

Food as Medicine



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Traditional Recipes & Healing Wisdom from 15 Countries Around the World

1



**The Best Gift
for Every Table**



Welcome to Author Page

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Lilia Yermak



About the Author

Lilia Yermak is a teacher, poetess, and specialist in Tourism and Hospitality who has spent her life exploring the world — not just through geography, but through culture, cuisine, and connection.

Her passion for travel is matched by her deep care for human health and well-being. With every recipe and reflection in this book, Lilia invites readers to see food as a form of healing, storytelling, and global unity. She writes with the heart of a poet, teaches with the soul of an explorer, and cooks with one simple belief: wellness should be beautiful, meaningful, and shared.

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Introduction

What if you could heal your body, explore the world, and honor tradition — one meal at a time?

That's the journey this book invites you to take. Inside, you'll find traditional recipes, each from a different country, chosen not just for their flavor — but for their healing potential. From the fermented soups of Japan to the herb-packed salads of Lebanon to the warming lentil stews of Morocco, every recipe in this book carries generations of wisdom.

This is more than a cookbook. It's a global wellness map.

- Each chapter highlights one country,
- One dish rooted in heritage,
- And the health benefits that have kept it on local tables for centuries.

You'll learn how different cultures use food as daily medicine — to soothe digestion, fight inflammation, fuel immunity, and balance energy. Alongside every recipe, you'll also find fun cultural facts, traditional practices, and beautiful visuals that bring the place and the plate to life.

Whether you're looking to eat cleaner, feel better, or just add more meaning to your meals, this book is your guide.

No gimmicks. No pills.
Just real food, from real places, that really works.





Healing Breakdown

Ingredient

Benefits

Wild greens	<i>Antioxidants, liver and gut support</i>
Olive oil	<i>Heart-healthy fats, anti-inflammatory</i>
Lemon juice	<i>Vitamin C, digestive boost</i>
Garlic	<i>Antibacterial, circulatory support</i>
Parsley	<i>Detox, vitamin C, anti-inflammatory</i>
Mint	<i>Soothing, digestive</i>
Bulgur	<i>Fiber, prebiotics</i>
Black beans	<i>Plant protein, fiber, iron, gut health</i>
Garlic & onion	<i>Prebiotics, immune support</i>
Oregano	<i>Antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory</i>
Avocado	<i>Healthy fats, potassium</i>
Lime juice	<i>Vitamin C, digestive boost</i>
Mung dal	<i>Easy-to-digest protein, gut-friendly</i>
Turmeric	<i>Anti-inflammatory, liver support</i>
Ginger	<i>Stimulates digestion, reduces bloating</i>
Coriander	<i>Balance gut flora, relieve indigestion</i>
Ghee	<i>Nourishes tissues, improves absorption</i>
Lentils	<i>Iron, protein, good health</i>
Chickpeas	<i>Fiber, hormone support, blood sugar</i>
Tomatoes	<i>Lycopene (antioxidant), skin health</i>



Healing Breakdown

Ingredient

Benefits

Salmon	<i>Omega-3s, brain health, anti-inflammatory</i>
Dill	<i>Digestive support, antioxidant</i>
Lemon zest	<i>Vitamin C, liver support</i>
Mustard	<i>Blood sugar balance, metabolism boost</i>
Teff flour	<i>Iron, calcium, gut-friendly starch</i>
Berberie spice	<i>Circulation, metabolism</i>
Fermentation	<i>Probiotics, digestion, nutrient uptake</i>
Quinoa	<i>Complete protein, iron, magnesium</i>
Root vegetables	<i>Fiber, prebiotics, stable energy</i>
Herbs/spices	<i>Anti-inflammatory, digestive</i>
Cannellini beans	<i>Fiber, protein, blood sugar control</i>
Kale/chard	<i>Antioxidants, calcium, detox support</i>
Bread	<i>Resistant starch, gut flora nourishment</i>
Beans + maize	<i>Complete protein, iron, amino acids</i>
Carrots	<i>Fiber, beta-carotene, blood sugar balance</i>
Cumin	<i>Anti-inflammatory, digestive aid</i>
Açaí berries	<i>Antioxidants, skin health, brain function</i>
Banana	<i>Potassium, mood regulation, fiber</i>
Chia seeds	<i>Omega-3s, digestion, blood sugar control</i>
Coconut	<i>Healthy fats, minerals</i>





Japan

Health-Focused Fun Facts

- Japan has one of the highest life expectancies, often linked to their fermented foods like miso and natto.
- The traditional Japanese diet is rich in umami, which helps with satiety and reduces overeating.

- Miso soup is often eaten for breakfast in Japan, supporting digestion and hydration after sleep.
- Seaweed, a staple in Japanese cuisine, is high in iodine and supports thyroid health.

- Green tea, consumed daily in Japan, is packed with antioxidants like EGCG.
- Portion sizes in Japan are smaller, which helps regulate calorie intake and maintain weight.



Miso Soup

In Japan, miso soup is often served for breakfast. Warm, savory, and full of umami, it gently wakes the digestive system, hydrates the body, and offers sustained energy. Add seaweed, tofu, scallions, maybe a mushroom or two — and you've got one of the healthiest, most grounding meals in the world.

Miso Soup

Core Benefits

Gut health, immune support, digestive balance

Why It Heals

Miso — a fermented soybean paste — has been a staple of Japanese cuisine for over a thousand years. But it's more than just flavor; it's functional food. Thanks to natural fermentation, miso is rich in probiotics that nourish your gut microbiome and support overall health.

Notes

- **No extra salt needed:** miso is naturally salty.
- **Fully plant-based:** when made with kombu instead of bonito.
- **Better than bouillon:** real nutrients, live cultures, no artificial junk.
- **Feeling bold?** Try topping with natto — Japan's probiotic powerhouse.





Ingredients

- 2 cups (500 ml) water
- 1 tbsp miso paste (preferably dark and long-fermented)
- 1 tsp bonito flakes (or 1 piece dried kombu for vegan version)
- ½ sheet nori, torn by hand
- 2 oz (50g) soft tofu, cubed
- 1 tbsp chopped scallions
- Optional: shiitake mushrooms, soft-boiled egg, sesame seeds

Instructions

- In a saucepan, bring water to a simmer. Add kombu or bonito flakes and gently simmer for 5 minutes.
- Remove kombu or strain out the flakes. You've now got a light **dashi broth**.
- Turn off the heat — this is important.
- In a small bowl, dissolve the miso paste with a few spoonfuls of hot broth. Stir until smooth.
- Return the miso mixture to the pot. **Do not boil** — heat kills the beneficial probiotics.
- Add tofu, torn nori, scallions, and any extras like mushrooms or egg.
- Serve immediately — ideally warm and fresh.



Preparing

10 Minutes



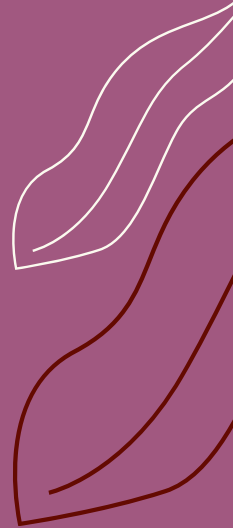
Cooking

10 Minutes



Serving

5 Minutes





Greece

Health-Focused Fun Facts

- The Mediterranean diet, rooted in Greek cuisine, is associated with reduced risk of heart disease.
- Wild greens like those in horta are rich in antioxidants and consumed daily in rural Greek villages.

- Olive oil from Crete has some of the highest polyphenol levels in the world.
- Greek yogurt contains probiotics that support gut and immune health.

- Fresh herbs like oregano and dill offer antimicrobial benefits.
- Feta cheese is lower in fat and easier to digest than many other cheeses.



Horta Vrasta

Forget superfood powders — the Greeks have been eating horta (wild greens) for centuries. Horta vrasta is a simple dish of boiled leafy greens, served warm with extra virgin olive oil and lemon juice. It's the kind of food Hippocrates might've prescribed — and it still makes its way to tables in Greek villages today.

Horta Vrasta

Core Benefits

Antioxidants, liver support, anti-inflammatory

Why It Heals

The greens are usually foraged: dandelion, amaranth, chicory, mustard leaves. They're rich in **phytonutrients, fiber, and bitter compounds** that support detoxification, liver function, and digestion. Combined with olive oil (heart-healthy fats) and lemon (vitamin C, alkalizing), this dish is a low-calorie, high-benefit powerhouse.

Notes

- **Bitter = better:** the more bitter the greens, the more detoxifying the effect.
- **Serve with feta or olives** for a full Mediterranean plate.
- **Great for digestion**, especially if eaten in the evening.
- **Works well** with greens that grow wild in other parts of the world too.

Horta Vrasta





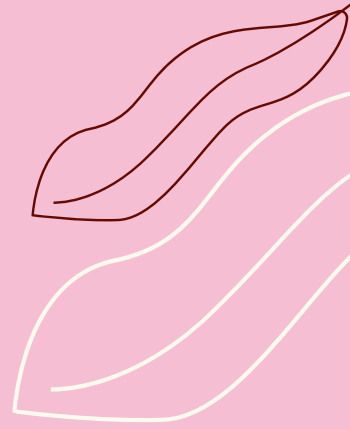
Preparing
10 Minutes



Cooking
15 Minutes



Serving
5 Minutes



Ingredients

- 1 large bunch of wild greens (dandelion, chicory, beet greens, or spinach)
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- Juice of ½ lemon
- Salt to taste
- Optional: chopped garlic, a pinch of chili flakes

Instructions

- Rinse the greens well to remove dirt and grit.
- Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add a generous pinch of salt.
- Drop in the greens and boil gently for 5–10 minutes until tender.
- Drain and let cool slightly.
- Drizzle with olive oil and lemon juice. Add salt to taste.
- Serve warm or room temp as a side or light meal.



Mexico

Health-Focused Fun Facts

- Black beans are a staple in Mexican diets and are loaded with resistant starch for blood sugar control.
- Traditional Mexican cuisine includes many prebiotic-rich foods like nopales and beans.

- Chili peppers, used widely in Mexico, contain capsaicin — a metabolism-boosting compound.
- Avocados are rich in monounsaturated fats, which support heart health.

- Corn tortillas contain fiber and complex carbs for lasting energy.
- Traditional salsas made with raw tomatoes, onion, and lime provide vitamin C and antioxidants.



Black Bean Soup

In Mexican cuisine, black beans aren't just a side dish — they're central to nutrition and culture, especially in rural and Indigenous communities. Black bean soup is humble, affordable, and deeply nutritious: high in fiber, plant protein, resistant starch, and a wide spectrum of minerals like magnesium and iron.

Black Bean Soup

Core Benefits

Blood sugar balance, plant protein, good health

Why It Heals

Combined with warming herbs like **epazote** (which reduces bloating and gas) and topped with avocado or lime, this dish supports **blood sugar balance**, digestion, and even cardiovascular health. It's vegan by default and incredibly satisfying.

Notes

- **Add epazote** (a traditional Mexican herb) if you can find it — great for digestion.
- **Great for batch cooking** and freezes well.
- **Low glycemic + high satiety**, making it excellent for blood sugar support.
- Serve with a warm tortilla or brown rice for a complete meal.

Black Bean Soup

Healthy recipe is a dish that uses natural ingredients that are fresh and cooked in the right way to produce healthy dishes for our bodies



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Ingredients

- 1 cup dried black beans (or 1 can, drained and rinsed)
- 1 tbsp olive oil or avocado oil
- ½ onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 bay leaf
- 3 cups water or vegetable broth
- Salt to taste
- Optional toppings: chopped cilantro, diced avocado, lime wedges, chili flakes

Instructions

- If using dried beans, soak overnight and cook until tender (~1 hour).
- In a pot, sauté onions in oil until soft. Add garlic, cumin, oregano. Stir for 1 minute.
- Add cooked beans, water/broth, and bay leaf. Simmer 15–20 minutes.
- Use an immersion blender to partially blend (for creamy texture with some whole beans).
- Salt to taste. Serve hot with toppings of your choice.



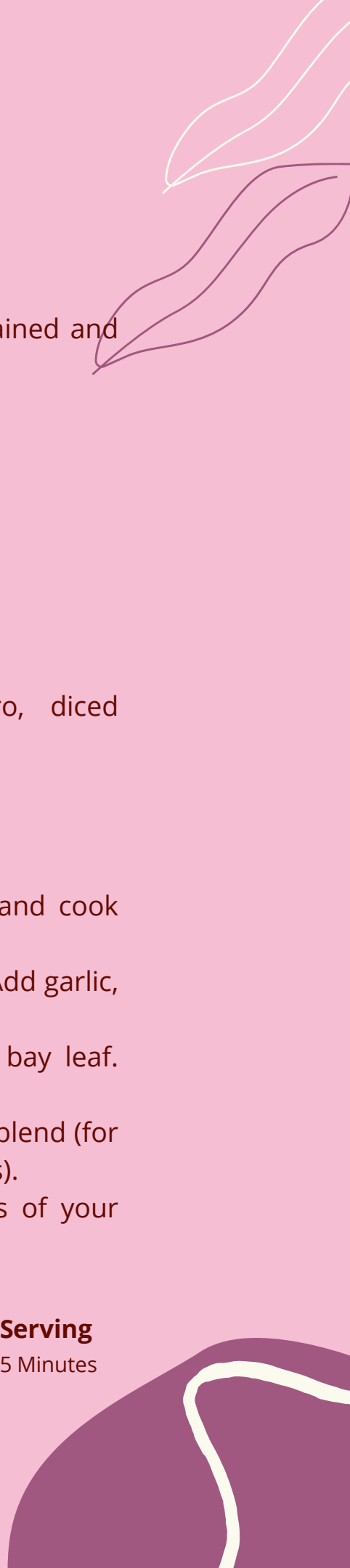
Preparing
15 Minutes



Cooking
45 Minutes



Serving
5 Minutes





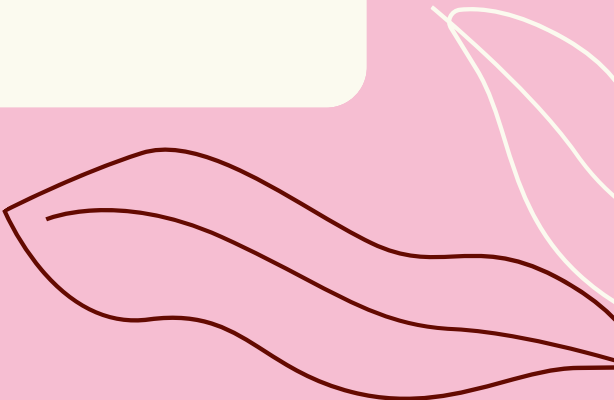
Lebanon

Health-Focused Fun Facts



- Parsley, the main ingredient in tabbouleh, is a diuretic and supports kidney detox.
- Lemon and olive oil dressing aids digestion and vitamin absorption in traditional Lebanese salads.

- Fresh herbs and raw vegetables are common in Lebanese meals, supporting gut and immune health.
- Bulgar wheat in tabbouleh is a whole grain rich in fiber and B vitamins.

- Garlic is used often and helps lower blood pressure and cholesterol.
 - Labneh, a strained yogurt, provides probiotics for gut balance.
- 



Tabbouleh

Unlike versions overloaded with bulgur, traditional Lebanese tabbouleh is mostly green — parsley is the star, not the grain.

Tabbouleh

Core Benefits

Detox, anti-inflammatory, rich in vitamins and fiber

Why It Heals

In Lebanese cuisine, tabbouleh isn't a side — it's a celebration of **fresh herbs**, especially **parsley**, one of the most nutrient-dense greens on earth. Parsley supports **liver detox**, helps **reduce inflammation**, and is loaded with **vitamin C, A, and K**. Combined with cooling mint, anti-inflammatory olive oil, hydrating tomatoes, and gut-loving lemon juice, tabbouleh is a **raw, plant-powered dish** that refreshes and rejuvenates.

Notes

- **Parsley is the main ingredient**, not bulgur. Think of it as a parsley salad, not a grain salad.
- Great as a light lunch, side, or wrap filling.
- Pairs well with hummus, falafel, grilled fish or tofu.
- Use **quinoa instead of bulgur** for a gluten-free version.



Tabbouleh

Parsley-Bulghur Salad
with Lemon and Mint



Ingredients

- 1 large bunch parsley (flat-leaf preferred), finely chopped
- ½ cup fresh mint leaves, finely chopped
- 2 medium tomatoes, diced
- ¼ cup fine bulgur wheat (soaked in hot water 15 min, then drained)
- Juice of 1 large lemon
- 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- Salt to taste
- Optional: chopped cucumber or spring onion



Preparing

20 Minutes



Cooking

0 Minutes



Serving

5 Minutes

Instructions

- Soak bulgur in hot water for 15 minutes. Drain and fluff with a fork.
- Finely chop parsley, mint, and tomatoes. Use a sharp knife — no food processor.
- In a large bowl, combine all ingredients.
- Add olive oil, lemon juice, and salt. Mix gently.
- Chill before serving. Flavor improves after 30–60 minutes.




India

Health-Focused Fun Facts

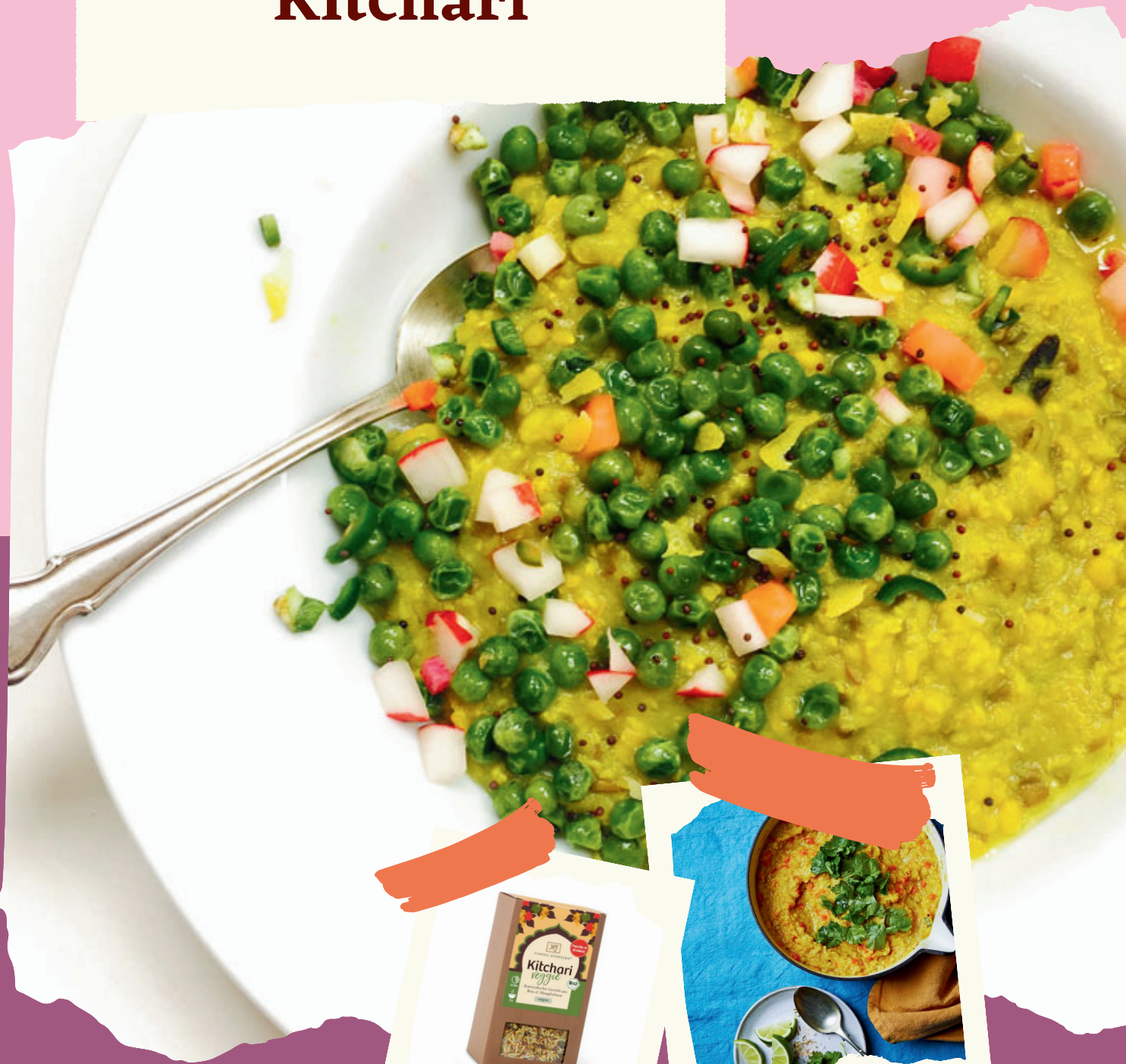


- India's ancient Ayurvedic system uses food like kichari as a natural detox tool for the gut and liver.
- Turmeric, a staple in Indian cooking, contains curcumin — a powerful anti-inflammatory compound.

- Traditional Indian meals balance all six tastes to promote digestive and emotional health.
- Ghee, used in many Indian dishes, supports brain function and gut lining.

- Spices like cumin, coriander, and fennel help with digestion and gas relief.
 - Lentils and legumes are widely consumed and offer plant-based protein and fiber.
- 

Kitchari



Kitchari

Core Benefits

Digestive reset, detox, anti-inflammatory

Why It Heals

Kitchari is a simple porridge made from lentils and rice, used in Ayurveda as a **cleansing and healing meal**. It's easy to digest, rich in plant protein, and infused with digestive spices like turmeric, cumin, and ginger. Traditionally used during **panchakarma** (a detox protocol), kitchari is a go-to meal for times of illness, gut imbalances, fatigue, or emotional stress. It gives your body nutrients while letting your digestive system rest and reset.

Notes

- **Easily customizable:** Use any veggies you like.
- **Vegan by default:** Just swap ghee for coconut or olive oil.
- **For detox:** Eat for all three meals for 1–3 days with warm herbal teas.
- **Anti-inflammatory:** Thanks to turmeric, ginger, and mung dal.



Kitchari

This is India's version of “food as medicine” in its purest form — nourishing, grounding, and deeply comforting.

Ingredients

- ½ cup yellow mung dal (or red lentils)
- ½ cup white basmati rice
- 1 tbsp ghee or coconut oil
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- ½ tsp turmeric
- ½ tsp ground coriander
- ½ inch fresh ginger, grated
- 1 small carrot, chopped
- 1 handful spinach or kale
- 4 cups water
- Salt to taste
- Optional: squeeze of lemon, fresh cilantro



Preparing

15 Minutes



Cooking

45 Minutes



Serving

5 Minutes

Instructions

- Rinse the lentils and rice thoroughly until water runs clear. Soak for 15–30 minutes if you have time.
- In a pot, heat ghee or oil. Add cumin seeds and let them sizzle for a few seconds.
- Stir in ginger and dry spices. Sauté for 30 seconds.
- Add lentils and rice, mix well. Add water.
- Bring to a boil, then lower heat and simmer gently for ~30 minutes. Stir occasionally.
- When grains are soft and porridge-like, add vegetables and cook another 5–10 minutes.
- Serve warm. Add salt, lemon, or cilantro to taste.





Morocco

Health-Focused Fun Facts

- Spices in Moroccan cooking like turmeric, cumin, and ginger are known for anti-inflammatory properties.
- Harira is often consumed to break fasts during Ramadan, helping to gently reset digestion.

- Chickpeas and lentils in Moroccan dishes are iron-rich and support steady energy.
- Mint tea is a Moroccan staple that supports digestion and relaxation.

- Olive oil and preserved lemons in Moroccan cuisine aid in liver and gallbladder function.
- Traditional slow-cooked tagines retain more nutrients and flavor without added fats.



Lentil Harira

Harira is Morocco's iconic lentil soup — warm, spiced, and deeply nourishing. Traditionally eaten during Ramadan to break the fast, it's packed with plant-based protein, fiber, iron, and antioxidants.

Lentil Harira

Core Benefits

Immune support, anti-inflammatory, iron-rich

Why It Heals

The combination of **lentils, chickpeas, tomatoes, turmeric, ginger, cinnamon, and fresh herbs** makes this a powerful immune-boosting and anti-inflammatory meal. It supports steady energy, gut health, and hormone balance — especially important in times of stress or seasonal transition.

Notes

- **Gluten-free and vegan by default**
- Use **bone broth** instead of veggie broth for extra minerals (non-vegan)
- Store well — tastes even better the next day
- Add a pinch of cayenne for circulation boost



Lentil Harira

**"Anthony Bourdain called Harira 'a hug from the inside'
— and once you taste it, you'll understand why."**



Preparing
20 Minutes



Cooking
60 Minutes



Serving
5 Minutes

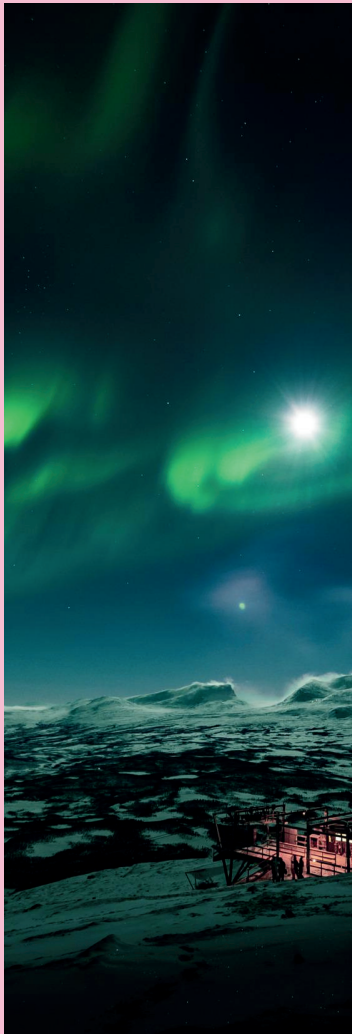


Ingredients

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- ½ onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- ½ tsp turmeric
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ¼ tsp ground ginger
- 1 carrot, diced
- ½ cup red or green lentils
- ½ cup canned chickpeas, drained
- 1 ½ cups chopped tomatoes (fresh or canned)
- 3–4 cups vegetable broth or water
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- Salt & black pepper to taste
- Optional: lemon wedges for serving

Instructions

- Heat olive oil in a pot over medium heat. Sauté onion and garlic until fragrant.
- Stir in spices: cumin, turmeric, cinnamon, ginger. Cook for 30 seconds.
- Add carrot, lentils, chickpeas, tomatoes, and broth. Bring to a boil.
- Reduce heat and simmer for 30–40 minutes, until lentils are soft.
- Stir in cilantro and parsley. Season with salt and pepper.
- Serve hot with lemon wedges and warm flatbread.



Sweden

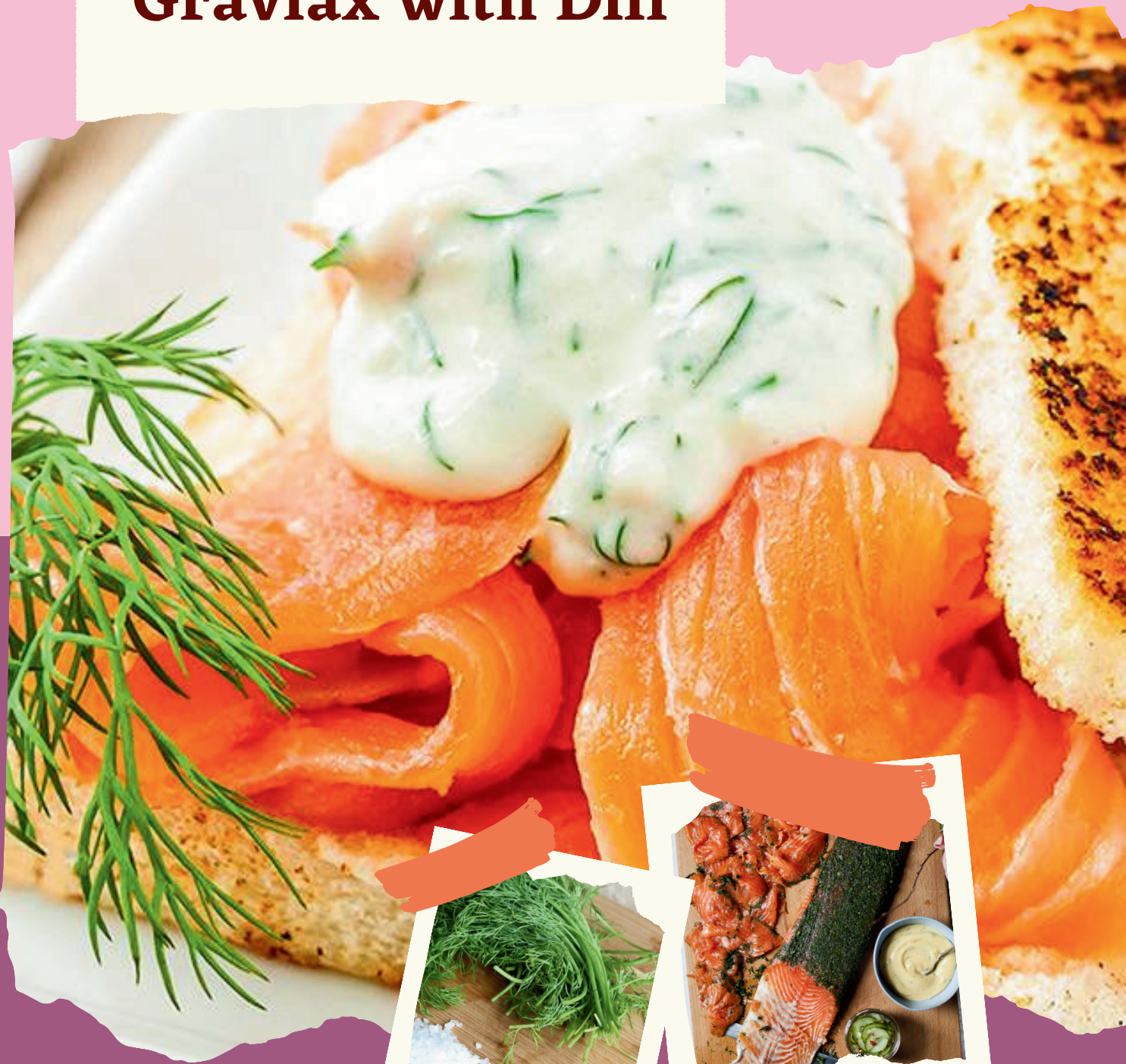
Health-Focused Fun Facts

- Gravlax is a preserved food that retains omega-3 fatty acids, critical for brain health.
- Traditional Swedish diets feature rye and root vegetables, both excellent for gut health.

- Dill, used in many Swedish dishes, helps with digestion and has mild antimicrobial properties.
- Pickled foods in Nordic diets support the microbiome and boost probiotic intake.

- Herring and salmon are staples rich in vitamin D and selenium.
- Lingonberries, often eaten with savory dishes, are packed with antioxidants and fiber.

Gravlax with Dill



Gravlax with Dill

Core Benefits

Omega-3s, anti-inflammatory, heart & brain health

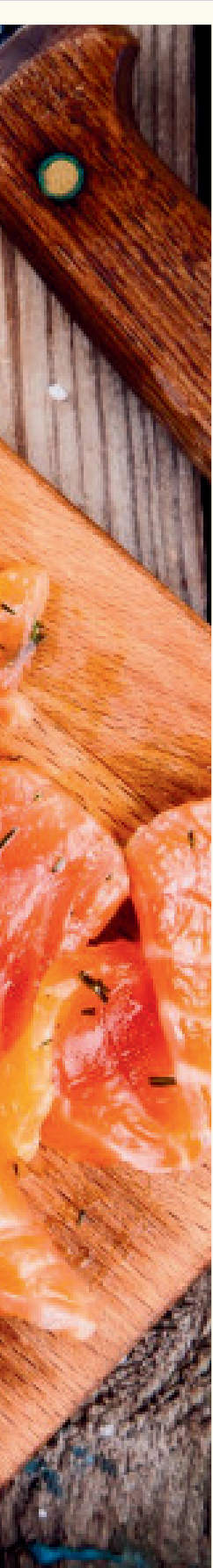
Why It Heals

Gravlax is packed with **omega-3 fatty acids**, which support heart health, reduce inflammation, and boost brain function. The curing process also keeps enzymes intact and makes it easier to digest than cooked fish. Add dill (a natural digestive aid), and a mustard-dill sauce, and you have a dish that's as **functional as it is elegant**.

Notes

- Use **sashimi-grade or previously frozen salmon** to ensure safety.
- Cured, not cooked — the salt and sugar draw out moisture and preserve the fish naturally.
- Gravlax keeps for about a week refrigerated.
- Can be served with **boiled potatoes, salad, or eggs** for a Nordic-style brunch.





Ingredients

For the salmon:

- 1 lb (450 g) fresh salmon fillet, skin on
- 2 tbsp sea salt
- 1 tbsp raw sugar (or coconut sugar)
- 1 tsp crushed black pepper
- 1 small bunch fresh dill, chopped
- Zest of 1 lemon

Optional mustard-dill sauce:

- 2 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tbsp maple syrup or honey
- 1 tbsp chopped dill
- 1 tsp white wine vinegar
- 1 tbsp olive oil



Preparing

30 Minutes



Cooking

0 Minutes



Serving

10 Minutes

Instructions

- Rinse and pat salmon dry.
- Mix salt, sugar, pepper, lemon zest, and dill in a bowl.
- Lay a piece of plastic wrap in a dish. Place salmon skin-side down. Cover evenly with cure mixture.
- Wrap tightly and place a weight on top (like a small cutting board or pan).
- Refrigerate for 48 hours, flipping once halfway through.
- Unwrap, scrape off the cure, and slice thinly on the bias.
- Serve chilled with rye crispbread, sliced cucumber, or the optional mustard sauce.



Thailand



Health-Focused Fun Facts

- Tom Yum soup contains lemongrass and galangal, which support immunity and soothe the gut.
- Spicy soups like Tom Yum can clear sinuses and improve circulation.

- Thai cuisine often includes fermented fish sauce and herbs that boost microbiome health.
- Fresh lime juice in Thai dishes enhances iron absorption and supports liver function.

- Chili peppers increase endorphins and metabolism while providing vitamin C.
- Thai basil has antibacterial properties and is used in traditional medicine for stress relief.



Tom Yum Soup

This Hot & Sour Thai Soup with Herbs isn't just a Thai classic; it's a global icon. It's been praised by chefs, wellness experts, and even celebrities. Gordon Ramsay said: "This soup punches you in the face — in the best way possible. It's sharp, fiery, full of character."

Tom Yum Soup

Core Benefits

Antibacterial, digestion, immune support, anti-inflammatory

Why It Heals

Tom Yum is more than just Thailand's signature soup — it's a **natural medicine chest in a bowl**. Every ingredient has a purpose: lemongrass and galangal fight infection, lime juice balances pH, chili stimulates circulation, and mushrooms support immunity. It's hot, tangy, fragrant, and deeply restorative — especially during flu season, times of stress, or poor digestion. And it's fast: ready in 15–20 minutes, no fancy techniques required.

This is everyday medicine, Thai-style.

Notes

- For **clear broth**, don't boil after adding lime juice.
- Adjust chili to your heat tolerance — this soup can get spicy.
- Add shrimp or tofu to make it a meal.
- Lemongrass and lime leaves are tough — used for flavor, not eaten.



Tom Yum Soup

Tom Yum delivers all five essential flavors — spicy, sour, salty, sweet, and umami — making it neurologically satisfying and emotionally comforting.



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Preparing

20 Minutes



Cooking

25 Minutes



Serving

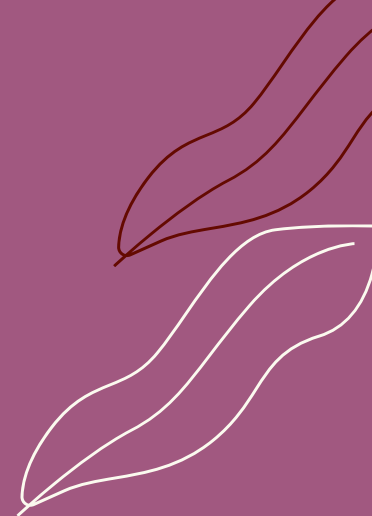
5 Minutes

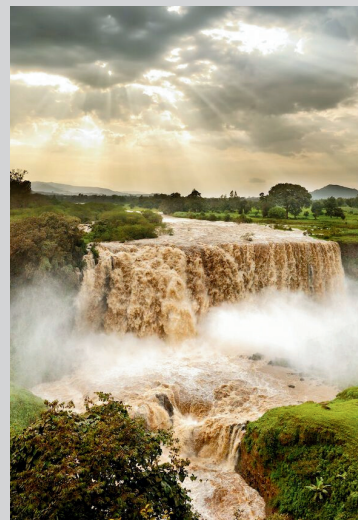
Instructions

- In a pot, bring water or broth to a boil.
- Add lemongrass, galangal, and lime leaves. Simmer 5–7 minutes to infuse.
- Add mushrooms and tomato. Simmer another 5–7 minutes.
- Add chilies, lime juice, and fish sauce. Stir and taste.
- Garnish with fresh cilantro. Serve hot, ideally with jasmine rice.

Ingredients

- 3 cups water or vegetable broth
- 2 stalks lemongrass, chopped and smashed
- 3–4 slices galangal (or fresh ginger if unavailable)
- 3 kaffir lime leaves, torn (optional but traditional)
- 1 cup mushrooms (straw, oyster, or button), sliced
- 1 small tomato, cut into wedges (optional)
- 1–2 Thai bird's eye chilies, sliced (or to taste)
- 2 tbsp lime juice (fresh)
- 1 tbsp fish sauce (or soy sauce for vegan)
- Fresh cilantro, to garnish
- Optional: tofu, shrimp, or chicken for protein






Ethiopia

Health-Focused Fun Facts



- Injera is a naturally fermented flatbread that feeds healthy gut bacteria.
- Ethiopian meals are mostly plant-based and include iron-rich lentils and legumes.

- Berbere spice blend includes chili, garlic, and fenugreek — all anti-inflammatory.
- Teff, used in injera, is a gluten-free grain rich in protein, fiber, and calcium.

- Meals are served communally, encouraging mindful, social eating.
 - Traditional fasting periods promote metabolic reset and gut rest.
- 



Injera with Lentils

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Injera with Lentils

Core Benefits

Gut health, plant protein, iron, B-vitamins, sustained energy

Why It Heals

Injera is Ethiopia's national staple — a slightly sour, spongy flatbread made from **teff**, one of the world's most nutrient-dense ancient grains. Naturally **gluten-free** and **fermented**, injera supports **digestive health**, feeds good gut bacteria, and delivers long-lasting energy. Paired with misir wat — a rich, spiced lentil stew — this dish becomes a complete plant-based powerhouse. Lentils offer **iron, fiber, and protein**, while spices like **berbere, garlic, and ginger** support immunity and circulation. Together, they form a dish that's **vegan, deeply satisfying, and deeply rooted** in tradition.

Notes

- **Traditional injera ferments for 3-5 days** for full probiotic benefits.
- Eat with **hands only** — right hand, pinch and scoop.
- Teff is **high in iron, calcium, and resistant starch**.
- Berbere spice is warming, energizing, and immune-supporting.

Injera with Lentils





Preparing

30 Minutes



Cooking

25 Minutes



Serving

10 Minutes

Ingredients

For the Lentils (Misir Wat):

- 1 tbsp olive or avocado oil
- ½ onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 cup red lentils, rinsed
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 2 ½ cups water or vegetable broth
- 1–2 tsp berbere spice blend (adjust to heat preference)
- Salt to taste
- Optional: pinch of cinnamon or fenugreek

For the Injera (simplified version):

- 1 cup teff flour (or teff + all-purpose mix)
- 1 ½ cups water
- Pinch of salt



Instructions

To make Injera (quick method):

- Mix teff flour and water into a thin batter. Cover and let ferment at room temp for 1–2 days.
- Stir in a pinch of salt. Heat a nonstick pan over medium heat.
- Pour batter thinly (like a crepe). Cook uncovered until bubbles form and surface sets. Do not flip.
- Remove and let cool. It should be soft, bendy, slightly sour.

To make Misir Wat:

- In a saucepan, heat oil. Add onion and garlic. Sauté until golden.
- Stir in tomato paste, berbere, ginger. Cook 1–2 minutes.
- Add lentils and water. Simmer uncovered for 20–25 minutes, until soft and thickened.
- Season with salt. Serve warm on top of injera.

In Ethiopia, food is deeply tied to community, ritual, and respect. Meals are traditionally eaten from a shared platter, using injera to scoop up lentils, stews, and vegetables — no utensils, just hands and hospitality.



China

Health-Focused Fun Facts

- Mushrooms like shiitake are used in Chinese medicine to support immunity and reduce cholesterol.
- Traditional Chinese soups are sipped slowly to warm the body and aid digestion.

- Ginger and garlic are foundational in Chinese cooking for their antimicrobial and circulatory benefits.
- Green tea is a digestive tonic in Chinese meals, promoting hydration and detox.

- Bone broth-based soups support joint health and collagen repair.
- Chinese food theory balances yin and yang ingredients to maintain internal health harmony.



Shiitake Mushroom Soup

Shiitake mushrooms (and dishes like this soup) have been widely praised, especially in the realms of functional medicine, holistic nutrition, and culinary wellness. While no one celebrity is famous for this exact soup, several influential figures have publicly praised shiitake mushrooms and traditional Chinese healing broths.

Shiitake Mushroom Soup

Core Benefits

Immune strength, anti-cancer properties, energy support, detox

Why It Heals

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), food is **functional, not just flavorful** — and shiitake mushrooms are a textbook example. Used for centuries as a medicinal food, they're rich in **beta-glucans**, compounds that **stimulate immune function** and may help fight tumors, viruses, and chronic fatigue. Paired with **ginger, garlic, scallions**, and a light broth, this soup is warming, energizing, and deeply cleansing. It's especially good in cold seasons or times of stress and recovery. Easy to make, easy to digest, and packed with **umami**.

Notes

- If using **dried shiitake**, soak in warm water for 20–30 minutes first — the soaking liquid can be used as broth.
- Tofu adds protein, making this a complete light meal.
- Can also add a few slices of **daikon radish** for liver and kidney support (TCM tip).
- Drink slowly — it's meant to be **sipped, not gulped**.



Shiitake Mushroom Soup



“Not vitamins — but heat, history, and instinct.”
– Anthony Bourdain on Chinese soup culture





Preparing
15 Minutes



Cooking
30 Minutes



Serving
5 Minutes

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp sesame oil (or neutral oil)
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 inch fresh ginger, sliced
- 4–5 fresh shiitake mushrooms, sliced (or use dried + rehydrated)
- 3 cups water or vegetable broth
- 2 scallions, chopped
- 1 tbsp low-sodium soy sauce (or tamari for gluten-free)
- Optional: tofu cubes, soba noodles, spinach or bok choy

Instructions

- Heat sesame oil in a pot. Add garlic and ginger. Sauté until fragrant.
- Add mushrooms and cook 3–4 minutes until softened.
- Pour in water or broth. Add soy sauce. Simmer for 10–15 minutes.
- Add scallions and any optional extras (tofu, greens, etc.).
- Taste and adjust seasoning. Serve hot.





Peru

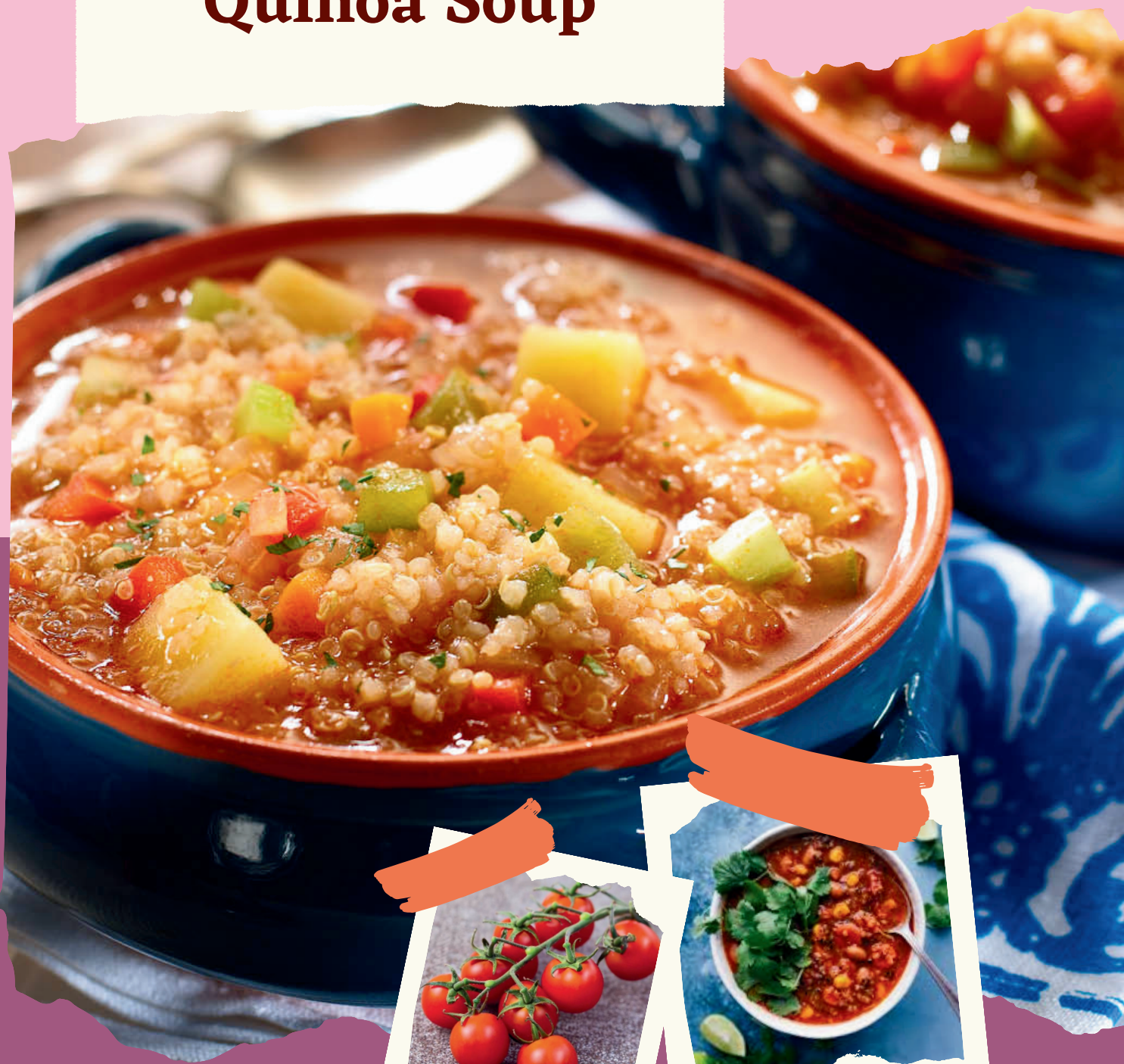
Health-Focused Fun Facts

- Quinoa is one of the few plant-based complete proteins, native to the Peruvian Andes.
- Peruvian cuisine features root vegetables like maca and yacon that support hormone balance.

- Aji amarillo peppers contain capsaicin and vitamin C, boosting metabolism and immunity.
- Choclo (giant corn) is high in fiber and helps regulate digestion and blood sugar.

- Lime juice in Peruvian ceviche enhances iron absorption and supports liver detox.
- Traditional Andean diets include herbs like muña and coca for altitude and digestion support.

Quinoa Soup



Quinoa Soup

Core Benefits

Complete plant protein, blood sugar balance, digestive support, immune boosting

Why It Heals

Long before quinoa became a global superfood, the **Indigenous peoples of the Andes** were using it as **sacred nourishment** — and still do. In the Peruvian highlands, sopa de quinua is a warming, mineral-rich soup made with **quinoa, vegetables, herbs**, and sometimes cheese or egg. Quinoa is one of the few **complete plant proteins**, offering all 9 essential amino acids. It's also rich in **iron, magnesium, zinc, and fiber**, making it excellent for **energy, hormonal balance, and immune strength** — especially in colder seasons or at high altitudes.

Notes

- **Quinoa must be rinsed** well to remove bitter saponins.
- A traditional soup in **Quechua and Aymara** communities — eaten for strength and endurance.
- Easily made vegan, gluten-free, or richer with egg and cheese.
- Great for **immune support**, especially in cooler weather.





Ingredients

- ½ cup white or tri-color quinoa, rinsed
- 1 tbsp olive oil or avocado oil
- ½ onion, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 carrot, diced
- 1 celery stalk, chopped
- 1 small potato or sweet potato, cubed
- 1 tomato, chopped
- ½ tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 3-4 cups vegetable broth or water
- Salt & pepper to taste
- Optional: chopped cilantro, squeeze of lime, grated queso fresco or poached egg



Instructions

- In a pot, heat oil and sauté onion, garlic, carrot, and celery for 4-5 minutes.
- Add quinoa, tomato, spices, and broth. Bring to a boil.
- Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 20-25 minutes, until quinoa "pops" and potatoes are tender.
- Add salt and pepper to taste. Garnish with herbs, lime, or cheese if desired. Serve hot.



Preparing

15 Minutes



Cooking

25 Minutes



Serving

5 Minutes



Brazil

Health-Focused Fun Facts

- Açaí berries are loaded with anthocyanins — antioxidants that promote brain and skin health.
- The traditional Brazilian diet includes tropical fruits that are rich in fiber and micronutrients.

- Açaí bowls are commonly eaten post-exercise in Brazil for energy and recovery.
- Brazil nuts are one of the best dietary sources of selenium, supporting thyroid and immunity.

- Cassava, used in farofa and tapioca, is a gluten-free carb that's easy on the digestive system.
- Papaya is often eaten for breakfast and contains enzymes that support digestion and gut balance.



Açaí Bowl

Traditionally eaten by Indigenous Amazonian tribes as a survival food, it became Brazil's favorite breakfast in the coastal surf culture. Today, it's an energy-packed, cooling, vibrant bowl that fuels both body and mind.

Açaí Bowl

Core Benefits

Antioxidants, energy boost, skin health, anti-inflammatory

Why It Heals

Açaí berries, native to the Amazon, are loaded with **anthocyanins** — antioxidants that help fight inflammation, boost skin elasticity, protect cells from oxidative stress, and support brain health. Plus, the **healthy fats and fiber** in açaí keep you full and fueled, without spiking blood sugar.

Notes

- Use **unsweetened frozen açaí packs** if possible (avoid added syrups).
- Traditionally served thick — not as a smoothie, but as a spoonable bowl.
- Want more protein? Add a scoop of **vegan protein powder**, nut butter, or Greek yogurt.
- In Brazil, açaí na tigela is a post-surf or pre-soccer meal — light but energizing.



Açaí Bowl

“Anthony Bourdain called Harira ‘a hug from the inside’
— and once you taste it, you’ll understand why.”

Ingredients

- 100g frozen açai purée (unsweetened, if possible)
- ½ frozen banana
- ¼ cup frozen berries (blueberries, strawberries, etc.)
- Splash of plant-based milk or coconut water (just enough to blend)
- Toppings (choose any):
 - Sliced banana
 - Fresh berries
 - Granola
 - Chia seeds
 - Shredded coconut
 - Cacao nibs
 - A drizzle of honey (optional)

Instructions

- In a blender, combine açai, banana, frozen berries, and a small splash of liquid.
- Blend until thick and smooth — like soft-serve ice cream.
- Pour into a bowl and arrange toppings creatively.
- Eat immediately with a spoon. Not a drink!



Preparing

10 Minutes



Cooking

0 Minutes



Serving

5 Minutes





Turkey

Health-Focused Fun Facts

- Red lentils in Turkish soup are high in iron and easier to digest than other legumes.
- Cumin and lemon, used in mercimek çorbası, aid digestion and nutrient absorption.

- Turkish meals often begin with soup to warm the stomach and stimulate enzymes.
- Yogurt is a daily staple and provides probiotics that enhance gut health.

- Fresh herbs like mint and parsley are used liberally and help cleanse the liver.
- Olive oil is a cornerstone of Turkish cooking and supports cardiovascular health.

Mercimek Çorbası

Mercimek çorbası is one of the most iconic dishes in Turkey — it's served at homes, restaurants, school cafeterias, mosques, and even upscale hotels. Simple yet deeply satisfying, it's made with red lentils, onion, carrot, garlic, cumin, and lemon.



Red Lentil Soup

Core Benefits

Gut healing, iron-rich, grounding, protein-packed

Why It Heals

This silky red lentil soup is served in nearly every Turkish home. It's made with humble, healing ingredients — **lentils, onion, garlic, carrots, cumin** — and traditionally eaten with lemon. The combination supports digestion, eases inflammation, and fuels the body with iron and plant-based protein. It's a go-to comfort food that also happens to be a complete **gut-friendly tonic**.

Notes

- **Traditional tip:** Always serve with lemon — the acid helps absorption of iron from the lentils.
- In Turkish cuisine, this soup is often followed by **rice and a vegetable dish** — it opens the appetite.
- Excellent for **meal prep** — it keeps well and gets better after a day.
- Light enough for breakfast, comforting enough for dinner.



Red Lentil Soup

In Turkey, Mercimek Çorbası is the “anytime soup” — served at breakfast, lunch, or dinner. It’s even the first course at weddings and funerals. Some locals say, “If a Turkish home doesn’t have lentils, it’s not a kitchen.”



@lilia_yermak

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp olive oil or butter
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 small carrot, diced
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 cup red lentils, rinsed
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- ½ tsp sweet paprika
- 4 cups water or vegetable broth
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Juice of ½ lemon
- Optional garnish: chili oil, mint, or lemon wedges

Instructions

- In a pot, heat olive oil or butter. Sauté onion, garlic, and carrot until soft (5–7 min).
- Add cumin and paprika. Stir for 30 seconds.
- Add lentils and water/broth. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 20–25 minutes.
- When lentils are soft, use an immersion blender to purée until smooth (or leave it rustic).
- Stir in lemon juice, season with salt and pepper.
- Garnish with a drizzle of chili oil or crushed dried mint if desired. Serve hot with warm bread.



Preparing
10 Minutes



Cooking
25 Minutes



Serving
5 Minutes




Kenya

Health-Focused Fun Facts



- Githeri provides complete plant protein when combining maize and beans.
- High-fiber Kenyan staples like beans and greens promote satiety and gut health.

- Traditional one-pot meals reduce processed food intake and preserve nutrients.
- Sukuma wiki (collard greens) is rich in calcium, vitamin K, and antioxidants.

- Fermented uji (porridge) supports the microbiome and gut lining.
 - Boiled roots like arrowroot and sweet potato provide complex carbs and sustained energy.
- 

Githeri



Maize and Bean Stew

Core Benefits

Balanced plant protein, fiber, sustained energy

Why It Heals

A staple of Kenyan kitchens, Githeri combines **maize (corn) and beans** — a perfect protein match that fuels with fiber, iron, and complex carbs. Originally made by simmering over fire in clay pots, this one-pot dish is hearty, satisfying, and nutritionally complete. It supports **blood sugar regulation, digestive health, and energy balance**, especially for active lifestyles.

Notes

- Githeri is often **batch-cooked** and reheated through the week.
- You can mash it slightly for a thicker stew, or leave it brothy.
- In Nairobi, it's often spiced up with **pilipili (chili)** or served with sliced **ripe avocado**.
- Great for **vegetarians, diabetics, athletes, or anyone needing long-burning energy**.



Maize and Bean Stew

Githeri is a traditional Kenyan one-pot dish made with boiled maize (corn) and beans — simple, nourishing, and incredibly smart. It's been eaten by the Kikuyu people for generations, and remains a staple in schools, homes, and rural villages across Kenya.

Ingredients

- 1 cup dry red kidney beans (or 1 can, drained)
- 1 cup whole maize/corn kernels (fresh, frozen, or pre-boiled)
- 1 tbsp oil (sunflower or avocado oil)
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 tomatoes, diced
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 carrot, diced (optional)
- ½ tsp turmeric
- ½ tsp curry powder or garam masala (optional twist)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Fresh cilantro, to garnish

Instructions

- If using dry beans and maize, soak overnight and boil until tender (separately or together). Set aside.
- In a large pot, heat oil and sauté onion until golden. Add garlic and cook for 1 minute.
- Add tomatoes, turmeric, and spices. Cook until tomatoes soften.
- Stir in beans, corn, and carrots. Add a splash of water if needed.
- Simmer for 10–15 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.
- Garnish with chopped cilantro and serve warm — often with tea or avocado.



Preparing

15 Minutes



Cooking

60 Minutes



Serving

10 Minutes





Italy

Health-Focused Fun Facts

- The Mediterranean diet, with olive oil and beans, is linked to longevity and heart health.
- Ribollita includes kale and garlic — both strong anti-inflammatory ingredients.

- Old bread in ribollita becomes resistant starch, feeding beneficial gut bacteria.
- Italian cuisine emphasizes seasonal vegetables, reducing inflammation and promoting gut health.

- Herbs like rosemary and oregano are rich in antioxidants and aid digestion.
- Cheese like Parmigiano-Reggiano contains enzymes and probiotics that support the gut.



Ribollita

“La cucina povera” — the “kitchen of the poor” — is how Italians describe this kind of food: simple, seasonal, and healing. Ribollita is more than soup — it’s a symbol of resourcefulness, community, and nourishment.

Tuscan Bean & Vegetable Stew

Core Benefits

Gut health, fiber, plant protein, prebiotics, anti-inflammatory

Why It Heals

Ribollita, which means “reboiled,” is a rustic Tuscan soup made from **leftover bread, cannellini beans, kale, carrots, onion, garlic, and olive oil**. It’s the definition of slow food: made to stretch leftovers and nourish whole communities. High in **fiber, polyphenols, and prebiotics**, it feeds gut bacteria, stabilizes blood sugar, and supports long-term health. This dish is **slow food medicine** at its finest: seasonal, filling, healing, and deeply satisfying.

Notes

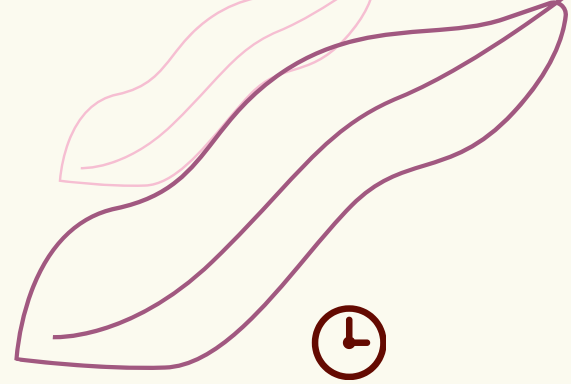
- **Best made a day ahead** — flavors deepen with time.
- Traditionally served twice: first hot, then “ribollita” the next day.
- You can purée half the soup for creaminess or keep it rustic.
- Want extra protein? Add a poached egg or a sprinkle of Parmesan.





Ingredients

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 carrot, diced
- 1 celery stalk, chopped
- 2 cups chopped kale or Swiss chard
- 1 ½ cups cooked cannellini beans (or 1 can, drained)
- 1 cup crushed tomatoes
- 3–4 cups vegetable broth or water
- 2 slices day-old sourdough or rustic bread, torn into chunks
- 1 tsp dried thyme or rosemary
- Salt & black pepper to taste
- Extra olive oil, to drizzle when serving



Preparing

20 Minutes



Cooking

40 Minutes



Serving

5 Minutes

Instructions

- Heat olive oil in a pot. Sauté onion, garlic, carrot, and celery until soft.
- Add chopped greens, beans, tomatoes, herbs, and broth. Bring to a boil.
- Reduce heat and simmer 30–40 minutes until thick and flavorful.
- Stir in bread chunks during the last 10 minutes. Let them absorb liquid and soften.
- Season with salt and pepper. Drizzle with extra virgin olive oil before serving.

Conclusion

Your Body. Your Culture. Your Power.

By now, you've traveled across 15 countries — not by plane, but by plate. And in every chapter, you've seen one truth repeated over and over:

Food is more than fuel. Food is function. Food is medicine.

From the fermented broths of Asia to the healing herbs of the Middle East, from the beans and grains of Africa to the wild greens of Europe — the world has been teaching us how to eat well **for generations**. And yet, somewhere along the way, we forgot. We overcomplicated health. We handed it to pills and products. This book is about reclaiming it.

You don't need a degree in nutrition. You need tradition, simplicity, and a little attention. Every recipe in this book was chosen because it's **real, rooted, and proven** — not in a lab, but in daily life.

What now? Cook one dish at a time. Share meals with others.

Listen to how your body feels. Explore new ingredients.

Return to what feels nourishing. Let this book be your **toolkit**, not your rulebook. Adapt. Modify. Make it yours. Healing doesn't have to be rigid. It just has to be real. And above all:

May your food bring you energy, clarity, comfort, and connection — just like it has for millions around the world.

Thank you for coming on this journey.
Now go feed your body like you love it.

— **Lilia Yermak**



