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Breakfast of CHAMPIONS

Great reasons to start the day the right way

Beating the brekkie blues

Breakfast advocate Sue Radd believes getting the right start to the day is so essential for your health, she's written a book about it. JESSICA HOUGH discovers the best way to break the fast.

NUTRITIONIST Sue Radd agrees with the old saying, "breakfast is the most important meal of the day". In her latest publication, *The Breakfast Book*, she outlines how the right brekkie helps with weight control, mood, performance and even longevity.

Whether you're a busy professional, a school kid, an athlete, new mum or shift worker, breakfast is essential, but it is frequently ditched because people think they don't have time to eat their first daytime meal.

Sue says another misconception about nutrition is that missing breakfast will help with weight loss, "particularly among young girls or young adult women because they think skipping any meal will help you lose weight, but breakfast is the one that gets ditched."

"This is a totally erroneous myth. All the evidence points to the opposite. In fact, what we find from research is that people who regularly eat breakfast have a lower BMI (body mass index)," she says.

A number of studies have been conducted on the benefits of breakfast and they have

confirmed that eating early in the day is crucial to weight loss. Sue points to a United States study focusing specifically on breakfast.

"All the participants were placed on a 1200-calorie per day diet: some of the women's diets included breakfast, while the others were placed on the same diet, the same number of calories, but without the breakfast. The ones that included the breakfast, same number of calories, lost weight," she says.

The connection between weight loss and eating breakfast is simple: by eating when you wake up you stimulate your metabolism right away, meaning you can burn calories with more efficiency.

"Even if you're restricting your calories there's no point saving them up for lunch and dinner. You're better off having the big breakfast, a moderate size lunch and a lighter evening meal - you're actually better off from a weight control point of view doing it that way," Sue says.

Breakfast is equally important for brain function, particularly in children, because it provides fuel for thinking.

"We know that breakfast, particularly foods with carbohydrates coming from wholegrains, improves your concentration, improves your learning ability, your memory retrieval - all these things - so they're very important for brain function," Sue says.

While the best type of breakfast is made up

of wholegrain cereal, yoghurt, nuts, fresh juice and fruit, Sue says in most cases some breakfast is better than none at all. "If you're going to eat bacon and sausages, you're better off eating them in the morning than late at night."

On the whole, Australians are healthier breakfast eaters. But, according to Sue, a frightening trend is emerging: we are beginning to follow the unhealthy eating habits of some Americans.

"A concerning trend that I've identified in Australia is breakfasts away from home. I don't think it's good because the choices people make are not good. There's been an 80 per cent growth over the last four years in breakfasts purchased from takeaway outlets and cafes."

"This is where breakfast is going in the future in Australia, which is a bit sad, but we're following the United States yet again. Luckily, today only eight per cent of breakfasts are eaten out. Breakfast is still the meal that's least eaten out. However, based on current trends, I think that's going to change," she says.

The increase in breakfast-on-the-run stems from a feeling that we are increasingly time poor, but this fixation is based on a complete fallacy as far as the first meal of the day is concerned. Sue says lack of time is the last excuse you should be using when you eat a fatty takeaway breakfast.

"You don't do anything to Weet-Bix - it's so quick to eat, it is a fast food," she said.



MY TOWN

PP Cranney, playwright
What's your favourite local restaurant?
 My dining room - I married a great cook.
What is your favourite dish there?
 Roast chicken.
What's your favourite fast food/takeaway place?
 Figtree Pizza.
Where is the best pub/watering hole?
 The IPAC bars.
Would you describe yourself as a beer, wine, spirits or teetotaler kind of person?
 All of the above (on the wagon at the moment).
Where would you take someone for a romantic dinner?
 Belmore Basin for fish and chips from Boufflers.
Where would you recommend for a night out on the town with friends?
 A show at the IPAC (hopefully one of mine), then a drink at the Oxford Tavern.
If you had to eat one food for the rest of your life what would it be?
 Bananas.
What is the one food you'd never want to eat again?
 Polenta.
What do you like best about the Illawarra?
 I can afford to live here.
Where's our best beach?
 Coniston - Rosie the dog loves it.
What's your favourite cafe?
 Aromas at the IPAC.
What do you choose if forced to eat from a vending machine?
 Mars bars.
Where's your favourite clothing or homewares shop?
 K Mart, Figtree.
Where do you relax in the Illawarra?
 On my back deck looking out at the escarpment, the ocean and the steelworks.
If you're cooking, what's your speciality?
 Baked beans on toast (see question number one).
Do you have a favourite deli? If so where and why?
 Wollongong Nut & Deli, Kembla St. Great nuts.
What's your favourite bread shop?
 Bakers Delight, Westfield Figtree.



Drink up ... *The Breakfast Book* author Sue Radd says starting the day with a glass of water is important because your body becomes dehydrated overnight.

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WHILE STOCKS LAST



In Sue's breakfast comparison, the cafe-style breakfast costs the most and has the most kilojoules, sodium and fat, but this is still better than skipping brekkie.



Fruit contains phyto-chemicals which, among other things, protect against cancer.



Fresh juice is a healthy way to start the day.

Seven-day winter menu

Items marked with an asterisk (*) are taken from menus in *The Breakfast Book*.

Sunday
Freshly squeezed orange juice
Spicy tomato breakfast beans* or baked beans
Toasted tomatoes
Sautéed mushrooms
Slices wholegrain toast with hummous or bhini
Water/tea/herbal tea/coffee or coffee alternative

Monday
Hot apple tea with ginger*
Porridge or 1-minute oats with tablespoon of chopped hazelnuts, sultanas and a drizzle of honey
Low-fat milk or soy milk
Water/tea/herbal tea/coffee or coffee alternative

Tuesday
Orange
Custard wholegrain English muffin with warmed, canned cream corn and sliced tomato
Water/tea/herbal tea/coffee or coffee alternative

Wednesday
Weet-Bix or Vita-Brits topped with canned apricots and honey and a tablespoon of ground SA (finsseed, sunflower, almond)
Warmed low-fat milk or soy milk
Water/tea/herbal tea/coffee or coffee alternative

Thursday
Carrot, apple and ginger juice* or commercial juice
2 slices wholemeal raisin toast with 100 per cent fruit jam (no butter)
Water/tea/herbal tea/coffee or coffee alternative

Friday
Spicy winter citrus salad* or 1 orange
High-fibre cereal such as Fibre Plus or Just Right
Tablespoon of almonds
Drizzle of honey
Warmed low-fat milk or soy milk
Water/tea/herbal tea/coffee or coffee alternative

Saturday
Compote with apple, sour cherries and apricots*
French toast* or boiled/poached egg on wholegrain toast
Water/tea/herbal tea/coffee or coffee alternative

Weekend treat:
Sweet orange and hazelnut hotcake stack
Serves 3
Olive oil spray
1 cup wholemeal self-raising flour, sifted
¼ cup hazelnut meal
¾ cup low-fat milk or soy milk
2 eggs, beaten
1 tsp sugar

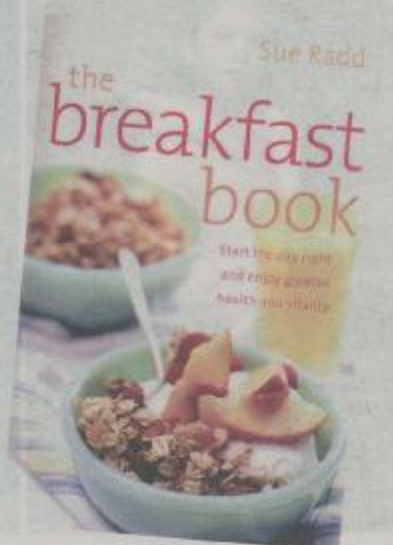
½ cup orange juice
2 oranges
3 tbsp honey
¼ cup hazelnuts, halved
In a blender, process the flour, hazelnut meal, milk, eggs and sugar until smooth. Set aside for 5-10 minutes.

Using a small sharp knife, peel the oranges, making sure you remove all the white pith as this will taste bitter once cooked. Cut the oranges into 1cm slices.

Heat a large non-stick frying pan and spray with olive oil. Drop ¼ cup of the batter into the hot pan and cook until bubbles appear. Flip and cook the other side until golden brown. This should take about 1-2 minutes. Repeat with the rest of the batter.

To make the orange sauce, place the hazelnuts into a small thick-bottomed pan and toast until fragrant. Add the honey, juice and orange slices and cook over a medium heat 2-3 minutes until slices just start to soften and the honey has caramelised a little.

Serve on large dinner plates. For each serve, arrange orange slices on top of two pancakes - one stacked on top of the other - and drizzle with the sauce.



The Breakfast Book by Sue Radd is published by Hodder Headline and is available now (\$19.95). The book contains meal plans by season and lifestyle as well as recipes for quick breakfasts, cereals and weekend breakfasts. Sue has also interviewed celebrities such as model Chloe Maxwell, cricketer Brett Lee and television presenter Melissa Doyle on how they start the day.



Can't go past a fried egg? Try a gooey googy-egg instead and completely revert to your childhood by adding buttered toast soldiers.



Liquid breakfasts won't provide enough energy for the day and shouldn't be used as a permanent replacement for sit-down breakfast.



Starting the day with a coffee isn't the healthiest way to break that overnight fast. "You could be well on the way to being dehydrated without feeling the tiniest bit thirsty," Sue says.