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GI NEWS

The Official Glycemic Index Newsletter



December 2015

Hi, just a reminder that you're receiving this email because you subscribed to GI News via our web site. If you are no longer interested.

This issue looks at Christmas traditions and a traditional rich fruit cake; What you need to know about the festive season; Dietitian Nicole Senior talks turkey; Dr Antigone Kouris on the traditional Greek diet; 4 ways to use the GI Symbol; Low GI diets reduce risk of metabolic syndrome in overweight kids and Prof. Jenni Hill on how GI values can be different for everyone.

Christmas cake: It's really tradition

Did you know that Christmas cake was once more like porridge? Plus Kate McGhie's traditional rich Christmas cake – you can even make it without added sugar.

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GI values of your favourite nuts

Nuts pack a nutritional punch and will have very little impact on blood glucose levels. Check out the GI values of cashews, peanuts, pecans, mixed nuts and fruit & nut mix.

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Low GI diets improve overweight kids health

A systematic review and meta-analysis finds a statistically significant and positive impact for triglycerides, beta cell function and insulin sensitivity.

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Party-time drinks & nibbles

Enjoy the fun says Dr Alan Barclay, but smart choices can minimise the risk of high and low blood glucose – and also prevent unwanted weight gain during the holiday period.

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Nicole Senior talks turkey

Lean turkey meat is rich in protein, high in B12 and a source of iron, zinc and selenium. Don't feel you have to buy a whole bird to roast, there are a variety of cuts.

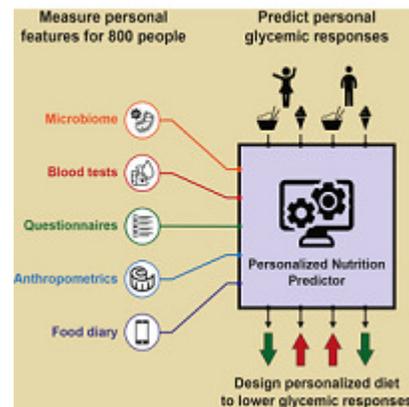
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Is a healthy diet different for everyone?

This new study is a game-changer for showing a connection between post prandial glucose responses (PPGR) and gut bacteria.

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Dr Antigone Kouris & the Greek diet

Religious fasting and vegan eating (legumes, fruit, vegetables, nuts and bread) were important parts of the traditional Greek diet.

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Four festive fare recipes

Rolled lamb with pea and mint filling, Vegetable roasties, Baked stone fruits and berries and Apples with crunched filo and maple glazed brazils.

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GI Symbol updates nutrient criteria

To reflect changes to our understanding of fats and carbs, our criteria have been reviewed to limit glycemic load and new food categories added.



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What I eat: Associate Professor Antigone Kouris

Nicole Senior talks to Associate Professor Antigone Kouris, an Accredited Practising Dietitian with over 28 years experience with a PhD, Bachelor of Science and Diplomas in Dietetics and Botanic Medicine. She worked with Professor Mark Wahlqvist for 20 years in the Department of Medicine at Monash University where she conducted pioneering research on the Mediterranean diet and longevity.

What is your cultural background? I was born in Melbourne Australia, but lived in Athens for 5 years as a teenager and finished a British secondary school there. My parents migrated to Australia in the 1950s. My father is from Crete, famous for the Seven Countries study in the 1950s, which was the first study to report the health benefits of the Cretan Mediterranean diet. My mother is from Athens, but her mother was originally from the spice capital Constantinople (now known as Istanbul) when many Greeks lived there during the Byzantine era and Ottoman empire prior to the 19th century.

What does a typical day's food look like in your culture? First generation Greeks in Australia have retained many aspects of their traditional food habits from Greece. This is what I discovered when I interviewed nearly 200 elderly Greek Australians for my PhD in the early 1990s and who were deemed one of the longest lived populations in the world at the time. In contrast, second and third generation Greek Australians are consuming a more multi-cultural diet.

A traditional Greek diet consists of:

Breakfast: Sourdough wholemeal (wheat/barley/corn) bread or rusks, olive oil, olives, tomatoes and sometimes cheese (usually fetta) or yoghurt and herb tea (sage or sideritis). Milk was rarely consumed by adults in Greece in the 1950s.

Mid-morning: Fruit, nuts.

Lunch: This was the main meal of the day. Meat was typically consumed only once a week or less (usually on a Sunday), chicken/pork once a week or less, fish (especially oily fish) or seafood (especially squid) about once a week (or more if one lived near the sea), meatless meals twice a week usually made with legumes (especially as soup in winter) or just vegetables (stewed in lots of tomato and oil) but served with cheese. The main meal was always served with either a salad or stewed vegies in tomato or boiled wild greens (chickory, endive, amaranth), bread and a glass of wine. Rice, pasta or potatoes were consumed with meals a few times a week.

Afternoon: Siesta for 1 hour and then fruit and Greek coffee.

Dinner: Light meal usually consisting of strained Sheep yoghurt, walnuts and honey.

Supper: Herb tea such as sage or sideritis or chamomile with a rusk or plain sweet biscuit.

Greek religious fasting: The traditional Greek diet is also beneficially influenced by the Greek Orthodox religion. The religion recommends vegan eating for up to 200 days of the year (during Easter, Christmas, Assumption of Mary) and Wednesday and Friday of every week. Many first generation Greek Australians are continuing the practice of vegan eating 2 days a week where only legumes, fruit, vegetables, nuts and bread are consumed. Could this be the secret to their longevity? Our PhD student and dietitian Tania Thodis at La Trobe University is exploring the role of Greek religious fasts and health.

What is your favourite dish? Haricot bean soup (fasolada). This soup (and not souvlaki) is considered to be The National Dish of Greece! This highlights that the traditional Greek diet is a plant-based diet.

What are 3 ingredients this cuisine couldn't do without? Extra virgin olive oil, onions, tomato. However, oregano, dill, mint,



Haricot bean soup (fasolada)

garlic and lemon are also critical ingredients giving many dishes their characteristic flavours. Cretan dishes also feature rosemary and fennel. Unfortunately spices do not feature in many Greek dishes (except dishes prepared by Greeks originally from Asia Minor/Constantinople like my mother!) I believe Greek dishes can be made even healthier by spicing them up a little!

Can you suggest a hero ingredient? Haricot beans

Associate Professor Antigone Kouris is currently a member of the Department of Dietetics at La Trobe University where she is involved in setting up an on-line course in Nutritional and Herbal Medicine for allied health professionals. She has over 40 published papers, has co-authored 5 university text books (including a book on integrative medicine) and 3 of her own books (including a cook book on spiced up Greek dishes!) Recently she turned her expertise to the development of healthy low fodmap gluten free cookies (Skinnybiks) using novel ingredients like spelt and lupin after being challenged by one of her patients. Find out more about Skinnybiks here: www.skinnybik.com



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