



SARAH RAVEN is best known for her work as a gardener and author but she also studied medicine at the University of London and then worked as a junior doctor at Royal Sussex County Hospital, Brighton. Since her medical training, she has become interested in healthy eating and what it means to her cooking. Here, she focuses on exceptionally good foods that she believes should be included in our diet as much as possible – and how to eat them. Using information gathered from nutritionists, medical journals and research centres, and based on her own discoveries, Sarah has distilled that knowledge into a collection of 12 fruits and vegetables, from kale and blood oranges to tomatoes and beetroot.

Sarah Raven's SUPERFOODS

In her new series, Sarah picks the healthiest fruit and vegetables to eat in season, with delicious recipes to make the most of their flavours and natural goodness

THIS MONTH: BROCCOLI

WORDS, RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY SARAH RAVEN ● PHOTOGRAPHS BY JONATHAN BUCKLEY
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BROCCOLI HAS LONG BEEN regarded as a nutritious choice, but it has now joined the super league. Like all green vegetables, it is rich in fibre, full of iron and packed with vitamins A, B and C. However, recent research has found that the florets contain a compound called glucoraphanin, which is used in the plant's own defence system but also boosts our bodies' own antioxidant levels, creating a sort of 'antioxidant mop'. This is increasingly important as we get older and have a greater likelihood of

imbalances in our body's chemistry, which in turn contribute to an increased risk of heart disease and some cancers.

But which variety is most beneficial? There's the big, puffy, tree-like, deep-green calabrese, available all year; there's purple sprouting broccoli, at its best in the next month or so; and its white, more tender cousin – rare to find in a greengrocer's, but easy to grow. But it's the new Beneforté broccoli, which looks like a small-headed calabrese, that is causing quite a stir in the world of nutrition. ➔



SMOKED MACKEREL, BROCCOLI AND ALMOND SALAD

Preparation 20 minutes, plus marinating Cooking about 15 minutes Serves 5-6 as a main or 8-10 as a starter

This is an excellent salad for lunch or as a starter for dinner. Serve with griddled sourdough, rubbed lightly with cut garlic and drizzled with extra-virgin olive oil. There are two different dressing recipes here, both good.

FOR THE SALAD

- 1 red onion, very thinly sliced**
- 2 tbsp capers, plus 1 tbsp vinegar from the jar**
- zest and juice 1 lemon**
- 300g broccoli**
- 300g purple sprouting broccoli**
- 4 smoked mackerel fillets, skinned and flaked into bite-sized pieces**
- 60g flaked almonds, toasted**
- 60g blanched hazelnuts, toasted and roughly chopped**

FOR THE YOGURT DRESSING

- 4 tbsp natural yogurt**
- 3-4 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil**
- 20g freshly chopped herbs**

such as mint, parsley and dill zest and juice of 1 lemon

FOR THE APPLE DRESSING

100ml olive oil

50ml cider vinegar

½ apple, cored, peeled and chopped

20g freshly chopped herbs such as mint, parsley and dill

½ tbsp runny honey

1 Mix together the red onion, capers, vinegar, ¼ teaspoon salt, lemon zest and juice. Leave to marinate for at least one hour, longer if possible.

2 Blend all the dressing ingredients in a food processor for either the yogurt or apple version. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper.

3 Steam the broccoli for 5-7 minutes until tender.

4 Toss all the salad ingredients together gently with half the dressing and half the toasted nuts.

5 Arrange in a serving bowl, drizzle over the rest of the dressing and scatter with the remaining nuts. ➔

With most broccoli varieties, you'll need to eat quite a lot to derive the benefits, but the newly, and traditionally, bred Beneforté (so-called Super Broccoli) contains more than twice the level of the good stuff we need to consume. From analysis of wild brassicas collected in Sicily, scientists found that these native forms have exceptionally high levels of glucoraphanin – a compound that activates the body's defences – many times greater than their long-cultivated cousins. Beneforté is the result of 30 years of research and crossbreeding of cultivated broccolis with these wild-flower ancestors. This new form has such high levels of glucoraphanin that eating only two portions a week will help protect against disease. To get the best out of it, don't boil it and discard the water, as that's where some of the goodness lies. Instead, roast, juice or steam it, with minimal water, using, rather than discarding, the water if you can.

Seeds and plants of Beneforté broccoli are yet to be made available, but hopefully we'll be able to grow our own within the next couple of years. For now, look for it in supermarkets and start planning menus to make sure you get your fill. It's worth it – this vegetable really does do you good.



ROASTED PURPLE SPROUTING BROCCOLI, CITRUS AND SWEET POTATOES WITH ANCHOVY MAYONNAISE

*Preparation 35 minutes
Cooking 45 minutes
Serves 8 as a starter*

A colourful plate that's perfect as a starter for a winter dinner party, or for lunch with a robust green salad containing plenty of rocket and wafer-thin fennel.

- 1 unwaxed lemon
 - 1 unwaxed blood orange
 - 500g sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into small wedges
 - 3 tbsp olive oil
 - 500g purple sprouting broccoli, with even-sized stems
 - 3 banana shallots, peeled and finely chopped
 - 30g bunch mint, chopped
- FOR THE MAYONNAISE
- 1 medium egg, plus 1 egg yolk
 - 1 garlic clove

- 6 tinned anchovy fillets, drained
- ½ tsp English mustard powder
- 275ml sunflower oil (or one part olive oil to two parts sunflower oil)
- 2 tbsp lemon juice

- 1 Heat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan oven) gas mark 6. First make the mayonnaise. Put the eggs in a food processor and blitz them with the garlic, anchovy fillets, mustard and a pinch of salt and black pepper.
- 2 When the mixture is quite smooth, slowly add the oil in a stream while blending continuously, until the oil emulsifies and makes a thick mayonnaise. Stir in the lemon juice to taste.
- 3 Next, prepare the fruit. To get rid of some of the bitterness of the citrus pith, put the lemon and orange in cold water, bring up to the boil, then drain. Fill the pan with

- fresh water and repeat. Slice off the tops and bottoms, cut the fruits in half, remove the pithy core and thinly slice them, removing any pips.
- 4 Put the sweet potato and fruit slices onto a baking tray and toss to coat with olive oil. Sprinkle with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Roast in the oven for 10 minutes, then stir and roast for another 5 minutes.
- 5 Add the purple sprouting broccoli and shallots and toss well in the oil, adding a little more if needed. Cook for a further 20 minutes, or until the sweet potato starts to brown at the edges. Transfer to a serving plate, scatter with mint and serve immediately with the bowl of anchovy mayonnaise.

RIBOLLITA

*Preparation 30 minutes
Cooking 1 hour 15 minutes
Serves 8-10*

Ribollita is a meal in a soup – a hearty dish that's ideal for this time of year. You can use almost any vegetable, but kale is an essential and I like adding nutritious broccoli right at the end – two of the most powerful antioxidant foods. I also love the look of the red cabbage, contrasting with carrot in the bowl. While training to be a doctor nearly 30 years ago, I worked as a waitress at The River Café. We were taught that this soup should be made so thick, your spoon could stand up in it. I have omitted bread, a classic ingredient, but there's so much veg in this one, it's almost solid.

- 200g borlotti or other beans, fresh, or dried and soaked
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2 onions, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 4 carrots, diced
- 100g bunch of flat-leaf parsley, chopped (stems included)
- 400g celery, sliced diagonally into 2cm pieces
- 2 Florence fennel bulbs, cut

- into 1cm slices
- 500g kale, stalks removed and leaves shredded
- 500g red cabbage, stalks removed and leaves shredded
- 2 tbsp sherry vinegar
- 2½ litres hot vegetable stock
- 300g broccoli
- zest and juice 2 lemons
- 1 tbsp ground dried dulse or Kombu seaweed (maraseaweed.com)

TO SERVE
extra-virgin olive oil
chopped parsley
Parmesan shavings

- 1 Put the beans in a large pan and just cover with unsalted water. Cook for about 40 minutes until soft, then leave them in their liquid. You can use tinned, but the texture is better with fresh or pre-soaked dried beans.
- 2 Meanwhile, add the oil to a pan and sweat the onion, garlic, carrot, parsley, celery and fennel bulb gently for about 15 minutes, until soft.
- 3 Remove half the beans with a slotted spoon and add to the onion with the kale and cabbage. Add the vinegar to help the cabbage keep its colour. Cover everything with the stock and cook for 30 minutes. Top up with more stock if necessary, but this is a solid soup, so don't drown the vegetables.
- 4 Purée the other half of the beans with about half the cooking liquid in a food processor. Mix the purée into the soup, adding more bean water if the soup is too dry.
- 5 Add the broccoli for the last five minutes or so, until it is tender, but not mushy. Stir in the lemon juice and seaweed, and season with salt and fresh black pepper.
- 6 Pour into bowls, drizzle with a little olive oil and top each one with a sprinkling of lemon zest and Parmesan shavings. Serve with extra-virgin olive oil, chopped parsley and some grated Parmesan to add, bit by bit, as you eat. ➔



7 Sarah has written a number of bestselling gardening and cookery books, and runs a range of courses from her home at Perch Hill in East Sussex. Visit sarahraven.com for more details.



BROCCOLI AND CAULIFLOWER FALAFEL FRITTERS WITH SWEET AND SOUR TOMATO SAUCE

Preparation 40 minutes, plus chilling Cooking 35 minutes Serves 5-6

Roasting or steaming broccoli is the best way to keep its nutrients. This makes 30-40 small falafel balls or 10 large round, flat patties. They're also good packed into a pitta with lemon and olive oil-dressed lettuce, rocket, coriander leaf and fresh mint.

- 600g cauliflower, cut into even-sized small florets
- 400g broccoli, cut into even-sized small florets
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- 1 heaped tsp each ground cumin, ground coriander and ground turmeric
- 1 level tsp cardamom seeds
- 1 heaped tsp each of cumin seeds and coriander seeds, dry-fried and coarsely ground
- 2 medium eggs, beaten
- 40g rice flour
- zest of 2 lemons
- zest of 1 orange
- 50g bunch fresh coriander, stems and all, roughly chopped
- 30g bunch fresh mint leaves,

- roughly chopped
- FOR THE SWEET AND SOUR TOMATO SAUCE
- 2 banana shallots (or 6 spring onions), peeled and finely chopped
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 heaped tsp fresh thyme leaves
- 1 x 400g tin chopped tomatoes
- 1 tbsp cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp coconut palm sugar
- zest and juice of 1 blood orange
- 5 anchovy fillets in oil (optional)

- 1 Heat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan oven) gas mark 6. Put the cauliflower and broccoli onto a baking tray. Add the olive oil and all the spices and mix well. Roast in the oven for 20 minutes.
- 2 Meanwhile, make the sauce. Sauté the shallots in the oil with the thyme until soft. Add the tomatoes, vinegar, sugar, blood orange zest and juice and anchovies (if using). Simmer over a low heat for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally, to reduce. Keep warm.
- 3 Put the beaten eggs, rice

- flour, lemon and orange zests, fresh coriander and fresh mint into a large mixing bowl and stir well to combine. Season with flaky salt and freshly ground black pepper.
- 4 Take the roasted vegetables from the oven and leave to cool for 10 minutes. Put two-thirds into a food processor and blitz for about 3 seconds. Add this to the egg mixture. Chop the remaining third of roasted vegetables by hand and add to the rest. Stir well to combine, then chill for 1 hour.
- 5 Shape into 10 fritters (or 30-40 falafels) and fry in a little oil for about 5 minutes on each side until golden brown and cooked through. Serve with the sauce.

BROCCOLI, APPLE AND GINGER JUICE WITH LEMON

Preparation 10 minutes Makes 2 x 300ml glasses
The broccoli stem has the same level of goodness as the florets but isn't usually eaten - that's where this juice comes in. The idea of broccoli juice may not seem tempting, but mix it with

apple, ginger and fresh lemon and it creates a delicious drink that provides plenty of antioxidants to start the day.

- 500g broccoli, including stem
- 500g apples (sweet or sharp depending on preference)
- 25g-50g ginger (to taste)
- zest and juice of 1 lemon
- handful of mint, finely chopped (optional)

- 1 Cut up the broccoli and apples and feed them into the juicer with the ginger. Juice according to the manufacturer's instructions. Add the lemon juice.
- 2 Stir well, adding the mint if using, pour into glasses and top with lemon zest. 🍋

CL READER OFFER

Buy a packet of Sarah Raven's purple sprouting or Cima di Rapa broccoli for FREE - you pay just £2.50 p&p*. Simply visit sarahraven.com, add your choice of broccoli to your basket and quote the offer code CLBROC. Offer ends on 2 February 2015.

*LIMITED TO ONE PACKET OF FREE SEEDS PER ORDER. ONLY VALID WITH PURPLE SPROUTING AND CIMA DI RAPA VARIETIES. SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY.