



Food and nutrition with naturopath **SOPHIE ATKIN**  
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# Make time for dinner

If you have been reading this column regularly, hopefully, you have mastered breakfast and lunchtime meals.

For those of you who are new to these columns, I have been writing a sequence of articles that discuss the significance of the meals we eat — breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks and drinks. The aim of these articles is to give you some tips, strategies and examples to make these meals easy to implement every day.

Now, it's dinner time.




Dinner needs to fill you up enough to get you through the night without disturbing your sleep with hunger pains. This does not mean that it has to be huge. Remember that dinner is the meal of the pauper. This does not mean it needs to be stingy, just a little smaller.

If you are an athlete you may get away with a massive carb-heavy pasta for dinner, but most of us do not need to carb load every day of the week.

It makes no sense to eat a pasta or high-carb meal when we are about to rest, as the main energy source at rest is fats. The aim of dinner is to encourage a deep sleep and to provide enough protein and minerals to repair and rebuild muscles, nervous and immune systems, at the same time to allow detoxification to take place.

Dinner is often the most social meal. The one where we sit down together and actually stop. Most of us put a bit of effort into dinner and while we make up any number of excuses to skip breakfast or lunch, most of us will not skip dinner.

- **The perfect dinner will provide you with enough nutrients to get you through the night, without causing a big dip in your blood sugar levels. At the same time it should be small enough to allow you to wake up with a strong morning appetite. If you wake up still feeling full from last night's meal, you have eaten too much or eaten the wrong food combinations at dinner.**
- **Dinner rules: If you have a special night where you go out for dinner or make a special desert or attend a dinner party, you may stray from these rules. But for the everyday weekday meals, these can be really helpful.**

■ VEGETABLES	PROTEIN	COMPLEX CARBS AND STARCHY VEGETABLES	DESERT
<div>■ 2 cups of vegetables.</div> 	<div>1 palm size serve.</div>	<div>¼ of the plate. The smallest part of the meal.</div> 	<div>Fresh or stewed fruit, yoghurt, a little dark chocolate are great for every day sweet cravings. Save sugary deserts for special occasions, eating out or when friends pop in.</div>
<div>■ Any vegetables cooked or raw. Eat a variety of colours. Make the bulk of your dinner green vegetables, and minimal white vegetables.</div>	<div>Red meat, eggs, fish, chicken, kangaroo, pork.</div> 	<div>Rice, legume, chickpeas, quinoa, wholegrain pasta, potato.</div>	<div>Dark chocolate, stewed fruit, yoghurt.</div>