



Food and nutrition with naturopath **SOPHIE ATKIN**
North East Natural Health Centre



SUMMER
SQUASH WITH
BAKED EGGS

Ingredients

- 3 cups of grated zucchini, yellow squash, etc.
- 1 tsp salt, plus more for sprinkling
- 2 tbsp + 2 tsp olive oil, divided
- 2 shallots, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ tsp paprika, plus more for sprinkling
- ½ pound tomatoes, chopped
- 4 ounces soft goats’ cheese (chèvre)
- ¼ cup loosely packed basil, plus more for garnish
- 4 eggs
- Freshly ground black pepper

* Serve with crusty bread and a salad, and you have a hearty vego mid-week meal.

Method

- Combine zucchini with 1 tbsp salt in a colander and let drain in the sink for 30 minutes.
- Preheat oven to 375°F.
- In an oven-proof skillet, heat 2 tbsps olive oil over medium heat. Add shallots, garlic, and paprika and cook, stirring until just tender and fragrant. Squeeze as much liquid as possible from the squash and add the squash to the skillet along with the tomatoes. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the mixture is tender and no longer releasing liquid.
- Remove skillet from heat and stir in goats’ cheese and basil.
- Smooth the mixture evenly in the skillet and make four wells using the back of a spoon. Pour ½ tsp olive oil in each well.
- One at a time, crack an egg into a small bowl and pour into one of the wells. Sprinkle salt, pepper, and paprika over each egg.
- Bake until egg whites are set and yolks are still soft, about 10 minutes.
- Garnish with basil and serve with crusty bread.

* Adapted from Food Network

Be a part-time vegetarian

You do not have to call yourself a vegetarian to discover the wonderful flavours and health benefits of reducing your meat intake and trying dishes created from pulses, legumes, vegetables and tofu.

For this reason I would like to explore some pros and cons of reducing your meat intake and taking up the challenge of becoming a part-time vegetarian.

This can be as part-time as you like.

You may decide to make all breakfasts and lunches vego, but keep the meat at dinner.

Alternatively you may allow for one to three meat-free days a week.

It’s up to you.

Let’s look at the benefits:

- Vegetarian eating is about incorporating plant-based protein at every meal and combining it with

wholegrains, fruit and vegetables and yummy condiments. This ensures each meal is packed full of flavour, nutrients, and fills you up.

- The key to a healthy vegetarian diet is variety — and lots of it. There is no point becoming a vegetarian if you are fussy about lots of food such as lentils, pulses, whole grains, tofu, nuts, seeds and green leafy vegetables.
- Hard-core meat eaters often crave salt, fat and flavour, so as long as your vegetarian dish contains healthy oils, a combo of plant proteins and is not bland you should be able to reduce your meat intake with no cost to flavour or health.

- Add seasalt, fresh stocks, seaweeds and lots of herbs and spices — these promote the salty flavour that meat eaters are often craving as well as adding essential minerals and digestive properties into the meal. One disadvantage in the Goulburn Valley is that few cafés/ restaurants do vegetarian food well. Often just some meat-free pasta, risotto or focaccia which can be tasty, but a little lacking in protein and very much lacking in excitement!

- For this reason I adopt the principle of being a part-time vegetarian where you can mostly create vegetarian dishes at home and therefore be more flexible when eating out.
- Being a part-time vegetarian allows you to explore a wider variety of foods, as well as having huge economic, environmental, and health benefits.

- If you do decide to become a vegetarian it is vital to supplement — you can’t remove the meat from a plate without replacing it with some other iron-rich and protein-dense foods.
- When you eat meat as a condiment or replace it with well chosen vegetarian protein, food can be delicious, filling and extremely healthy.

