



**Tuna and cucumber brown sandwich**  
 Sugar: 2.9g Fat: 5.3g Salt: 1.37g  
**180g pack of mixed melon and grapes**  
 Sugar: 15.1g Fat: 0.2g Salt: 0g

**Melissa's verdict:** Always look for a healthy, "lite" option. **SANITLY SWAP:** A wrap would be even better than a sandwich.



**TOTAL IN GRAMS**  
 SUGAR 18g  
 FAT 5.5g  
 SALT 1.37g

**150g box of fish sushi (including rice, soy sauce and pickled ginger)**  
 Sugar: 7.6g Fat: 2.2g Salt: 0.2g

**Melissa's verdict:** When it comes to sushi, sashimi – the raw fish – is healthier than sushi rolls. **SANITLY SWAP:** Team your sushi with a big seaweed salad and a rice side of edamame beans.



**TOTAL IN GRAMS**  
 SUGAR 1.6g  
 FAT 1.9g  
 SALT 0.2g

**Regular brown bread BLT sandwich per pack**  
 Sugar: 3.7g Fat: 13.5g Salt: 1.97g  
**60g dried mangoes**  
 Sugar: 27g Fat: 0.2g Salt: 0g

**Melissa's verdict:** You may think dried mangoes are healthy but they're packed with sugar. **SANITLY SWAP:** Fresh fruit is always better.



**TOTAL IN GRAMS**  
 SUGAR 30.7g  
 FAT 13.7g  
 SALT 1.97g

**Chicken korma and pilau rice meal for one**  
 Sugar 7.6g Fat 27.2g Salt 2.4g  
**Half a 300g pot of tarka dal**  
 Sugar 2.7g Fat 6g Salt 0.5g  
**One onion bhaji**  
 Sugar 1.7g Fat 6.1g Salt 0.36g  
**One 130g Peshwari naan bread**  
 Sugar: 11.3g Fat: 9.2g Salt: 0.9g

**Melissa's verdict:** Ready meals are full of sugar, which spikes your blood sugar levels – and because they're so refined, they're not nearly so satisfying. For an extra 14 minutes of cooking, you can have a proper meal if you're prepared. **SANITLY SWAP:** Dice the rice for veg. Dal is easily made: fry onions then add coconut milk, raw broccoli and cauliflower, plus soy beans for extra protein. Simmer for 20 to 30 minutes. Your energy levels will soar, you won't be hungry and it's cheaper.



**TOTAL IN GRAMS**  
 SUGAR 48.5g  
 FAT 41.6g  
 SALT 5.1g

**Seven-inch pizza with pepperoni, hot green peppers and mozzarella (765g)**  
 Sugar 10.8g Fat 24.4g Salt 4.3g  
**1 heaped tbsp premium coleslaw**  
 Sugar 2.1g Fat 12g Salt 0.2g

**Melissa's verdict:** Pizzas can leave people sluggish because they're loaded with carbs and pepperoni is a processed meat that is linked to carcinogens. **SANITLY SWAP:** If you eat pizza regularly, opt for a protein topping like the classic spinach-and-egg Fiorentina, or cut the pizza in half and serve with a salad that includes chopped eggs and olives. Better still, make your own pizza with pita bread, passata, chicken, tuna or mushrooms.



**TOTAL IN GRAMS**  
 SUGAR 12.9g  
 FAT 36.4g  
 SALT 4.5g

**Individual steak and kidney pie (200g)**  
 Sugar: 3g Fat: 25.6g Salt: 1.11g  
**165g chunky-cut oven chips**  
 Sugar: 0.8g Fat: 6.2g Salt: 0.8g  
**100g steamed carrots**  
 Sugar: 1.4g Fat: 0.3g Salt: trace  
**16g tomato ketchup**  
 Sugar: 3.4g Fat: 0.3g

**Melissa's verdict:** The quality of the protein and nutrients here are very low and will increase cholesterol if eaten regularly. There may not be much sugar in this – but a huge amount of what you're eating is fat. With processed meat, you don't know where it comes from and it may be pumped full of hormones and antibiotics. **SANITLY SWAP:** Kidneys are best bought organic from the butcher.

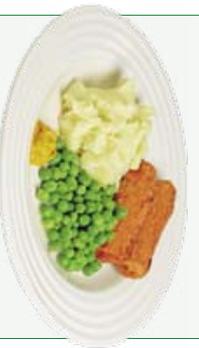


**TOTAL IN GRAMS**  
 SUGAR 8.6g  
 FAT 32.1g  
 SALT 2.24g

DINNER

**Two Cumberland sausages, grilled**  
 Sugar: 0.7g Fat: 27.5g Salt: 1.3g  
**Creamy mashed potato (half of a 450g shop-bought tray)**  
 Sugar: 1.6g Fat: 15.4g Salt: 1.09g  
**80g petit pois**  
 Sugar: 2.4g Fat: 0.7g Salt: 0.14  
**1 tsp English mustard**  
 Sugar: 0.6g Fat: 0.5g Salt: 0.43g

**Melissa's verdict:** You could have a similar, more nutrient-rich meal with far fewer calories and just as much flavour. **SANITLY SWAP:** A healthy diet isn't all or nothing, so why not have one meat and one veggie sausage to decrease the saturated fat? Also, swap the potato for mashed chickpeas. To make your meal fit, fry some onion.



**TOTAL IN GRAMS**  
 SUGAR 5.3g  
 FAT 44.1g  
 SALT 3.42g

**Two roast chicken drumsticks with the skin removed**  
 Sugar: 0g Fat: 4g Salt: 2g  
**100g mixed-leaf salad**  
 Sugar: 0.9g Fat: 0.2g Salt: 0g  
**200g baby Jersey Royal potatoes, boiled in the skins**  
 Sugar: 1g Fat: 0.3g Salt: 0.03g  
**1 tsp olive oil**  
 Sugar: 0g Fat: 5g Salt: 0g  
**1 tsp balsamic vinegar**  
 Sugar: 1g Fat: 0g Salt: 0.3g  
**1 tsp mayonnaise**  
 Sugar: 0.2g Fat: 11g Salt: 0.2g

**Melissa says:** In my opinion, this is too boring for anyone to eat. Removing chicken skin is healthier, but leaving a little skin every now and then isn't going to be disastrous if your diet is generally healthy. **SANITLY SWAP:** Marinate the chicken for a few minutes in olive oil, a little soy sauce and honey to make it sweet and sour then grill it for 15 minutes. Or simply rub it in some low-salt, low-sugar ketchup and olive oil.



**TOTAL IN GRAMS**  
 SUGAR 3.8g  
 FAT 20.5g  
 SALT 2.53g

**Spaghetti carbonara ready meal**  
 Sugar 4.4g Fat 3.6g Salt 3.3g  
**25g Parmesan**  
 Sugar: 0g Fat: 7.1g Salt: 0.37g  
**Two slices of garlic cheese bread**  
 Sugar: 1.6g Fat: 10g Salt 0.4g

**Melissa's verdict:** Why buy ready-made spaghetti when you can cook it in 6 minutes? **SANITLY SWAP:** For more fibre, mix 4 to 5 tablespoons of cooked wholemeal pasta with a simple sauce made from a 200g can of passata, dried onions, mushrooms and peppers.



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**One 130g Peshwari naan bread**  
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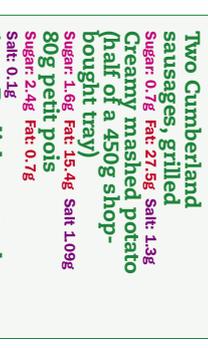
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**TOTAL IN GRAMS**  
 SUGAR 8.6g  
 FAT 32.1g  
 SALT 2.24g

**Two meringues**  
 Sugar: 24.6g Fat: 0g Salt: 0.08g  
**100g fresh raspberries**  
 Sugar: 4g Fat: 1g Salt: 0.3g  
**30ml double cream**  
 Sugar: 0.8g Fat: 14.3g Salt: 0.3g

**Melissa's verdict:** Meringues are fat free but full of sugar. **SANITLY SWAP:** Use silken tofu (it's very low in calories). Blend with the raspberries, add a sweetener like stevia and it will set in a mousse after 3 minutes in the fridge. Serve with cream fratche.



**TOTAL IN GRAMS**  
 SUGAR 29.4g  
 FAT 15.3g  
 SALT 0.68g

**150g rhubarb crumble pot**  
 Sugar: 29.7g Fat: 11.6g Salt: 0.2g  
**100g ready-made fresh custard**  
 Sugar: 10.5g Fat: 6.4g Salt: 0.1g

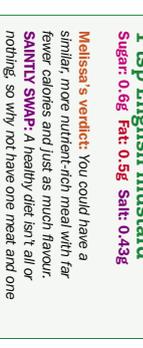
**Melissa's verdict:** Rhubarb is very low in sugar but that means it's sour, so we sweeten it. **SANITLY SWAP:** Make rhubarb puree and use stevia, not sugar, in the crumble. Baked cooking apples with a few raisins, cinnamon and a little honey would be even better. Treat custard like a condiment – have just a tablespoon.



**TOTAL IN GRAMS**  
 SUGAR 40.2g  
 FAT 18g  
 SALT 0.3g

**Two sticks of celery**  
 Sugar: 0.7g Fat: 0.2g Salt: 0.1g  
**150g regular houmous**  
 Sugar: 0.75g Fat: 39.9g Salt: 1.55g

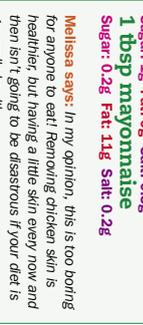
**Melissa's verdict:** This is a great combination. Houmous contains olive oil, which increases the metabolism and is said to have anti-ageing properties.



**TOTAL IN GRAMS**  
 SUGAR 1.45g  
 FAT 40.1g  
 SALT 1.6g

**Two sticks of celery**  
 Sugar: 0.7g Fat: 0.2g Salt: 0.1g  
**150g regular houmous**  
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**TOTAL IN GRAMS**  
 SUGAR 1.45g  
 FAT 40.1g  
 SALT 1.6g

**100g slice of plain New York-style cheesecake**  
 Sugar: 16.7g Fat: 25.8g Salt: 0.3g

**Melissa's verdict:** A sugar and fat minefield. **SANITLY SWAP:** Try oatcakes and a lower-fat, sour cream cheese like quark, topped with some chopped chili, passion fruit or cherries. Once you re-educate your taste buds this will seem quite indulgent.



**TOTAL IN GRAMS**  
 SUGAR 16.7g  
 FAT 25.8g  
 SALT 0.3g

**150g rhubarb crumble pot**  
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**100g ready-made fresh custard**  
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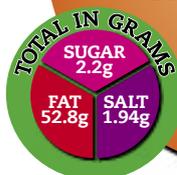
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 FAT 18g  
 SALT 0.3g

DESSERT

## SNACK ATTACK?

**50g hand-cooked salt and cider vinegar crisps**  
 Sugar 1.2g Fat 14.4g  
 Salt 1g

**85g taramasalata**  
 Sugar: 1g Fat: 38.4g  
 Salt: 0.94g



Melissa says: *Taramasalata is high in fat – switch to homous for protein and unsaturated fat.*

### Two crumpets

Sugar: 4g Fat: 1.2g  
 Salt: 0.78g

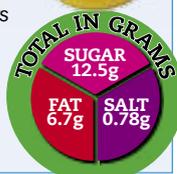
**7g unsalted butter**  
 Sugar: 0g Fat: 5.5g  
 Salt: 0g

**½ tbsp honey**  
 Sugar: 8.5g Fat: 0g  
 Salt: 0g



**Melissa's verdict:** *A lot of diet clubs recommend crumpets but the topping can tip the balance. Honey is just sugar.*

**SAINTLY SWAP:** *Try a thin spread of peanut butter or cream cheese.*



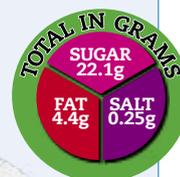
### 200g creamed rice pudding

Sugar: 17.8g Fat: 4.4g Salt 0.25g

**2 tps strawberry jam**  
 Sugar: 4.3g Fat: 0g Salt: 0g

**Melissa's verdict:** *Jam is just sugar and anything sugary will only make you crave more of it. Have some fresh strawberries instead.*

**SAINTLY SWAP:** *A scoop of ice cream would have much less sugar.*



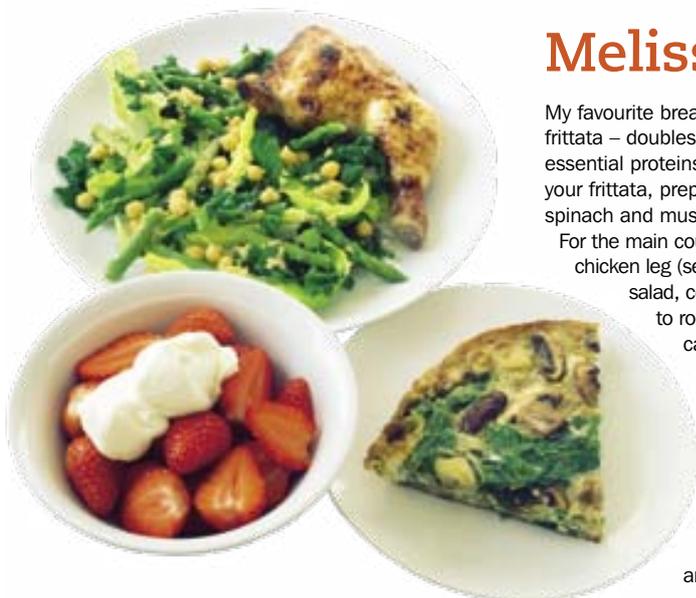
## Melissa's perfectly balanced meal:

My favourite breakfast – a mushroom and spinach frittata – doubles as a starter. Eggs are full of essential proteins and amino acids. To make your frittata, prepare an omelette mix, add onions, spinach and mushrooms then finish under the grill.

For the main course, I'd suggest a large marinated chicken leg (see the recipe on page 28) with a salad, containing everything from asparagus to roasted curly kale. Slow-releasing carbs would come in the form of ¾ tablespoon of quinoa, wholemeal rice or lentils and chickpeas mixed into the salad. If you're really hungry, increase the protein with cottage cheese, an extra chicken leg or an egg in the salad. For a meat-free alternative, cook a vegetable chilli using kidney beans and chickpeas (both are full of

protein), onions, mushrooms and tinned tomatoes. Flavour with garlic, cumin and chilli then serve with a simple salad or a "rainbow" selection of veg.

The best pudding is always fresh fruit. Berries are very low in sugar and are now in season, so my choice would be a bowl of fresh strawberries with two dollops of Greek yoghurt on top.



### Fats: unsaturated and saturated

There's evidence that unsaturated fats – found in oily fish, nuts and seeds, avocados and olive oil – are lower in cholesterol, while the saturated fats in animal and dairy products increase it. But don't be afraid of fat. Unlike sugar, which is just for energy, fat helps to build hormones. Every single membrane of our cells has fat and our brain is 60 per cent fat, so it is essential. A fat-free diet is also linked to increased hunger, which causes sugar cravings.

### Sugar: fructose and glucose

Fructose, the kind that occurs naturally in fruit, is a better source of sugar because it's unrefined. But be warned – fructose goes straight to the liver rather than being stored as glycogen, which

the body can burn, so stick to two portions of fruit and one diluted glass of juice a day. To sweeten foods, use a sugar substitute such as stevia.

### Salt and sodium

Salt – which is a major cause of high blood pressure – can easily be avoided. But as well as needing to watch for the salt we add to meals, we also need to monitor the salt that's already present in the food we buy. This includes the ones we buy for health reasons, such as smoked fish, olives, anchovies and fortified cereals. Salt is also known as sodium chloride, but sometimes manufacturers only give the figure for sodium, which will be less than the total salt content – 1g of sodium per 100g is equal to 2.5g of salt.

## How to read food labels

- Labels on the backs of packaging tend to contain nutritional information per 100g, while labels on the front – used to make at-a-glance comparisons between products – usually give the nutritional details per serving (so it's best to check whether your idea of a serving corresponds with the manufacturer's).
- You will also find a Reference Intake chart on the front of packaging. Based on the recommended daily nutritional needs of an average-sized, moderately active woman, RI labels are usually colour-coded like traffic lights, so a red box indicates a high level of fat, salt, sugar etc. Amber means it has a medium content and green denotes a low level.
- Generally, if the first few ingredients in a list are healthy, low-fat ones, you can assume it's a safe choice. The more refined a food is, the more ingredients it has listed on the packaging.
- Foods can only be billed as "light" or "lite" when they contain at least 30% less of one particular value than the regular equivalent. But just because a food is lower in fat, it does not mean it's better for you – it could be higher in sugar and/or salt than the standard version. Similarly, "no added sugar" foods may still be high in natural sugar (as well as salt and/or fat).