



# Fish for Thought

A handy guide to fish and its health benefits, providing practical advice about buying, storing and cooking fish for all the family!

In association with nutritionist Fiona Hunter

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT



We are often told that we should be eating more fish, but many of us don't know why. In fact, fish is good for every part of the body as it is low in fat and packed full of protein, vitamins and minerals and Omega-3 fatty acids.

Our brains comprise approximately 60% fat, and are therefore dependant upon an adequate supply of 'good' fats from our diet for optimum function. Omega-3 fatty acid intake, in particular, has been linked to benefits in terms of cognitive function, concentration, learning ability and coordination.

The Government advises us to eat at least two portions of fish a week, one of which should be oily fish. But in reality, eating a well-balanced diet can be difficult, and eating more fish is not always easy. Getting the kids to eat it can be even trickier!

This easy-to-follow guide will advise you on how much fish we really should be eating and why. More importantly, it will help you to boost your family's intake with helpful tips and hints on preparing, storing and cooking family-friendly fish dishes, as well as advising on how best to supplement your diet if you still find it difficult to eat enough fish.

**Only 30%**  
eat the government  
recommended  
intake of fish,  
and even fewer  
people eat enough  
oily fish\*



# WHY SHOULD WE EAT MORE FISH?

Fish is not only packed with protein, which is required for the growth and maintenance of muscles and body tissues, but also contains important nutrients such as iron, zinc, iodine and selenium. These help to **boost energy, immunity and the body's natural defences** against free radicals, which are involved in ageing and many disease processes.

Fish also contains **B vitamins**, which have an important role in converting food to energy in every cell of the body, and help the body to build healthy nerve tissue.

A good supply of oily fish, such as mackerel and herring, provides an important source of **vitamin A, ensuring healthy eyes, skin and hair**, and **vitamin D** which helps in the formation of **strong bones and teeth**.

Last but not least, fish is also low in 'bad' saturated fats, and rich in so-called 'good fats', known as Omega-3 fatty acids.

## ISN'T ALL FISH THE SAME?

White fish such as cod, haddock and plaice contains some Omega-3, but at a much lower level than in oily fish. Tucking into oily fish twice a week will help give your body and mind the essential Omega-3 nutrients it needs. Pregnant and breastfeeding women are also advised to eat between one and two portions of oily fish a week (visit [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk) for more information).

## WHAT IS AN OILY FISH?

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| ✓ Salmon<br>(fresh, smoked or canned) | ✗ Tinned tuna<br>(although fresh tuna is!) |
| ✓ Trout                               | ✗ Cod                                      |
| ✓ Mackerel                            | ✗ Haddock                                  |
| ✓ Herring                             | ✗ Plaice                                   |
| ✓ Sardines<br>(fresh or canned)       | ✗ Skate                                    |



**Fishy Fact:**  
**Seafood can also be great for your love life! Oysters have been reputed to act as an aphrodisiac**



*"I think it's really important that my children eat fish, but my son hates the taste – I even tried disguising it, but he always picks it out! I now give him a fish oil supplement, Efalex, so I know he's getting enough Omega-3, and I don't get any complaints!"*

**Emma, Brighton**

# THE FACTS ABOUT FATTY ACIDS

Oily fish is one of the richest sources of the Omega-3 fatty acids, which are known to be beneficial to our overall health.

Omega-3 fatty acids are present in every cell of our body and are vital for our wellbeing. They are sometimes referred to as essential fatty acids because the 'parent molecules' from which they are formed can't be made by the body, so must be obtained from the diet – just like vitamins and minerals.

## **What does Omega-3 do?**

Two of the most important Omega-3 nutrients to health are: Docosahexaenoic (DHA), which provides the building blocks for cells of the brain and eyes and Eicosapentanoic acid (EPA), which is important for the circulation and helps transmit messages between nerves. Fish is the richest source of DHA and EPA in our diets.

## **Fishy Fact:**

But there's more! Omega-3 fatty acids also have other benefits. As well as maintaining brain function, lowering blood cholesterol levels and protecting the heart and circulation, Omega-3s are also linked to improving a child's hand-eye co-ordination and improving symptoms of learning disorders<sup>\*\*</sup>. They also help to maintain a healthy immune system.

# CHEAP AS (FISH AND) CHIPS!

Contrary to popular opinion, fish needn't be pricey, with plenty of cheap treats available to up your Omega-3 content.

Look out for smoked salmon off-cuts which can often be found pre-packed in supermarkets and on request from fishmongers. They're ideal for sandwiches, pasta sauces and in fish pies and much, much cheaper than elegant slices despite tasting every bit as good.

Try smoked mackerel as an alternative to cheese in sandwiches. Not only is it lower in calories, but it's also just as cheap. It's also perfect for topping a crunchy salad.

Kippers are a traditional breakfast favourite that have fallen out of fashion but make a nutritious and far healthier alternative to a fry-up. They're also a lot cheaper than buying traditional English breakfast ingredients and are surprisingly filling.



**Fishy Fact:**  
44% of people don't eat fish because they think it's too expensive\*

## Did you know?

If you're buying fish from a supermarket, you can help ensure we maintain healthy fish stocks worldwide, by looking out for the blue Marine Conservation Society (MCS) logo. This guarantees that the fish comes from a sustainable source.

**Tip:** Famous chefs are recommending pollock as a tasty but sustainable alternative to cod.



**Marine  
Conservation  
Society**

# IN THE KITCHEN

Oily fish is not only great for boosting body and mind, it's also extremely versatile to cook with.



## CHOOSE IT!

**With close to 40 restaurants in the UK and over ten years of serving delicious fish dishes, Loch Fyne Restaurants know what to look for when buying fish:**

- Look at the skin – it should have a shiny, moist, firm appearance. You should also notice a pleasant sea fresh aroma if the fish is really fresh.
- Examine the eyes - fresh fish will have bright, clear and slightly bulging eyes.
- When buying fillets look out for neat, cleanly cut fillets and a translucent appearance.
- Smoked fish should look glossy with a fresh smoky aroma.
- How is it presented? All fresh fish should be displayed and packaged on ice.
- Read the labels – look for line caught fish from small sustainable fisheries, to avoid fish caught by deep-sea trawlers which causes irreparable damage to the sea bed.

## STORE IT!

**The Food Standards Agency provides the following tips for safe storage:**

- Put fish and shellfish in the fridge or freezer as soon as you get home.
- Make sure that all fish and shellfish are covered or wrapped.
- Don't store fish or shellfish in water.

## Fishy Fact:

UK consumers have admitted that a lack of kitchen skills is a key reason they are giving the fish counter a wide berth. Over 40% said they didn't know how to prepare fish or seafood, with almost half saying that they would eat more fish if they knew how to cook it.\*

# PREPARE IT!

## Be sure to...

- Wash your hands before handling fish or shellfish.
- Thaw the fish or shellfish thoroughly in the fridge, preferably overnight.
- Keep everything clean by using separate cutting boards, knives, plates, etc. for preparing raw fish or shellfish.
- Cook the fish so that the fat drips away.
- Marinate seafood in the fridge and throw the marinade away after removing the raw fish or shellfish. If you want to use the marinade as a dip or sauce, set some aside before it touches the raw fish.

## Avoid...

- Letting the raw fish or shellfish come into contact with cooked food.
- Being rough with fish when cleaning it as damage to the flesh can allow bacteria to spread.

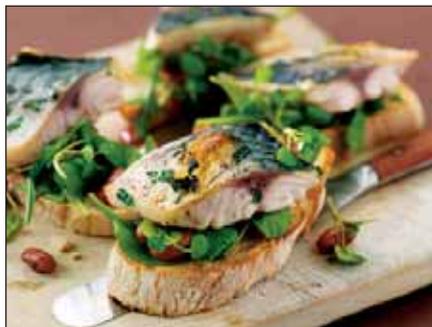
# COOK IT!

Treat your family to a fish supper with a difference. Mackerel is rich in Omega-3 and easy to find in most supermarkets. Try herbed mackerel bruschetta for a tasty combination of European flavours using fresh ingredients.

**Tip:** If you need to thaw fish quickly, use the 'defrost' setting on your microwave. Stop it when the fish is icy but flexible.

## Herbed mackerel bruschetta

Serves four



### You will need:

- 1 ciabatta loaf, sliced (approx 2 slices per person)
- 1 large garlic clove, peeled
- 45ml/3tbsp olive oil
- 1 x 400g can borlotti beans, rinsed and drained
- 100g/4oz salad leaves, washed (rocket and watercress work well here)
- 15ml/1tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1½ tablespoons cracked black pepper
- 4 tablespoons flat leaf parsley, roughly chopped
- 4 small/medium mackerel fillets, skin on

### Method

- Pre-heat the oven to 200C, 400F, Gas 6.
- Place the sliced ciabatta on a baking sheet and bake for five minutes.
- Toss the beans and salad together, drizzle over 15ml, 1tbsp olive oil, balsamic and season well.
- Mix the parsley with the black pepper. Stir to combine.
- Rub the skinless side of the mackerel fillets with the olive oil and coat with the herb and pepper mix.
- Heat a griddle pan or non-stick frying pan, and cook the fish (pepper side first) for two to three minutes each side.

Recipe courtesy of Seafish - [www.seafish.org](http://www.seafish.org)

## Fiona Hunter



**Fiona Hunter** has over 20 years experience in the field of nutrition. She began her career as a dietician working in the NHS and has spent ten years as nutrition editor at *Good Housekeeping Magazine*, as well as contributing to a range of magazines and newspapers.

**Fishy Fact:** Although only 20% of the nation eat the recommended intake of oily fish, only 30% of us take measures to boost our intake with supplements.\*

### Further Reading

**Recipes:** go to [www.seafish.org](http://www.seafish.org) for more simple fish recipes

**Guidance:** go to [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk) for more advice on fish consumption and recommended intakes

**Tips:** check out [www.fishonline.org](http://www.fishonline.org) for information on which fish to eat and which to avoid

**Help your friends and family:** request another copy of this guide or details about Efamol products by contacting **01372 379828** or emailing [info@efamol.com](mailto:info@efamol.com)

## OMEGA BOOST

If you are concerned that you or your family are not eating enough oily fish, you can easily boost your intake with a daily supplement.

Efamol products contain an advanced combination of Omega-3 and 6 nutrients from fish oils and evening primrose oil. The range includes products to maintain health for all the family, including:

**Efalex**, Specifically developed to support brain and eye function for both children and adults, and may help improve aspects of learning ability, including co-ordination and concentration \*\*

**Efalex Active 50+**, Containing fish oils and a combination of nutrients to aid healthy brain function in the over fifties including ginkgo biloba, vitamin B12 and folic acid.



### MORE INFORMATION

For more information about boosting your brain power naturally, or for free copies of this leaflet, please contact Efamol on:

**01372 379828**

email: [info@efamol.com](mailto:info@efamol.com)  
or visit: [www.efamol.com](http://www.efamol.com)