



SARAH RAVEN

is best known for her work as a gardener and author but she also studied medicine at the University of London and then worked as a junior doctor at Royal Sussex County Hospital, Brighton. Since her medical training, she has become interested in healthy eating and what it means to her cooking. Here, she focuses on exceptionally good foods that she believes should be included in our diet as much as possible - and how to eat them. Using information gathered from nutritionists, medical journals and research centres, and based on her own discoveries, Sarah has distilled that knowledge into a collection of 12 fruits and vegetables, from kale and blood oranges to tomatoes and beetroot.

Sarah Raven's SUPERFOODS



Every month, Sarah picks the healthiest fruit and vegetables to eat in season, with delicious recipes to make the most of their flavours and natural goodness

JULY: TOMATOES

WORDS, RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY SARAH RAVEN ● PHOTOGRAPHS BY JONATHAN BUCKLEY
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Super-healthy tomatoes are so versatile, you could eat them at every meal in a thousand different ways and never be bored. Raw, they're a rich source of vitamin A, C and E, as well as the mineral manganese. Commercial greenhouse crops, grown and picked not fully ripe, have been recorded as having one-third the vitamin C of those ripened outside. With health in mind, farmers are now producing 'designer tomatoes' in greenhouses that use pink LED lights to intensify flavour and add vitamin C. However, tomatoes are relatively easy to grow at home, plus they'll taste and be better for you.

High levels of lycopene – the most powerful antioxidant to have been measured in food – gives the deep-red pigment and is also found in watermelon, papaya and rosehip, as well as grapefruit, asparagus, parsley and basil. Cooking actually improves its absorption, with up to three times the amount compared with raw. Lycopene's anti-cancer benefits have been repeatedly shown, the evidence strongest for prostate, but also linked to a decrease in lung, stomach and breast cancer. In tomatoes, it's the skin that has the highest concentration, so leave them on and use as much tomato paste, purée and sundried tomatoes as you can in your day-to-day food, as these three provide the most lycopene gram for gram. Always eat tomatoes with a small amount of oil: lycopene is fat-soluble, so it helps to absorb it more efficiently.

Cooked tomatoes are also one of the best healthy-heart foods. Both raw and cooked have been shown to lower total cholesterol, LDL (bad) cholesterol and triglycerides. The phytonutrients – again more active in cooked tomatoes than raw – also combine together to prevent unwanted clumping of platelets and so reducing the risk of clogging of the arteries, as well as contributing to improving the function of the blood vessel walls. Several studies have shown that tomatoes can help lower blood pressure, especially in those where it is already raised.

With tomatoes at their best over the next few weeks and months, plan to feast on them as often as you can – it will do you a power of good.

PROVENÇAL SQUID, NEW POTATO, OLIVE AND TOMATO STEW

Preparation 20 minutes Cooking about 30 minutes Serves 4

Squid mixes beautifully with tomatoes, it's also low in fat and rich in potassium and vitamin E – nutrients that help to protect your heart and keep blood pressure and cholesterol within the normal range.

2 tbsp olive oil
1 small onion or shallot (about 150g), finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
800g squid, cut into bite-size pieces
1 small sprig fresh rosemary
3 sprigs fresh thyme
xxg fresh tomatoes or 1 x 400g tin chopped tomatoes
200g small waxy new potatoes
8-10 sun-dried tomatoes in oil, roughly chopped
100g Kalamata olives
30g fresh parsley, chopped

- 1 Heat 1tbsp oil over a medium heat in a large frying pan or hob-proof casserole dish. Add the onion or shallot and cook for 2 minutes. Stir in the garlic and cook for a further 2 minutes until the onion and garlic are slightly softened but not browned.
- 2 Add the squid, rosemary and thyme sprigs and cook for about 5 minutes.
- 3 Add the tomatoes – if using tinned, half fill the tin with water, give it a swirl and add that to the pan, along with the potatoes and sun-dried tomatoes. Stir and simmer for 20 minutes until the potatoes are cooked. Add a splash of water if it looks too dry. Season with salt and black pepper to taste.
- 4 Stir in the olives and 1tbsp olive oil. Leave to stand for 5 minutes. Remove the thyme and rosemary twigs (leaves having fallen off). Serve sprinkled with parsley. ➔



ROASTED TOMATO SOUP

Preparation 30 minutes

Cooking 50 minutes Serves 6 as a main or 8 as a starter

This is one of my favourite soups, good to cook when there is a glut of tomatoes and it freezes very well. For optimal health benefits, eat this with a bowl of steamed broccoli on the side – the florets are delicious dipped in the warm soup instead of bread.

1kg ripe tomatoes
2 bulbs fennel (about 400g)
2 large onions, peeled and quartered
3 tbsp olive oil
3 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
8 sun-dried tomatoes or 12 sun-blushed tomatoes in oil, plus extra to garnish
2 tbsp grated ginger
½ small red chilli, finely chopped, or 1 dried chilli, crumbled
30g bunch coriander
300ml tomato juice
2 x 400g tins coconut milk
30g bunch dill

4 tbsp Thai fish sauce
1 tbsp soy sauce
zest and juice of 2 limes

- 1 Heat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan oven) gas mark 4.
- 2 Coarsely chop the tomatoes (don't skin them), fennel and onions, and put them in a large roasting dish. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper, toss with 2 tbsp oil and roast for 30-40 minutes until slightly browning at the edges.
- 3 Meanwhile, heat a little more olive oil in a saucepan and cook the garlic, sun-dried tomatoes, ginger and chilli for 3-4 minutes.
- 4 Strip the leaves from the coriander and chop the stems and flavoursome root, if you have it. Reserve the leaves but add the stems and roots to the saucepan.
- 5 Add the tomato juice and coconut milk, and cook for a few more minutes. Cover, remove from the heat and allow the flavours to infuse for 10 minutes.



- 6 Stir in the roasted tomatoes, fennel and onions, followed by the dill, fish sauce, soy sauce, lime zest and juice. Season, then cover and simmer for 10 minutes.
- 7 Blend in a food processor and serve garnished with sliced sun-dried tomatoes and coriander. This soup is best eaten warm, but you can also serve it cold.

LINGUINE ALLA SCOGLIO

Preparation 30 minutes

Cooking 15 minutes Serves 4

In this traditional recipe from Ischia, off the coast of Naples, the pasta is mainly cooked in the juices of the tomatoes and shellfish, rather than its own pan of water, which is the key to the intensity of its flavour. Shellfish is high in heart- and brain-friendly omega-3 fatty acids.

200g wholewheat linguine
2 tbsp olive oil
2 garlic cloves, crushed
200g small squid, cleaned, cut into bite-sized pieces

200g raw king prawns, de-veined and cut into 3
500g plum or cherry tomatoes, halved
500g mussels, de-bearded and cleaned
500g clams, rinsed
250ml white wine
25g flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped

- 1 Add the linguine to boiling water and cook for 2 minutes. Drain and reserve the cooking water.
- 2 Heat the oil in a large frying pan, add the garlic and cook gently for 2 minutes.
- 3 Stir in the squid and prawns, and cook for 2 minutes.
- 4 Add the pasta and cook for 3 minutes, stirring regularly.
- 5 Add the tomatoes, mussels, clams, white wine and a couple of tablespoons of the reserved pasta water, stirring gently, and cook for a further 5-6 minutes. Taste and season with flaky salt and freshly ground black pepper. Serve immediately scattered with the parsley. ➔



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FOR SARAH'S STUFFED
BEEFSTEAK TOMATOES RECIPE**

TOMATO AND POPPY SEED TART

*Preparation 35 minutes, plus
chilling Cooking 45 minutes*

Serves 6-8

A delicious summer tart with extra nuttiness and nutrition from the poppy seeds in the pastry. They are a good source of minerals as well as the important healthy fats and omega-6s.

FOR THE PASTRY

140g plain flour
50g poppy seeds, toasted
1 tbsp dark brown sugar
100g butter
1-1½ tbsp milk

FOR THE FILLING

1 large onion, peeled and sliced
1 tbsp olive oil
1kg tomatoes, roughly chopped (or 2 x 400g tins chopped tomatoes)
8 sun-dried tomatoes, chopped
1 tbsp unpasteurised honey
1 tbsp red wine vinegar
200g soft goat's cheese
4-6 basil leaves

- 1 Heat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan oven) gas mark 4 and put a baking sheet inside to heat up.
- 2 Meanwhile, make the pastry. Sift the flour and ½ tsp salt into a bowl, add the toasted poppy seeds and sugar, then rub in the butter by hand until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Alternatively, pulse all the ingredients in a food processor. Add enough milk to bring the pastry together into a ball. Wrap in clingfilm and chill in the fridge for an hour or so.
- 3 Line a 28cm loose-bottomed tart tin with the pastry, leaving the excess draped

over the sides in case it shrinks. Prick the bottom of the pastry case with a fork, line with greaseproof paper or foil and weigh this down with baking beans or rice.

- 4 Put the tart on the warmed baking sheet in the oven and bake for about 15 minutes. Remove the baking beans and paper, and bake the case for another 5 minutes. Remove from the oven and trim away the excess pastry. Turn up the oven temperature to 200°C (180°C fan oven) gas mark 6 and reheat the sheet.
- 5 Meanwhile, sweat the onion in the oil until softened. Add the tomatoes, honey and red wine vinegar. Let the mixture bubble away until thick and reduced.
- 6 Spread the goat's cheese over the pastry case, scatter with basil leaves and cover with the thickened tomato

mixture. Bake for 25 minutes. Serve warm with a crispy green salad. 

1 Sarah has written a number of bestselling gardening and cookery books, and runs a range of courses from her home at Perch Hill in East Sussex. Visit sarahraven.com for details.

