

Eat Happy

with Melissa Hemsley



Liz Earle
Wellbeing
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Inside the episode:

Liz: Hello and a warm welcome to Wellness with Liz Earle and I so hope you are enjoying the series. Today I am continuing our journey with interesting and dynamic wellbeing warriors working in the feel-good food space. So, who better to welcome than Melissa Hemsley, one half of the famed Hemsley sisters whose food business - Hemsely and Hemsley - has contributed so much to good, modern, healthy home-cooking. Welcome Melissa.

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On the benefits of mindful eating:

Liz: Mindfulness is such a buzzword at the moment and it does seem to have a real place in eating. We can be mindful while we're preparing food, and mindful of the ingredients we're choosing, and when we're eating have that kind of contemplation that goes with the joy of flavours and textures. I'm as guilty as the next person of scrolling through my Instagram feed or reading emails while I'm eating, but we should take those few minutes just to enjoy and savour that moment of nourishment.

Melissa: I think mindfulness, it can get a bad rap. It's like healthy eating: healthy eating and mindfulness can get a bit eye-rolly when it feels too difficult or a bit too goody two shoes. Actually, I feel the word mindfulness comes into play when people over obsess over what food to eat or when to eat, like anything it can be taken to extremes. So, take the time to chew until you feel good, and most importantly, why chew? Well, because if you have a lot of digestive issues where you feel terrible after a certain meal, if you chew you get to know what food suits you better. If you really struggle with never feeling satisfied by your food, chewing can really help.

Liz: It's important to slow down when we eat - I have read that it takes twenty minutes for the brain to register from the digestive system that actually we're full. So, if we're rushing too much, we're not giving time for that signal to go back to the brain and say you can stop now. So we do tend to overeat if we're eating too quickly.

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On fake-aways:

Liz: What are your favourite fake-aways?

Melissa: I've never been to Thailand, but I'm obsessed with Thai food. I love Pad Thai, I love Pad See Ew, I love Thai green veg curry. I would say Thai would come up tops.

Liz: Would you make it with a slightly healthier twist?

M: Exactly. A lot of people will say you probably use half fat coconut milk and I'm like no absolutely not! I'm all about - and I know you are too - the fat and the whole ingredient. In my version of Thai takeaway, I'd get loads more vegetables in, I would not use sugar and would look for some alternatives. First, I would use coconut oil that has some natural sweetness, then coconut milk, then I might add some really good quality maple syrup and you only need a tiny bit. Then I might add lots of fresh lime or lemon juice and tonnes of herbs. It's so easy now to get Asian herbs like Thai basil and Thai mint and they're so cheap!

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On avoiding food-waste:

Liz: I know that one of your passions is being an ambassador for anti-food waste. Was that part of your thinking with the book as well?

Melissa: Exactly, that's going back to my mum again, she would always use leftovers up first. And an army dad as well, you didn't waste a thing, everything had its place and purpose. It's satisfying to not waste. You reduce taking the bins out, you save money and you feel a little bit smug in a good way. You feel really good when you don't waste and the environment needs it. We need to be wasting less. So throughout my book I've got tips for every recipe.

Liz: So how do we do that generally? If we're thinking "this all sounds very well but how do we put this into practice to waste less?"

Melissa: So two things I would say, at the end of every week open up your fridge and ask yourself is it possible to make a frittata from this?

Liz: A frittata being?

Melissa: A set omelette, like a Spanish omelette.

Liz: Would you use potatoes with that?

M: You can use anything. For example, after a Sunday roast a Monday is a great day to make a frittata. You have your leftover potato, or any left-over roots, your beetroots, your celeriac, your sweet potato. You can put in any leftover herbs: you might have bought some rosemary for some lamb, or thyme for some chicken. If you've got anything like a courgette or a carrot you can grate it in fresh. And there's always cheese knocking about isn't there?

Liz: Tiny little knob of cheese at the back of the fridge that needs using up.

Melissa: Exactly. You pour it into a pan, you let the bottom set and you put it under the grill. You know when it's done by prodding it because it will be nice and bouncy and set. You tip it on to a board and you can just slice it into wedges. They make a great breakfast, they make a great snack, they can make a fantastic lunch. You can even set them into muffin tins so you've got a little frittata to go.

More from Melissa:

1. Melissa's book: [Eat Happy](#).
2. Hemsely and Hemsley: www.hemsleyandhemsley.com
3. Melissa's website: melissahemsley.com
4. Melissa's Twitter: twitter.com/melissahemsley?lang=en
4. Melissa's Instagram: www.instagram.com/melissa.hemsley/?hl=en



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Hoisin duck pancakes

While it would be impossible to recreate true Chinese-style duck at home, this version comes with a big thumbs-up from my family. It uses duck breasts, speedy to cook and widely available, and quick pancakes made with chickpea (or gram) flour. The best thing about the recipe is the hoisin sauce, brightened with orange juice or any citrus and creaminess from the tahini. It's simple to make and tastes like the real deal. It's such a versatile sauce too. Just a little will enhance the flavour of leftover vegetables and it's also brilliant with fish burgers (p. 114).

Serves 4

4 duck breasts (skin on; total 600g)
1 teaspoon Chinese five-spice powder
A good pinch of sea salt

HOISIN SAUCE

6 tablespoons tamari
3 tablespoons tahini or smooth nut/seed butter (p. 276)
1½ tablespoons maple syrup
3 tablespoons orange juice
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1½ teaspoons toasted sesame oil
1½ teaspoons Chinese five-spice powder

TO SERVE

12 small Chickpea Wraps (p. 190 – made plain, with no additions, and warmed through), or any wraps of your choice
Chilli flakes, to taste
1 cucumber, sliced into matchsticks
6 spring onions, sliced into matchsticks

1. Preheat the oven to fan 200°C/Gas mark 7.
2. With a sharp knife, score the fat of each duck breast in a criss-cross pattern, then sprinkle over half the five-spice powder and salt and rub in.
3. Make the hoisin sauce by whisking all the ingredients together in a bowl, then taste for seasoning and set aside.
4. Heat up a wide, ovenproof frying pan to a high heat (no oil needed) and place the duck breasts, skin side down, in the pan. Sprinkle over the rest of the spice and salt. Cook for 3 minutes or until most of the fat has rendered, and the duck skin is golden.
5. Turn the duck breasts over and cook for a further 30 seconds to seal the other side. Place the pan in the oven for the duck to finish cooking – 8 minutes for rare or 10 minutes for medium rare – then remove the duck and leave to rest on a chopping board for 10 minutes. Use this time to make the chickpea batter and, while the duck is resting, use the same pan to make the wraps.
6. Pour any excess duck fat from the pan into a bowl.
7. Cut the duck breasts into thin slices, sprinkle with chilli flakes and place on a serving plate with the hoisin sauce in a bowl. Put the chickpea wraps on another plate and place the sliced cucumber and spring onions in a separate bowl. Let everyone assemble their own pancakes, pouring or spooning the hoisin sauce over the duck before adding the other ingredients.

* Use It Up

Duck and orange go so well together, but if you don't have an orange, use 2 tablespoons of lemon juice in the hoisin sauce instead. Save the duck fat for frying vegetables.



Monday miso noodle soup

Soothing, easy and restorative, this is my ideal Monday night dinner. It will set you up nicely for the week. Although I always prefer a one-pan recipe, you do need two pans to keep things moving along. However, make it worthwhile by cooking extra noodles and eggs for the week ahead, so think of this recipe as both your Monday night dinner and an investment for the week ahead. You could add them to a Waste Not, Want Not Bowl (p. 72) for a packed lunch. Not to worry if you can't get seaweed, but do look out for it.

Serves 4

10g (about 8 tablespoons)
seaweed, such as dulse or
arame
330g buckwheat noodles
1 tablespoon coconut oil
3cm piece of ginger, finely
chopped or grated
3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 fresh red chilli, deseeded and
finely chopped (or to taste)
1 bunch of spring onions,
sliced
200g shiitake mushrooms,
roughly sliced
1.2 litres stock/bone broth
(p. 278) or water
4 eggs, at room temperature
1 cabbage (400g), shredded

MISO STIR-IN

2 tablespoons miso paste
(or to taste)
1 tablespoon hot water
Juice of ½ lemon

TO SERVE

Toasted sesame oil, for
drizzling
1 tablespoon black sesame
seeds
½ lemon, cut into 4 wedges
Sea salt

1. Soak the seaweed (if using) in water according to the packet instructions, then drain, rinse in fresh water and roughly chop before setting aside. Boil the kettle.
2. Fill a saucepan with boiling water and cook the noodles according to the packet instructions until al dente (about 5 minutes instead of the usual 6–8), then drain, rinse with cold water to stop them cooking, and set aside.
3. Meanwhile, melt the oil in a second, larger saucepan over a medium-high heat. Add the ginger, garlic, chilli and white parts of the spring onions and fry for 2 minutes, stirring occasionally.
4. Add the mushrooms and cook for 3–4 minutes, stirring occasionally, then add the stock and bring to the boil. Reduce to a medium simmer to cook for 2 minutes and then add the cooked noodles back to the pan to heat through for 1 minute before removing from the heat.
5. While the mushrooms are simmering, fill the original pan with boiling water and lower the eggs into the pan. Simmer over a medium heat for 6½ minutes (for a just-runny yolk), then cool the boiled eggs under cold water, peel and halve.
6. Remove the soup pan from the heat, drop in the shredded cabbage and the soaked seaweed, then mix together the 'miso stir-in' in a small bowl and stir through the soup.
7. Divide the soup among four bowls, add the egg halves and top with the remaining chopped spring onions and a drizzle of toasted sesame oil. Sprinkle the egg halves with sea salt and black sesame seeds and serve with a lemon wedge if you wish.

* Use It Up

Any cabbage will do here, or swap it for pak choi, broccoli or any leafy greens, and use any mushrooms you have.

