

BALANCE | GLO

Sleep Well  
A Recipe Book for  
Restful Nights

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In our latest recipe plan, we share 5 nutritious dishes that are specifically designed to help you get the most from your sleep. The plan includes a light dinner, a bedtime snack, a soothing beverage, a healthy dessert, and a breakfast recipe to help promote alertness after a good sleep. It also shares the importance of sleep for wellbeing, why your diet might be keeping you up at night, sleep inducing ingredients, and practical nutrition-based sleep strategies.

*Love Jen + Ev xxx*





**Evelyn Joyce, Co-Founder**

## Intro to Our Sleep Well Recipe Plan

Evelyn is one of the co-founders of Balance and Glo, with a passion for demonstrating that eating healthily doesn't have to be onerous, costly or complicated. It's about focusing on whole foods, having a diverse and colourful diet, and planning ahead.

The recipes in this plan are all suitable for a vegetarian diet. Throughout the plan she provides serving suggestions, as well as hints and tips for how to build the recipes into your weekly schedule.

### Why sleep is important for wellbeing

Sleep is an essential component of our health and wellbeing. Getting enough high quality sleep protects and promotes both our mental and physical health. During sleep, our body works hard to process information, reduce our cortisol (stress) hormone levels, support healthy brain function, and repairs and maintains our physical health.

Poor sleep has a negative impact on wellbeing. A lack of sleep:

- reduces energy levels which can affect our motivation to exercise.
- reduces our emotional resilience (our capacity to successfully adapt and overcome adverse situations).
- causes the area of our brain that controls our fight or flight response (the amygdala) to become hyperactive, meaning we are more likely to feel anxious or irritable.
- can affect our diet. Sleep provides us with energy, when we are low on sleep we often reach for high in sugar foods (providing an initial spike of energy, but then a big dip). Studies have also found that a lack of sleep can impact our hormones that control hunger.



# Is your diet keeping you up at night?

If you're struggling to nod off at night, it might be worth considering your food and drink choices in the day and how they might be affecting your sleep patterns. Stress, exercise, daylight and routine are linked to sleep, but diet plays a role too.

## Regular meal patterns

Keeping regular meal times is vital for sleep because it helps regulate our body's internal clock, known as the circadian rhythm. Eating at consistent intervals signals to our body when to expect food and when to expect rest. Irregular meal times can disrupt this natural rhythm, causing fluctuations in blood sugar levels and affecting the release of hormones like melatonin, which is essential for sleep. By maintaining a routine in our eating patterns, we promote better digestion and improved sleep quality, ensuring a more restful night's sleep.

## Balanced Diet

Nutrients like magnesium, tryptophan, and melatonin, found in various foods, play a crucial role in promoting relaxation and regulating sleep patterns. A well-balanced diet helps stabilise blood sugar levels, prevents discomfort that can disrupt sleep, and supports the production of sleep-inducing hormones. By nourishing the body with the right foods, individuals can improve sleep quality and enjoy more restful nights.

Research has found that adults that don't get enough sleep are more likely to have a lower intake of calcium, magnesium and vitamin D. Whilst for adults over 50, there is a correlation between poor sleep and reduced intake of vitamins C, D, E, and K.

Having a healthy gut with a diverse microbiome has also been found to improve sleep for some people. To boost your microbiome aim to eat at least 30 different plants a week (including fruits and vegetables, nuts, pulses, grains, seeds and herbs). Where possible opt for whole grains, include some probiotics (e.g. fermented foods, yogurts that contain live or active cultures, and kefir), and avoid highly processed foods.



## Alcohol

Many people believe that alcohol can aid in sleep because it can induce drowsiness and relaxation. While alcohol may help you fall asleep more quickly, it interferes with the sleep cycle's crucial stages, leading to fragmented and disrupted sleep. It also reduces the amount of restorative deep sleep and REM (rapid eye movement) sleep, which are essential for overall well-being. You also might find yourself waking more frequently in the night to go to the bathroom. During the night the body releases an Antidiuretic Hormone (ADH) which causes the kidneys to release less water, reducing the volume of urine produced. However, alcohol is a diuretic and, therefore, it makes you more likely to need to urinate in the night, disrupting your sleep further. Alcohol also reduces the production of vasopressin, a hormone which signals the liver to reabsorb water rather than secrete it through the bladder.



## Caffeine

Work and family life can mean people are awake and busy at times that do not coincide with their circadian rhythm, this can lead to disrupted sleep patterns and feeling tired during the day. As a result, many people turn to stimulants that contain caffeine such as coffee, tea, and energy drinks (remember chocolate also contains caffeine, but much less than coffee). However, this can be counterintuitive as when consumed in the hours leading up to sleep it blocks the receptors which promote feelings of tiredness, affecting your ability to get to sleep. As half the caffeine remains in your system five to six hours after drinking it, it is recommended that you refrain from consuming caffeine at least six hours before bed, ideally eight.



# Sleep inducing ingredients

Certain ingredients in foods and drinks are known to have sleep-inducing properties. Incorporating these ingredients into your diet may help promote better sleep. Here are some sleep-inducing ingredients:

- **Tryptophan:** An amino acid found in poultry, dairy products, and nuts. It's a precursor to serotonin, which can help regulate sleep.
- **Melatonin:** A hormone that regulates the sleep-wake cycle. Foods like cherries, grapes, and tomatoes naturally contain melatonin.
- **Magnesium:** A mineral that helps relax muscles and promote calmness. Sources include nuts, seeds, dark chocolate, and leafy greens.
- **Calcium:** Found in dairy products, calcium can help the brain use tryptophan to produce melatonin, enhancing sleep quality.
- **Valerian Root:** A herb used in teas and supplements to promote relaxation and improve sleep.
- **Chamomile:** A popular herbal tea with calming properties that can help with sleep.
- **Lavender:** Whether in oil form or as a tea, lavender is known for its soothing and relaxing effects.
- **Honey:** A natural source of glucose that can slightly raise insulin levels, promoting the release of tryptophan and serotonin.
- **Bananas:** Rich in both magnesium and tryptophan, bananas can promote relaxation.
- **Oats:** Oats contain melatonin, making them a good bedtime snack.
- **Fatty Fish:** High in vitamin D and omega-3 fatty acids, fatty fish like salmon and mackerel can help regulate sleep patterns.
- **Almonds:** A source of magnesium and tryptophan, almonds can contribute to better sleep.

Incorporating these ingredients into your diet, especially as part of an evening meal or bedtime snack, can contribute to a more restful night's sleep. However, it's important to consider portion sizes and avoid heavy meals too close to bedtime to ensure that these ingredients have a positive impact on your sleep quality.



# Sleep Well

## 5 Recipes for Restful Nights



### RECIPE MENU

Lentil and Chickpea Dhal

Banana Bread Cookies

Golden Milk Latte

Apple and Blackberry  
Crumble

Banana and Blueberry  
Smoothie

Each recipe in this plan contains sleep inducing ingredients (e.g. Tryptophan, Melatonin, and complex carbohydrates), meals that are light and easy to digest, and dishes that are comforting and promote cosy sleep vibes. The plan includes a light dinner, a bedtime snack, a soothing beverage, a healthy dessert, and a breakfast recipe to help promote alertness after a good sleep. Feeling a little peckish in the evening try one of my Banana Bread Cookies, want a warming pud that fills you with goodness try one of my Mini Crumbles, and want to start the day alert and energised try my Banana and Blueberry Smoothie. I hope you love these recipes as much as I do!

*Love Ev xxx*



# Dinner



## LENTIL AND CHICKPEA DHAL

Servings: 4 | Time to create: 30 - 40 minutes

*Lentils are rich in tryptophan, an amino acid that plays a role in the production of Serotonin and Melatonin, two hormones that regulate sleep. Whilst the brown rice is a complex carbohydrate, providing a steady release of glucose, also promotes Serotonin and Melatonin production, and stabilises blood sugar levels, all of which contribute to a more restful night's sleep.*

### METHOD

1. Heat the olive oil in a large pan and add the onion, garlic and ginger. Once the onion has softened (approx. 8 minutes), add the spices and cook for a further 3 minutes.
2. Add the lentils and chickpeas and continue to stir for 5 minutes before adding the coconut milk, tomato puree and tomatoes. Bring to the boil, before reducing to a simmer and cooking for 30 minutes. Stir regularly to ensure the dhal does not stick to the dish.
3. Add the frozen spinach 5 minutes before you wish to serve. Stir until the spinach has thawed and is mixed into the dish.
4. Serve with brown rice and a sprinkle of fresh coriander.

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 red onion, finely diced
- 2 cloves of garlic, peeled and finely diced
- 1 thumb size piece of ginger, peeled and finely diced
- 1 tin (400g) of green lentils (drained)
- 1 tin (400g) of chickpeas (drained)
- 1 tin (400g) coconut milk
- 4 plum tomatoes, cut into eighths
- 4 frozen cubes of spinach
- 1 tbsp tomato puree
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp curry powder
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1 tsp chilli powder
- Serving suggestion: Brown rice and fresh coriander

*Top tip: When choosing a meal to help promote sleep, choose dishes that are light and easy to digest*



# Snack



## BANANA BREAD COOKIES

Servings: 8 | Time to create: 20 minutes

*Our Banana Bread Cookies help to promote sleep as the bananas are a source of tryptophan, the oats provide a slow release of energy that can help stabilise blood sugar levels during the night, and the almond butter and pecans add healthy fats and protein which can help promote a sense of fullness and satisfaction, reducing the likelihood of late-night cravings.*

### METHOD

1. Pre heat the oven to 180 degree Celsius
2. Place 50g of the oats and the remaining ingredients in a high speed blender. Blitz until it forms a dough. It's likely to be quite a sticky mixture.
3. Decant the dough into a mixing ball and add the remaining oats and mix together.
4. Create roughly 8 evenly sized balls and flatten into discs between your hands.
5. Place on a lined baking tray and pop in the oven for 15 minutes. They should be a golden colour.
6. Allow to cool before enjoying with your choice of decaffeinated tea.

### INGREDIENTS

- 150g dates
- 80g jumbo oats
- 30g pecans
- 1 small ripe banana
- 40g almond butter
- 1/2 tsp vanilla essence

*Top Tip: When choosing a bedtime snack, opt for snacks with minimal added sugars, as excessive sugar can lead to blood sugar spikes and crashes, potentially causing disruptions in sleep.*



# Beverage



## GOLDEN MILK LATTE

Servings: 1 | Time to create: 5 minutes

*This recipe makes a great bedtime drink to help induce a restful slumber - it's a super comforting drink. Turmeric can be used to aid the quality of sleep whilst also lowering anxiety levels, improving mood, and promoting relaxation. This latte is also packed with immune supporting antioxidants and anti-inflammatories.*

### METHOD

1. Pop everything in a blender, whizz, pour, enjoy!
2. Decant into a small saucepan and heat the mixture over low to medium heat, stirring continuously, but avoid boiling.

Other examples of sleep promoting drinks include:

- **Chamomile Tea:** Chamomile is a well-known herbal tea that has mild sedative effects, making it a popular choice for promoting relaxation and better sleep.
- **Peppermint Tea:** While not a sedative, peppermint tea can help relax the digestive system, which can prevent nighttime discomfort.
- **Decaffeinated Herbal Blends:** Many herbal tea blends are formulated specifically to promote sleep. Look for options with ingredients like chamomile, valerian, and lemon balm.

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup hot milk (milk of your choice)
- 1/4 tsp ground turmeric
- 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp maple syrup or honey
- A grind of fresh black pepper or 1tsp coconut oil
- If you want to add some extra spices, add 1/8 tsp of ground cloves, 1/8 tsp cardamom and 1/8 tsp nutmeg - it makes it extra special.

*Top tips: Gentle heating helps infuse the flavors without compromising the nutritional benefits.*



# Dessert



## APPLE AND BLACKBERRY CRUMBLES

Servings: 2 (small pie dishes) - 4 (ramekins) | Time to create: less than 30 minutes

*This dessert won't disrupt sleep but will satisfy sweet cravings. The oat topping will provide sustained energy and help stabilise blood sugar levels, and the almonds contain healthy fats, protein, and magnesium, which can help with relaxation and sleep quality.*

### METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 180C, fan setting.
2. Heat the 1 tsp of coconut oil in a pan and add in the apple cubes. Sprinkle with the cinnamon and add the maple syrup. Cook for 5 minutes (stirring frequently), before adding the blackberries for a further 3 minutes.
3. Place all of the topping ingredients (minus the flaked almonds and coconut sugar) into a bowl and give a really good mix.
4. Divide the apple and blackberry mixture between the dishes, and spoon over the topping mixture. Sprinkle with the coconut sugar and almonds.
5. Bake in the oven for 15-18 minutes, until the top is golden and you can see the filling bubbling through.

### INGREDIENTS

Filling:

- 300g of apple (weight when peeled and diced into roughly 1cm cubes) - approximately 3 apples
- 1 tsp of coconut oil
- 12 blackberries
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp maple syrup

Topping:

- 15g oat flour (blend 15g of oats to a flour consistency)
- 35g oats
- 25g ground almonds
- 10g mixed seeds
- 25g melted coconut oil
- 1 tbsp maple syrup
- 1/2 tsp coconut sugar
- 1 tbsp flaked almonds

*Top tips: When having a dessert be mindful of leaving enough time between eating and going to bed to allow your body enough time to digest (it's recommended at least 2 hours).*





## BANANA AND BLUEBERRY SMOOTHIE

Servings: 1 | Time to create: 5 minutes

*To promote wakefulness and boost energy, it's essential to choose foods and recipes that provide sustained energy and mental alertness. The banana in this recipe offers potassium and complex carbohydrates, whilst the peanut butter provides protein and healthy fats.*

*For a hearty smoothie bowl instead of a smoothie, use 50-75ml less soy milk (so the mixture is much thicker), spoon into a bowl and top with 2 tbsp of granola.*

### METHOD

1. Pop all the ingredients in a blender and blitz until smooth.

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 medium banana\*
- 60g blueberries\*
- 200ml soy milk
- 100g natural yogurt\*\*
- 1 tbsp chia seeds
- 1 tbsp peanut butter
- 1 tbsp oats
- 1 tbsp hemp hearts
- Pinch of cinnamon

*\*Use frozen fruit for a thicker smoothie.*

*\*\*If vegan, opt for soya yogurt due to its higher protein content.*

*Top Tip: Remember to stay hydrated throughout the day, as dehydration can lead to fatigue.*