

# Food & Styling

with Donna Hay

**Liz Earle**  
*Wellbeing*



**When did your extraordinary passion for food start?**

With my grandparents in their garden. I didn't realise it at the time but that growing and nurturing and planting and watching things grow week on week, and then being able to cook with what we'd grown started that appreciation for fresh produce.

**You moved from writing for magazines into your own magazine. Was that a goal for you?**

Oh no, I was never that savvy. I wish I had been! I always had the drive and passion but I guess it's all about finding the right partners. When it's your brand and your life, it just seems to happen, whether you're out for a run or sitting at your desk.

**What do you think makes you so popular?**

I think people love the visual, they love the food styling, and for the new people that come in we often find that they are astonished by the simplicity of our recipes. We have also found that as food and food blogs and lifestyles have changed so has our content. People do have that weekly rhythm, they're busy and in a hurry but then they might want to spend the weekend baking or entertaining at home.

**Is seasonality a big thing for you?**

No, not really, because Australia is so big! It does mean that we can get things done early, which is great being in the magazine industry.

**What's your philosophy when you come to food?**

I think it's all about balance. Trends come and go but life in balance is the way forward for me. I have an off-shoot from the magazine called 'Fresh and Light' which is a real passion project for me and that's what it's all about.

**You're so known for your beautiful images and styling. Does that come from you?**

Yes, I think so. I've always been aesthetically driven but I've found that beautiful pictures are what get people into food and I use it as my pull.

**One of the things I loved in your book was your approach to Christmas. What would your top tips for a foodie Christmas be?**

It can be such a crazy day! It can take all the joy out of it; there is so much pressure. I really do have so many horror stories. I think being mindful of how much oven space you have is a big one. Plan ahead. Get out all your platters and serving spoons so that you don't leave things sitting in the back of the fridge or cooker (I do it every time, it's what my friends tease me about now).

**You're only 47, and you have achieved so much. What's left on your list?**

I've just finished filming a healthy kids program. It's not extreme by any means, but I've given them great alternatives. We had an episode based around a movie night with healthy popcorn, peanut slices that are real peanut butter, vanilla and dates with dark chocolate. It's all about the alternatives. There is such fun and pleasure in encouraging children to cook. It's such a great thing to do as a family and as a team.

**Tell me about your latest book, 'Basics to Brilliance'?**

For me getting people to cook is the key because ultimately that means less ready meals and less fast food and people still struggle with the basics. This is a book of what I call modern basics, things that are great to have in your repertoire and that can be changed up once you have mastered them.

<https://www.donnahay.com.au/>