EDITION May 2026
From your school's caterer Taylor Shaw

BALANCED TRAY

More than just lunch

Watch them GROW!



Growing food from seed

Dietitian's Corner
Kickstart Your Day: Breakfast Matters



Chef's Corner
Our Development Chef Nik



Planting Season
Small Space Planting Ideas



May Half Term Food Waste Competition

This half term, why not get creative and enter our Food Waste Competition?

Simply create a meal using any leftovers that you have in the fridge.

For example, you could

- Turn leftovers into a tasty soup
- Make wraps using leftover vegetables or proteins
- Whip up a leftover omelette

Once your dish is complete:

Take a photo of your creation and submit along with your completed entry form which can be found below.

Send your completed form to ukmarketing@taylorshaw.com

The prize

One winning entry will get the chance to pick the menu at their school for the day, with the winning pupil enjoying their lunch for free.

A suggestion for a mealtime discussion, why reducing food waste is important for the planet?

This is a great opportunity to build confidence in the kitchen, think creatively, and learn how small actions can make a big difference to the finished meal.

Name ..... Dish Name .....

Ingredients .....

.....

Method and Timings

Describe how you made it including how long it took you.

.....

.....

.....

In 250 words or less describe one benefit of using up food waste.

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Dietitian's Corner

Kickstart Your Day: Breakfast Matters

Ever feel like your brain is still half asleep during those first couple of hours at school? That's your body's way of asking for fuel!

While sugar provides energy, it has no nutritional value. Eating breakfast gives your brain and body the energy you need to tackle the day, stay focused in lessons, and keep your mood steady.

But breakfast isn't just about avoiding tiredness, it also plays a key role in growth, learning, and overall health.

Why Breakfast Matters

While you sleep, your body is busy using energy for growth, repair, and keeping your organs working. Overnight, your energy stores get depleted, so eating breakfast in the morning refuels both your body and your brain.

Breakfast helps replenish glucose, which is the main fuel for your muscles and brain. That's why people who eat breakfast often notice improvements in:

- **Concentration:** staying focused during lessons
- **Memory:** remembering what you've learned
- **Problem solving:** tackling tricky questions or tasks

A healthy breakfast also helps keep your energy levels steady and prevents a mid-morning crash, which can lead to snacking on less nutritious foods like crisps, chocolate or other ultra processed foods.

But breakfast isn't just about energy, it's also a chance to get your daily essential nutrients in, that your body needs to function at its best:

- **Carbohydrates** for fuel and energy
- **Protein** for growth, repair, and keeping you full
- **Vitamins and minerals** from fruits, vegetables, and dairy
- **Healthy fats** to sustain energy and support overall health

Does it matter what I eat for breakfast?

Yes! What you eat in the morning can make a real difference to your energy and concentration. A breakfast high in sugar or refined carbs such as sugary cereal, pastries, or sugary drinks, may give you a quick burst of energy, but will often lead to a crash before lunchtime.

Choosing a healthy balanced breakfast gives you longer lasting energy, and helps your body get the nutrients it needs to grow, learn and recover.

Breakfast suggestions:

Good staples:

- Porridge with fruit and honey
- Wholegrain toast with nut butter
- Overnight oats with fruit and seeds

Quick / on the go:

- Smoothie (milk or yogurt, fruit and oats)
- Low sugar cereal with fruit (muesli, Weetabix, bran flakes)

Good Source of Protein:

- Boiled eggs with wholegrain toast
- Greek yogurt with berries and seeds

Even small changes, like adding extra fruit to your cereal or swapping sugary spreads for nut butter, make a big difference in keeping you fuelled and focused.

Did You Know?

- Studies have found that students who eat breakfast tend to perform better academically than those who skip it.
- Skipping breakfast can affect mood and make you feel irritable or tired.
- Eating a balanced breakfast can even support healthy bones, muscles, and skin.

Tips for a Successful Breakfast Routine:

1. **Prep the night before:** Overnight oats or pre-chopped fruit make mornings easier.
2. **Keep it simple:** Breakfast doesn't need to be complicated, even a piece of wholemeal toast with nut butter counts!
3. **Make it colourful:** Adding fruit or vegetables adds vitamins, minerals, and fibre.
4. **Stay consistent:** Try to eat something every morning, even if it's only small!

A healthy breakfast is one of the easiest ways to support your body, your brain, and your mood. Start small, see what works for you and your routine, and notice the difference it makes in your day.



Brainy Beans on Toast

Ingredients

- 1 red pepper, deseeded and finely chopped
- 4 spring onions, finely chopped
- 1 tin (420g) reduced-salt and reduced-sugar baked beans
- 150g mushrooms, sliced
- 16 cherry tomatoes, halved
- 4 medium slices wholemeal bread
- 4 teaspoons lower-fat spread
- freshly ground black pepper

Top Tip
If you don't have any spring onions, you can always use finely chopped onion.

Method

1. Put the pepper and spring onions into a large saucepan with 3 tablespoons of water. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes over a low heat, until the water has evaporated.
2. Add the beans, mushrooms and cherry tomatoes to the saucepan. Heat gently for 5 to 6 minutes, stirring often, until the beans are piping hot.
3. Meanwhile, toast the bread, then spread each piece with the lower-fat spread. Pile the beans on to the toast and serve, sprinkled with black pepper.

Source: The recipe above comes from the NHS website, which features a fantastic range of healthy recipes and helpful tips for families. https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/healthy-beans-on-toast/

From our kitchen to yours



Meet Nik, with over 30 years in the culinary industry, Nik's passion for food and sharing his expertise is truly inspiring!

In this edition, we have chosen some of our favourite easy recipes that do not include ingredients that contain the UK's 14 major allergens.

These versatile recipes work just as well with alternative ingredients; for example, if you are able to eat gluten, you can simply swap the gluten-free flour for plain flour.

Please always ensure that all ingredients used are suitable for the required allergies, as some products, such as dairy-free milk, may contain one or more of the UK's 14 major allergens



Iced Sponge (Serves 10)

Cake mix

- 148g sugar
- 205g gluten-free self-raising flour
- 10g gluten-free baking powder
- 7ml vanilla flavouring
- 80ml vegetable oil
- 237ml water

Icing

- 100g icing sugar
- 10ml water
- 10g sprinkles

Preheat the oven to 180oc or 160oc fan

Method

1. Place the sugar, flour, baking powder, oil, vanilla and some of the water into a bowl and mix on a low speed to incorporate the ingredients then add the rest of the water and mix until smooth
2. Pour into a lined baking tray and bake in the oven for about 30 mins
3. Allow the cake to cool
4. Mix the icing sugar and water together until a smooth icing is achieved, pour this over the cooled sponge and then sprinkle over the sugar sprinkles
5. Allow the icing to set and then cut into portions and serve



Image for illustration purposes only.

Do you have a dish you'd love to see featured? Let us know, and we'll happily consider including the recipe and expert advice in a future edition! Send your recipe request to ukmarketing@taylorshaw.com

Smashed Chicken Taco (Serves 3)

Ingredients

- 300g chicken mince
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp cumin
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 tbsp oil
- 6 small tacos/tortillas

Toppings choose from

- shredded lettuce
- diced fresh tomato
- diced red onion
- plant-based grated cheese*
- dairy-free yoghurt*

Method

- Place the chicken mince into a bowl add the paprika, garlic, cumin and salt, mix these all together until well combined
- Divide the mixture into 6 balls
- Place a ball of the mince mixture into the middle of the tortilla and then flatten out creating a thin even layer of mince over the tortilla (spread nearly to the edges)
- Heat a frying pan over a medium heat and a little oil
- Place the tortilla mince side down into the pan and cook for 3-4 minutes until crispy
- Flip and cook the other side for about 1 minute

Serve with your choice of toppings and eat straight away

Top Tip

If the tortillas feel stiff after cooking, they have been cooked too long or the heat was too high. You want to cook them long enough to get a few bubbles on the top and a few light brown spots on the underside when you flip them.

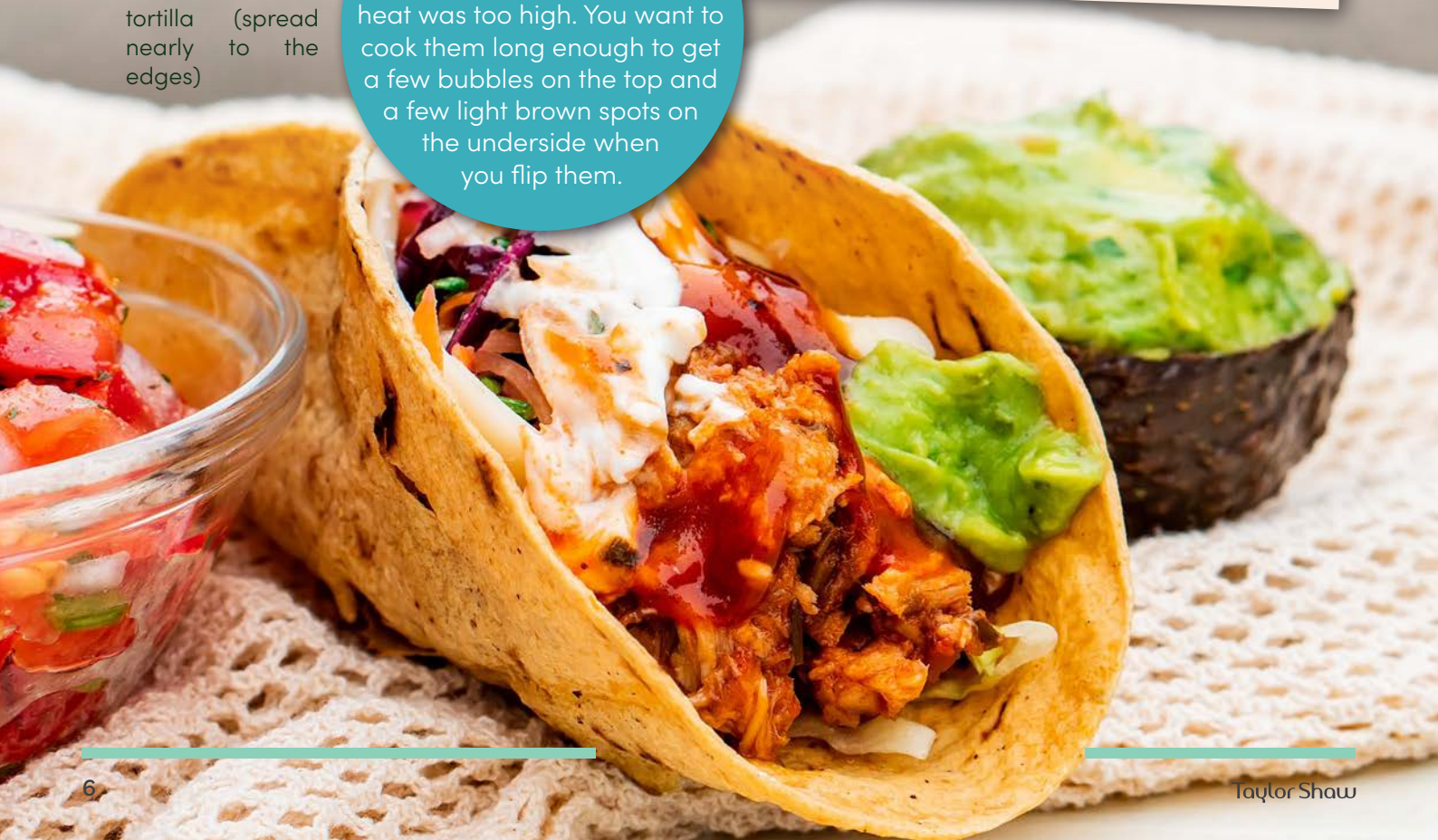
Taco recipe (Makes 8)

Ingredients

- 190g Gluten-free flour with xanthan gum (Dove's Farm or similar)
- 4g Gluten-free baking powder
- 3g Salt
- 27g Vegetable oil
- 177g Very warm water

Method

1. Place all the dry ingredients in a large bowl and combine
2. Stir in the warm water and vegetable oil until combined
3. Using your hands, continue to mix together the dough until it becomes a dough ball and all of the liquid has been absorbed
4. Turn on your hob to medium-high heat, so you can pre-heat a dry frying pan
5. Split the dough into 8 balls
6. Place a dough ball on a piece of parchment paper. Flatten the dough ball with your hand to make a disk shape.
7. The tortilla should be thin.
8. Place the tortillas in the pre-heated pan.
9. Cook the tortillas over medium-high heat until lightly browned, 30- seconds to 1 minute on each side.
10. Stack the tortillas on a plate and cover with a towel to keep warm.
11. Once the tortillas have completely cooled, store them in a plastic storage bag and refrigerate or freeze.



Pizza

Pizza Base

- 250g gluten-free flour
- 1 tsp gluten-free baking powder
- ½ tsp salt
- 180-200 ml warm water
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil

Pizza Sauce

- 3 tbsp tomato puree
- 1 tsp oil
- ½ tsp dried oregano
- pinch of salt

Toppings

- plant-based grated cheese*
- peppers
- olives
- mushroom
- spinach
- red onion
- sweetcorn
- pineapple
- jackfruit

Preheat oven to 200°c

Dough

- Place all the pizza base ingredients into a bowl and mix
- Roll out and place on a baking tray

Sauce

- Place all the sauce ingredients in a bowl grated apple
- Mix the ingredients together until incorporated
- Get your prepared base
- Spread the tomato sauce evenly over the base
- Top with the plant-based cheese and your chosen toppings

Cook

- Place the pizza in the oven
- Bake for 10-15 mins until golden and crisp

** Please ensure your chosen dairy-free products are free from the UK's 14 major allergens.*



What's in season?

Did you know that eating what's in season is not only good for the planet, but also for your taste buds and your wallet?

Seasonal fruit and vegetables haven't had to travel far to reach your plate, which means fewer food miles and a smaller environmental impact. They're often more affordable too, as they're plentiful at this time of year – and best of all, they taste amazing because they're harvested at peak ripeness.

Why not visit your local greengrocer or farmer's market to see what delicious seasonal produce is available? You might even discover some exciting new ingredients to try at home!

In season right now...

Asparagus
Cucumber
Elderflower
New potatoes
Rhubarb
Salad leaves
Spring cabbage
Strawberries
Wild garlic

Apple and Sultana Bircher (Serves 1)

Ingredients

- 100g grated apple
- 40g gluten-free porridge oats
- 125ml plant-based milk *
- 30g plant-based yoghurt*
- 5g honey
- 10g sultanas
- 1g ground cinnamon



Method

1. Mix the oats, yoghurt and milk in a bowl
2. Stir in the grated apple, cinnamon and sultanas. (If you want a creamy texture, add the sultanas to the mix and leave overnight or if you would like a chewy texture, add sultanas just before serving)
3. Cover and refrigerate overnight
4. When ready to eat drizzle the honey or maple syrup over the top

** Please ensure your chosen dairy-free products are free from the UK's 14 major allergens.*

You can change

- gluten-free oats to any oats
- substitute the plant-based milk for dairy milk
- substitute plant-based yoghurt for natural or Greek yoghurt
- substitute the honey for maple syrup to make it vegan



Planting season

If you have a small unused patch in the garden or some space on a windowsill, why not plant a few produce seeds to enjoy later in the year?

May is a peak month for planting, as the risk of frost has usually passed. You can directly sow hardy and tender vegetables such as carrots, runner and French beans, sweetcorn, courgettes, pumpkins and lettuce.

Alternatively, keep an eye out for great deals on starter plants like tomatoes and cucumbers, and consider sowing easy to grow herbs such as coriander, dill and parsley.