically processed or pasteurised and contains no meat, fish, eggs or dairy products.

Different people eat raw foods for different reasons. For some, the principal reason is ease of weight loss. For others, it's just an easy way to eat healthily. It is said that many raw food eaters witness a marked change in appearance, developing a clearer complexion and radiant skin. Others experience a significant increase in energy levels, feeling and looking years younger!

Enzymes are required for the digestion and absorption of food into your body. They are your life force. We literally depend on enzymes for everything; from walking, talking and breathing to cellular division and energy production.

When we are born, we are given a limited reserve of enzymes that are necessary to keep our body system in working order throughout the entire duration of our lifetime. The only additional source of enzymes we can get comes from the food that we eat. Problems arise when food is cooked above 44°C (112 degrees Fahrenheit) when enzymes are completely destroyed by heat during the cooking process.

When eating cooked food, the body needs to draw essential enzymes from the limited natural pool supplied at birth in order to digest the food. Imagine drawing money out of a bank account that is never topped up. Eventually, it will run out. It's exactly the same with enzymes.

If we continue to eat cooked foods and do not replace enzymes by eating raw food, we eventually begin to use up our bodies' enzymes reserves. Without these enzymes, cooked food is stored in our bodies as toxins, which can then lead to all kinds of diseases and illness.

The raw food diet is based on at least 75% of uncooked food. Raw food can be chopped, blended, pureed, juiced, dehydrated and combined into an infinite combination of mouth-watering recipes.

The raw diet is nutrient dense, there is little or no saturated fat, it is low in sodium, high in potassium and fibre-rich. These factors are important in helping to reduce the risk of certain diseases such as heart disease and some cancers.

Eating only raw foods can considerably limit the variety of foods that can be included in the diet, such as meat, potatoes and other cereal products, which in turn can limit our nutrient intake. This could lead to nutritional deficiencies - for example, iron and calcium - if followed for any length of time.

Following a raw food diet means that you have to carefully plan your meals to make sure you don't fall short of essential nutrients, vitamins and minerals.

Always consult your GP first before starting out on any diet.





April Seasonal Flavours

VEGETABLES

asparagus ● broccoli
jersey royal new potatoes
purple sprouting broccoli
radishes ● rhubarb
rocket ● sorrel ● spinach
spring onions ● watercress

FRUITS & NUTS

bananas ● kiwi fruit

MEAT

spring lamb ● wood pigeon

FISH & SEAFOOD

cockles ● cod ● john dory
salmon ● sea trout

As the days begin to lighten, so does the food with this season bringing an abundance of leafy greens, crunchy vegetables and aromatic herbs. So keep it clean and simple for spring.

AROMATHERAPY

With its distinctive aroma and woody texture rosemary is one of the most popular herbs, indispensable in any kitchen.

Rosemary is an evergreen plant, so it can be enjoyed all year round. At this time of year, as the weather gets warmer, the plants start to bush out and produce scented blue flowers. The flowers look great and give a delicate flavour to sweet dishes, such as ice cream, mousse and fool, or can be scattered on food as a garnish for meat, fish or a salad.

It's the intensely aromatic leaves of rosemary that give the strong flavour that marries so well with mutton, lamb, pork and poultry. Insert sprigs into roasting joints, pop a few in when roasting vegetables or fish or add a different dimension to chocolate sauce or fruit syrup. Rosemary also goes very well with honey: use the two together to make delicious marinades and glazes.

It is often added to dishes with garlic - the two flavours complement each other beautifully. The flavour of rosemary is retained after drying and 1tsp of dried rosemary is equivalent to 3tsp of chopped fresh leaves.

How to use: It's best to remove the sprigs after cooking or alternatively, strip the needles from the stems and chop. If you're using rosemary to perfume roasted veg, the leaves can burn. Either chop and mix into the roasting oil, or just use the stalks. If using dried rosemary in your cooking it's a good idea to crush the dried rosemary before adding it to your dish because the sharp leaves can be difficult to remove after cooking.

Why not add some sprigs of rosemary into extra virgin olive oil. Use this wonderfully aromatic flavoured oil in dressings and sauces or include in marinades to give fish and meat a delicious flavour. Sprinkle over roasted vegetables or potatoes for a delicious Mediterranean flavour.

Rosemary is one of the most commonly grown herbs in the garden and is a hardy plant that can live for up to twenty years, growing to a height of around 1 metre. It requires minimal pruning and attention throughout the growing season. Prune the plant every autumn to keep the plant to the ideal size for your garden.

Rosemary is also well suited to container growing, however you will need to use a large, deep pot as rosemary has long, deep roots. Use a mixture of sharp sand or grit and potting compost. Water the plant well and add more compost around the area if necessary. Keep the container well watered during the summer months.



LAMB TOPPED WITH ROSEMARY AND HORSERADISH CRUMBLE

Serves 4

By Jon Siswick, Restaurant Associates Marketing Leader

INGREDIENTS

3 tbsp olive oil
4 lamb chops
salt and pepper
2 onions, peeled and sliced
2 leeks, sliced
25g butter or margarine
1 small onion, peeled and finely chopped
150g breadcrumbs
2 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped
2 tbsp fresh rosemary, chopped
2 tbsp horseradish sauce, creamed
240ml red wine
240ml lamb stock
2 sprigs rosemary

METHOD

1. Heat the oil, add the chops and brown quickly on both sides.
2. Remove to a roasting pan and season. Reduce the heat.
3. Add the sliced onions and leek and cook for a further 5 minutes to brown.
4. In a separate pan, melt the butter or margarine.
5. Fry the chopped onion until softened, then add to the breadcrumbs.
6. Stir in the parsley, rosemary, horseradish and seasoning.
7. Divide the onion and leek mixture between the lamb chops and pile the breadcrumb mixture on top.
8. Pour the wine and stock around the chops, season and add the rosemary sprigs. Bake at 190C/375F/Gas 5 for 25-30 minutes, depending on size. Transfer to plate.
9. Remove the rosemary sprigs and reduce the liquid over a high heat to make a sauce.
10. Serve with buttered jersey royal potatoes and steamed purple sprouting broccoli.

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Simply answer the following question:

What's the minimum percentage of uncooked food you need to eat to be following a raw food diet?

Please forward your answer via the email address below:
marketing@compass-group.co.uk

Competition ends 5pm Thursday 30th April 2009 and winners will be drawn at Head Office. *Conditions apply - for further details please email.

Have you enjoyed this promotion? Please let us know your thoughts in an email.