

*The WCBS*  
**IRON-SPIRED**  
 Cookbook 2



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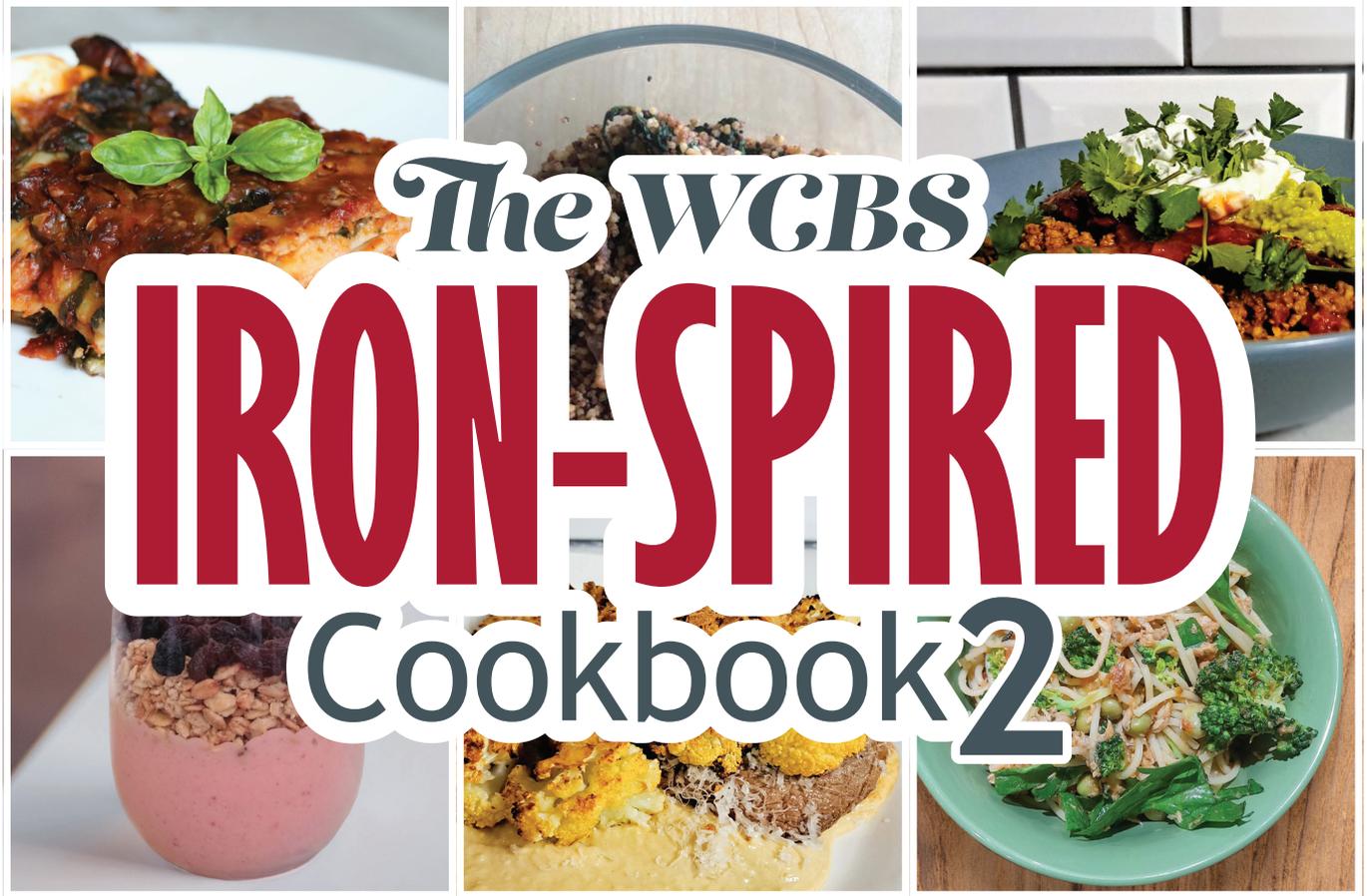
**Western Cape Blood Service**  
 Do something remarkable



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# The WCBS IRON-SPIRED Cookbook 2

Dear Reader,

In 2021 we released the first edition of our Iron-Spired digital cookbook to create awareness about eating iron-rich foods and maintaining good iron stores within your body. To keep promoting this, we are releasing 'The WCBS Iron-Spired Cookbook 2', featuring brand new and yummy recipes.

A healthy iron-rich diet is essential to maintain energy and is also very important for your overall health. As a blood donor, it is important to have the required Hb level to donate blood. A low Hb level is one of the most common reasons for being deferred from donating. Every time you donate blood, we test your Hb level. Men's Hb level needs to be 13.5g/dl and females' 12.5g/dl. To understand the relation between iron, haemoglobin and ferritin please read the article below by Dr Caroline Hilton as she explains how this correlates with blood donation.

This edition features recipes that were in our quarterly donor newsletter, Blood Buzz. We also had an internal staff competition, and we are proud to include A-Eshah Richards and Christoff van Wyk's recipes. It also features recipes never shared before.

Enjoy cooking and getting iron-spired! Please share your thoughts and let us know if you have an iron-spired recipe that you would like to share with the blood donor community.



Yours in blood donation and yummy food,  
Marike Gevers

# Understanding Iron, Haemoglobin and Ferritin

BY DR CAROLINE HILTON (HEAD - MEDICAL DEPARTMENT, WCBS)



Iron is a very important nutrient and has a wide variety of vital functions, like the transport of oxygen throughout our body. Low iron stores can make you feel tired and fatigued, or even short of breath. Every time you donate blood you are losing about 200-300mg of iron, so regular blood donation can steadily deplete your iron stores. WCBS offers iron tablets to all donors to replace what is lost in the donation, but we also encourage you to eat a balanced and iron-rich diet - hopefully this cookbook will inspire you!

Every time you donate blood we prick your finger to check your haemoglobin level to make sure that you have enough red cells in your blood to donate. While haemoglobin contains iron, your body also stores iron in other organs so this reading is not a true reflection of your entire stored iron (also called ferritin). WCBS started ferritin testing in early 2022 to help identify donors with low iron stores who should not be donating blood seeing as they will compromise their already low levels.

This test is performed in our laboratories from one of the samples taken at the time of your donation. Donors are sent a text message with their ferritin result if their iron stores are very low or very high, so that they can be made aware of this and inform their doctor. For more information about ferritin testing please read more about at [here](#). We know that regular blood donation can deplete iron stores, but there are other medical reasons that can also cause iron loss and should be considered, like chronic bleeding in the gut or heavy menstruation.

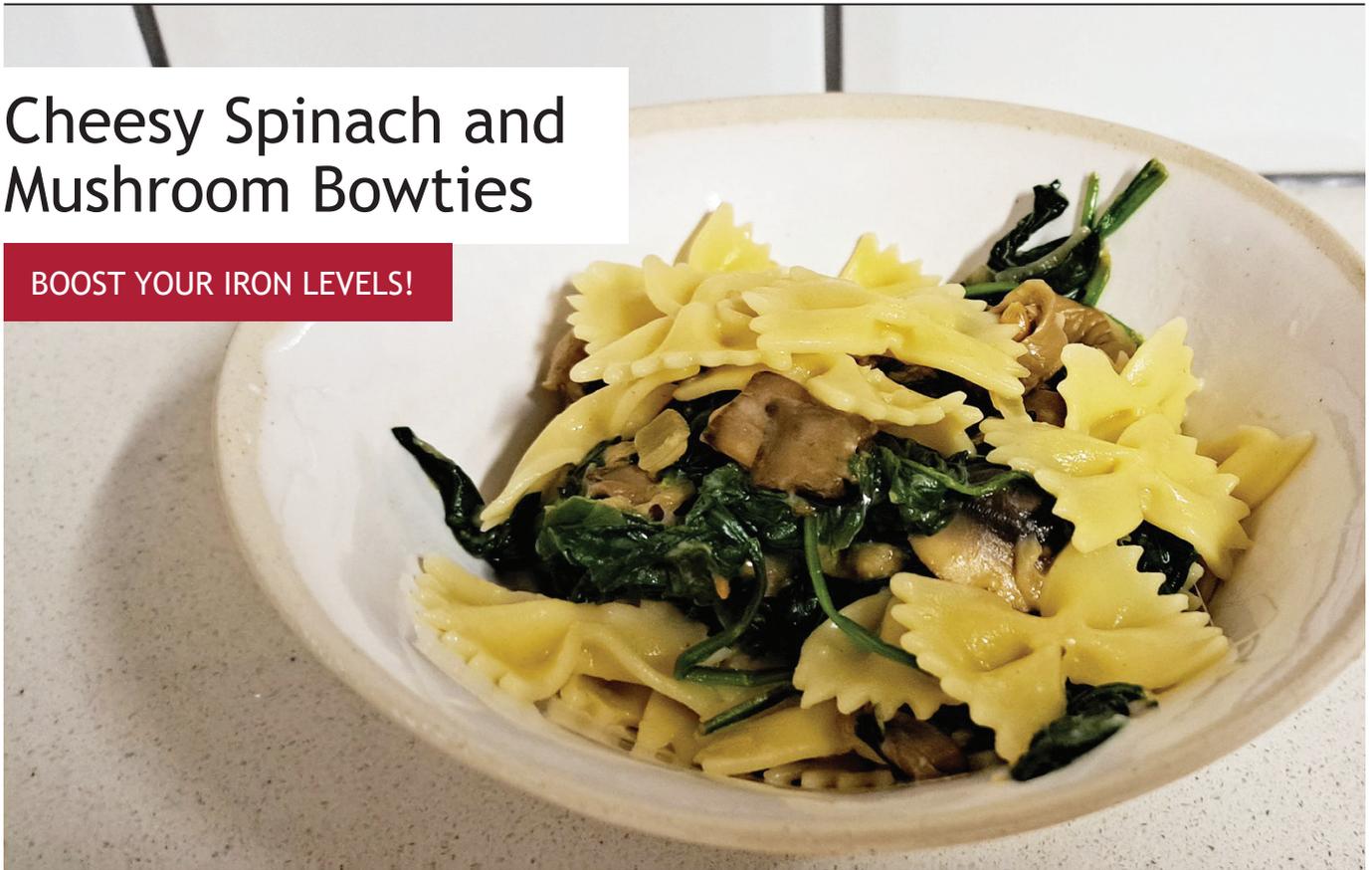
While we would like to collect as much blood as possible, ferritin monitoring (in addition to the haemoglobin finger-prick test) helps us to identify when blood donation could be harming a donor. It is our priority to make sure our donor base is as healthy as possible, so that they can safely donate blood and continue saving lives in our province.

For more information about iron, haemoglobin and ferritin, please click [here](#).



# Cheesy Spinach and Mushroom Bowties

**BOOST YOUR IRON LEVELS!**



BY *MARIKE GEVERS*

**Prep: 10 mins | Cook: 15 mins | Serves: 4 people**

## Ingredients:

- 350g bowtie pasta
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 punnet of portabellini mushrooms
- 1 punnet of exotic/ shitake mushrooms
- 1/4 cup of fresh thyme and oregano, finely chopped
- 300g of baby spinach, washed
- 1/2 fresh lemon, squeezed
- 1/4 cup parmesan, grated
- 1/4 cup Cheshire cheese
- 1 tub of cream cheese/ fat-free cottage cheese
- salt and pepper to taste

## Instructions:

Cook pasta in salted boiling water for 10-15 minutes.

Heat the olive oil in a pan over medium heat, add garlic and onion and cook until golden brown. Add mushrooms, thyme and organum and cook for 5 minutes. Add fresh lemon juice and spinach and cook until spinach is wilted. Remove from stove.

Drain pasta and add the mushroom spinach mix to the pasta. Add parmesan and Cheshire cheese and stir. Add cream cheese and stir thoroughly. Add salt and pepper to taste.

# Vegetarian Spinach and Mushroom Lasagne

**BOOST YOUR IRON LEVELS!**



BY CHRISTOFF VAN WYK

**Prep: 20 mins | Cook: 1h 20 mins | Serves: 8 people**

## Ingredients:

- 400g baby spinach leaves, rinsed
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 500g brown mushrooms, chopped
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 onion, chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 70g tomato paste
- 400g tinned chopped tomato
- 1 cup tomato sauce
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 1 tsp thyme
- 1/2 tsp paprika
- 250g lasagne sheets, or enough for 3 layers in a large casserole dish
- 400g mozzarella cheese, grated
- 1/4 cup basil leaves, chopped

## Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 200°C.

In a large saucepan, steam the spinach until wilted. Remove from the pan and set aside. Add the olive oil to the pan and sauté the mushrooms on a medium-high heat until brown and it release moisture. Add the salt, onions and garlic and sauté for another 5 minutes. Stir in the tomato paste, tin of tomatoes and 1 cup of the tomato sauce. Add the sugar, thyme and paprika. Simmer for 20 minutes.

Cook the lasagne sheets in salted boiling water for 10 minutes or until firm to the bite. Drain the pasta and separate the sheets so that they don't stick to each other.

In a large casserole dish (about 25x39cm) spread the remaining cup of tomato sauce in the bottom of the dish. Place a layer of lasagne sheets over the tomato sauce. Sprinkle over 1/3 of the mozzarella cheese, 1/3 of the spinach, spread 1/3 of the mushroom-tomato mixture and add half of the basil. Repeat this step.

Place the final layer of lasagne over the sauce, sprinkle over the remaining spinach, spread the remaining mushroom-tomato mixture and sprinkle over the remaining cheese. Cover the casserole dish with foil and bake for 25 minutes. Remove the foil and bake for another 25 minutes.

# Tuna and Broccoli Pasta

BOOST YOUR IRON LEVELS!



BY NADIA TURNER

Prep: 5 mins | Cook: 10 mins | Serves: 2 people

## Ingredients:

- 250g pasta of your choice
- 2 cups broccoli florets
- 125g sun dried tomato pesto
- 1 cup peas - frozen
- 2 cans tuna, drained
- handful of baby spinach
- salt and pepper to taste

Optional: grated cheddar cheese or parmesan

## Instructions:

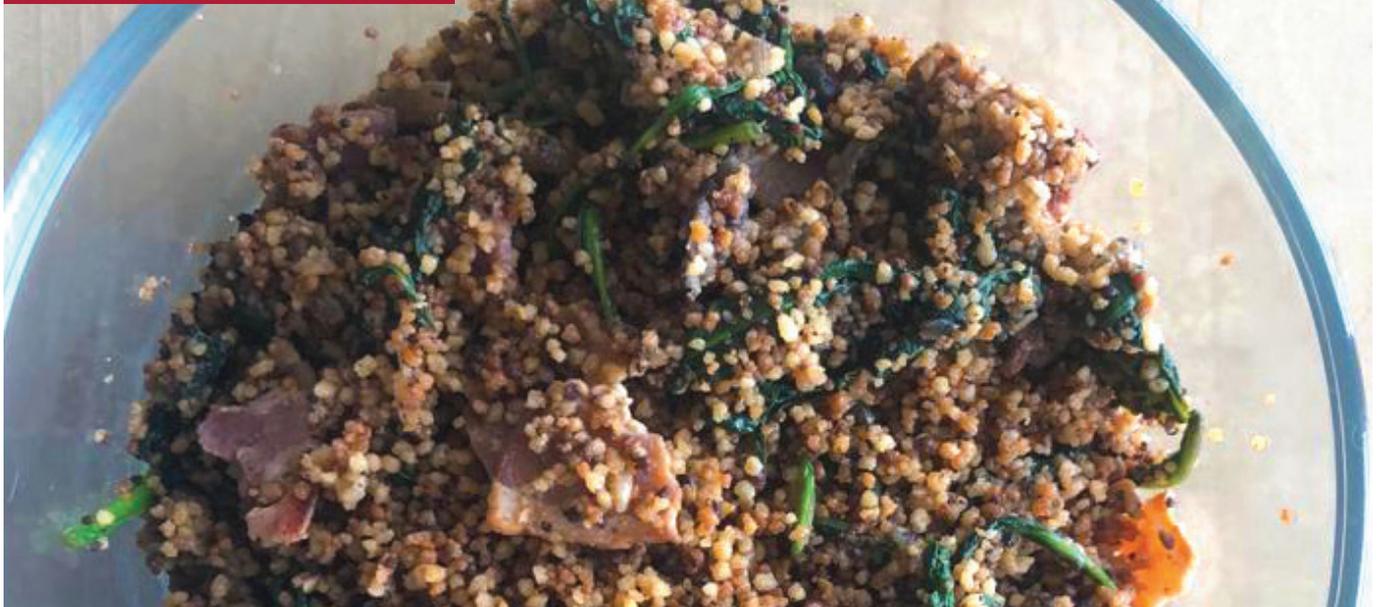
Cook pasta according to packet instructions.

While the pasta is cooking, steam, boil or microwave broccoli until just cooked. Place frozen peas in microwave-safe dish, add a tablespoon of water and cook for 3-4 minutes.

Drain the pasta and add the broccoli, tuna, peas, pesto and add salt and pepper to taste. Add the spinach and allow it to wilt from the heat. Optional: Top with grated cheddar cheese or parmesan.

# Bacon and Spinach Couscous

**BOOST YOUR IRON LEVELS!**



BY DYLAN OKTOBER

**Prep: 10 mins | Cook: 30 mins | Serves: 3-4 people**

## Ingredients:

- 1 pack of bacon, diced (alternatively you can substitute with macon or feta)
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1/2 medium white onion, diced
- 4 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 cup spinach
- 240ml couscous
- 350ml cups of water
- 1 tsp salt

## Instructions:

Fry the bacon in a non-stick pan on medium-heat and remove once done.

In a large saucepan, heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil and add the onion. Cook over medium heat for 10 minutes or until golden brown. Add garlic and continue to cook for 1 minute. Reduce heat and add the spinach. Cook for 5 minutes and then remove from the heat and set it aside.

In a separate non-stick pan or pot, add your dry couscous and let it toast on a low heat for 6 minutes. The granules will slowly start to brown and stir regularly to ensure it does not burn.

Once done, add the boiling water and 1 tablespoon of olive oil to the pot and remove from the heat. Stir immediately and cover. Let the couscous sit for 5 minutes then fluff with a fork once the water has been absorbed.

Add the couscous, salt, and spinach to the onion and garlic. Top with your diced bacon. Cook for 5 minutes over medium heat. Add salt to taste and serve.

# Hot Chicken Livers

**BOOST YOUR IRON LEVELS!**



BY A-ESHAH RICHARDS

**Prep: 5 mins | Cook: 20 mins | Serves: 2-4 people**

## Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp cooking oil
- 1 medium red onion, finely chopped
- 1 medium white onion, finely chopped
- 1 tsp crushed garlic
- 500g chicken livers, cleaned and cut in half
- mild garlic sauce, to taste
- 100ml water
- Portuguese rolls or baguette

Optional: 1/2 medium green pepper, chopped and 1/2 tsp crushed chilies

## Instructions:

Heat the cooking oil in a medium sauce pan and add onions. Braise onions until translucent. Add garlic and braise for another minute. Add chicken livers and cook for 5 minutes. Optional: add green pepper.

Add the mild garlic sauce and 100ml water. If you prefer more sauce add more water. Simmer on low heat for a further 10 minutes, stirring in-between. Add chilies - optional.

Remove from heat and serve with Portuguese rolls or baguettes.

# Easy Made Beef Nachos

**BOOST YOUR IRON LEVELS!**



BY MARIKE GEVERS

**Prep: 10 mins | Cook: 20 mins | Serves: 4 people**

## Ingredients:

- 500g beef mince
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp coriander
- 1 tsp chilli powder/flakes
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 3 tsp chutney
- 3 tsp sweet chilli sauce
- 2 tsp tomato paste
- 1 can of tomatoes, chopped and peeled
- salt and pepper to taste
- 6 tortilla wraps, cut into 16 slices
- 3 cups of cheese, grated
- 3 jalapenos (fresh or pickled), chopped finely
- 1 cup of fat-free cottage cheese, smooth
- 1 can of red kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- small can of Old El Paso salsa
- 1 cup of guacamole or 1 avocado, smashed
- 1/2 punnet coriander, finely chopped

## Instructions:

Preheat the oven to a 180°C on grill.

Heat the olive oil in a pan over medium heat. Cook garlic and onion until golden brown. Add mince and cook for 5 minutes. Add cumin, coriander, chilli and smoked paprika and stir. Lastly add chutney, sweet chilli sauce, tomato paste and a can of tomatoes. Cook for 15 minutes.

Place tortilla slices on a tray and bake until golden brown. Turn slices at least once, ensure that it doesn't burn. Remove tortilla slices and place them in an ovenproof dish. Add cheese and grill for 10 minutes or until cheese is melted. If you use ready-made nachos, you won't grill them upfront; you will just add cheese and grill. Once the cheese is melted, cut into squares.

Add jalapenos to cottage cheese. Add salt and pepper to taste to avocado and red kidney beans.

Place tortillas/ nachos on a plate. Top with mince, tomato salsa, guacamole, jalapeno cottage cheese and fresh coriander.

# Steak with Harissa Cauliflower

BOOST YOUR IRON LEVELS!



BY MARIKE GEVERS

Prep: 5 mins | Cook: 20 mins | Serves: 2 people

## Ingredients:

- 1 medium-sized cauliflower
- 4 tsp of harissa paste
- 4 cloves of garlic, crushed or finely chopped
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 400g steak, of your choice
- 1/2 cup of parmesan, grated
- 125g low-fat hummus
- crispy onions (store bought), to taste
- salt and pepper to taste

Optional: 1 punnet of small mixed peppers, deseeded and cut in half

## Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Drizzle some olive oil on the oven tray. Cut cauliflower into steaks and place it on the tray. Rub olive oil and garlic over the cauliflower. Brush harissa paste on the cauliflower and place it in the oven. Cook for 5 minutes, add peppers if you wish, and cook for another 10 minutes.

Add olive oil to a frying pan and the remaining garlic. Rub salt and pepper on both sides of the steak and fry in the pan. Depending on the heat of your pan and how you like your steak to be cooked, a medium rare steak will take you approximately 3 and half minutes on each side and let it rest for 4 minutes. Smear the hummus on your plate. Top with steak and grated parmesan, place the cauliflower steaks on top and finish off by sprinkling crispy onion bits.

For more information about steak and cooking alternatives, click [here](#).

# Breakfast Smoothie

BOOST YOUR IRON LEVELS!



BY MARIKE GEVERS

Prep: 5 mins | Cook: 5 mins | Serves: 2 people

## Ingredients:

- 1 cup Bulgarian yoghurt
- 1 cup frozen strawberries
- 2 small bananas - chopped
- 1 spoon of sugar, honey, xylitol or any sweetener

Optional: 1 cup of muesli with raisins and nuts

## Instructions:

Add yoghurt, strawberries and bananas into a blender and blend until smooth.

Pour into a glass or bowl and add muesli on top.

## Additional Note:

All fruits can be substituted by any of your choice. Even though bananas are low in iron, they make an awesome base for a smoothie. Blueberries and other berries such as, strawberries, blackberries and cranberries act as an active iron absorber, as it is a good source of vitamin C.

All fruits can be cut into pieces and frozen beforehand. Any frozen fruit also adds a nice cold thicker texture to a smoothie. Other fruits high in iron are figs, prunes, and dates. To add extra iron to your breakfast smoothie, add some muesli or granola with raisins and nuts.

# Cranberry and Pumpkin Seed Oat Biscuits

**BOOST YOUR IRON LEVELS!**



BY DYLAN OKTOBER

**Prep: 20 mins | Cook: 30 mins | Serves: 3-4 people (6-8 cookies)**

## Ingredients:

- 240ml rolled oats
- 240ml fine oatmeal
- 240ml cranberries, diced
- 240ml pumpkin seeds, diced
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp pepper
- 240ml brown sugar
- 100ml boiling water
- 75g butter, melted
- 1 tsp vanilla essence

## Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Line 2 baking trays with greaseproof paper.

In a bowl mix the oats, oatmeal, cranberries and pumpkin seeds, salt, pepper and brown sugar. Make a well in the centre and then pour the boiling water, melted butter and vanilla essence in. Stir quickly to bring the mixture together into a firm dough. Add a little more boiling water if necessary.

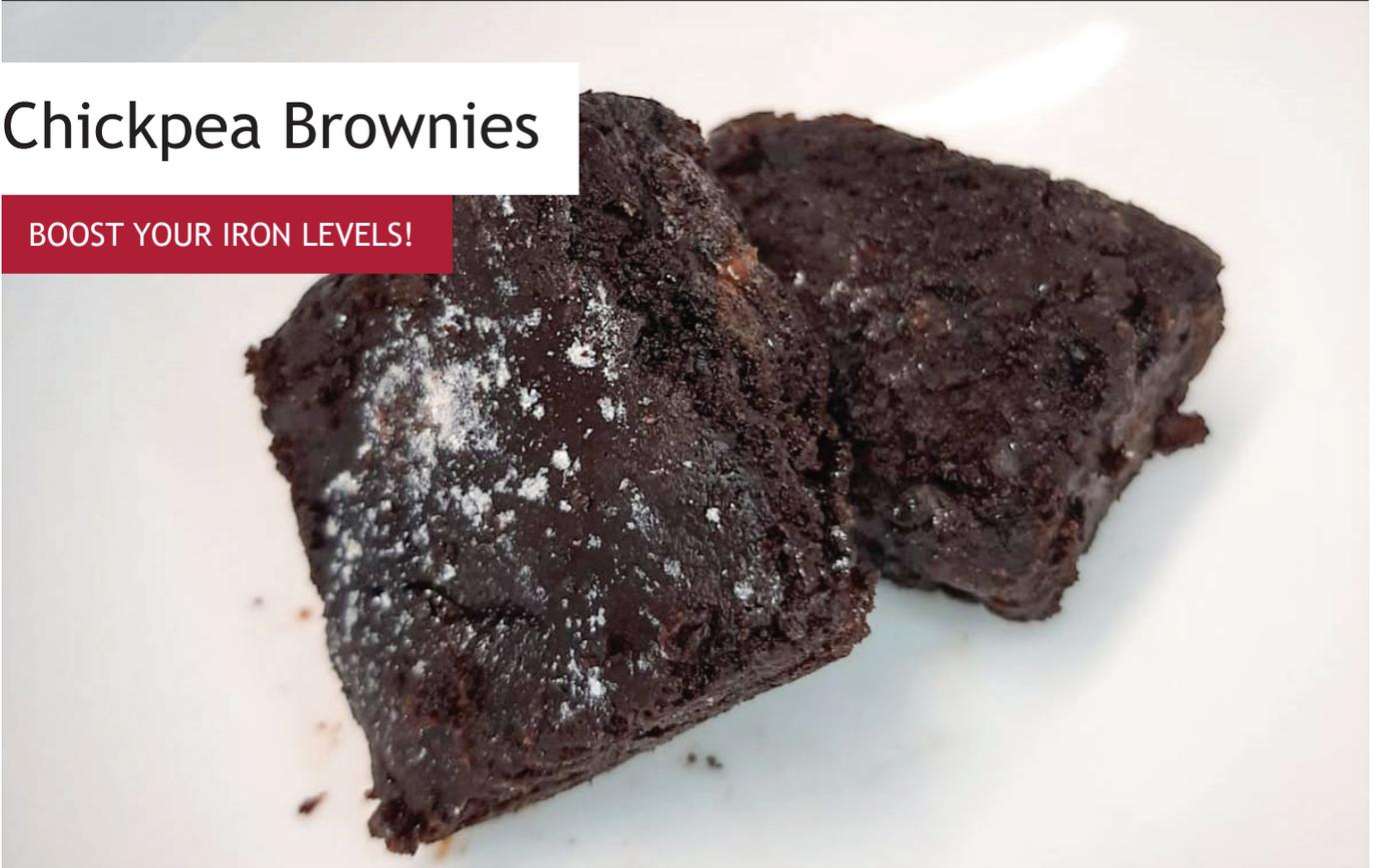
Dust your work surface with flour and transfer the dough onto it. Sprinkle the dough and a rolling pin with flour and roll out the dough. Use a tablespoon to scoop portions of the dough and roll dough in balls.

Place dough balls on baking tray and use fork and gently press down till it flattens out. Ensure that there is enough space between the biscuits.

Put the trays in the oven and bake for 25-30 minutes. Allow to cool.

# Chickpea Brownies

BOOST YOUR IRON LEVELS!



BY JIHAAN OPPERMAN

Prep: 15 mins | Cook: 20 mins | Serves: 6 people

## Ingredients:

- 1 can of chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1/3 cup flour
- 1/2 cup of sugar
- 3/4 cup milk
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
- 4 tbsp cocoa powder
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 4 tbsp oil
- pinch of salt

Optional: 1/2 cup chocolate chips

## Instructions:

Preheat oven to 180°C. Grease a small baking tray.

Blend chickpeas in a food processor or blender until smooth. Add flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, salt, sugar, milk and oil in food processor/blender and blend into a very smooth consistency. Add chopped walnuts and optional choc chips into mixture and stir thoroughly. Pour mixture into baking tray and bake for 20 minutes.

Remove dish from the baking tray onto a rack and allow dish to cool down for 30 minutes. Once dish has cooled down, cut into bite sizes and enjoy.

# Hope you enjoyed cooking with us!



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