

# All smiles



ISSY CROKER

## Melissa Hemsley's *Eat Happy* saves time and money on healthy meals

BY ANNIE MAKOFF

IN ALL the chaos of our busy, modern lives, many of us are more likely to reach for quick, unhealthy foods than healthier alternatives. We're so busy juggling work and family commitments that we've convinced ourselves we don't have the time to make better choices. But, says celebrity chef Melissa Hemsley, it's entirely possible to make healthy food from scratch—and fast.

"It's rare that people have time to spend ages cooking," says Hemsley, who is well-known for her foodie media appearances, along with sister Jasmine. "Everything is so fast-paced and people are so used to grabbing quick food, but it's important that people know how to make healthy fast food."

Healthy food made simple is the modus operandi of the sibling duo. They've written several cookbooks together, including *The Art of Eating Well* and *Good + Simple*, and had their own Channel 4 TV series, *Eating Well with Hemsley + Hemsley*.

*Eat Happy: 30-Minute Feelgood Food* is Melissa Hemsley's first solo cookbook. It features 120 delicious recipes that make magic out of leftovers and use cupboard-

staple ingredients.

"All the recipes in the book require minimal effort," Hemsley explains. "Every meal is on the table within half an hour. It's nourishing comfort food which the whole family will love."

Acutely aware of the pressures of modern life, Hemsley wanted to bring the joy back to home cooking by creating a cookbook featuring nutritious food that was easy, quick to cook and suited any budget. *Eat Happy* does all this and more. It's a book you can grab when you come home after a busy day and it helps you rustle something up in under 30 minutes.

What's more, Hemsley is convinced that good food can also lift the mood. Her book, she

hopes, will demonstrate the wellness benefits of a healthy meal. "When you eat nourishing foods, you instantly feel better and lighter. Whenever I'm feeling ill and tired, I'll cook up some soup and it makes me feel happier."

And because leftovers form the focus of Hemsley's recipes, trying out meal ideas from the book won't break the bank. It's what inspires her the most—looking in the fridge, freezer and cupboards to see what needs using up and experimenting to find out which foods go together.

"A recipe doesn't have to be complicated, so it's easy to be inspired," she says. "I love it when I meet up with someone who tells me they used to avoid cooking, as it stressed them out, but now they enjoy it and can put their own spin on a recipe based on what they've got at home already."

Along with time-saving tips in the "Making something out of nothing" and "Use it up" sections, *Eat Happy* is packed with crowd-pleasers. From breakfast ideas such as Turkish scrambled eggs, and spinach and smoked trout muffins, to snacks and canapés, to "bowl food" recipes such as easy ratatouille, there really is something for everyone. And, for the real fast-food fan, it even includes "Fake-aways"—Hemsley's healthy spin on take-aways, such as chicken katsu curry and beef and carrot koftas.

So what are her top tips for creating healthy, exciting meals? "We eat with our eyes, so colour on our plate makes all the difference," she explains. "I like a rainbow of vegetables; variety is important and keeps things exciting. Flavour-wise, if I cook with something that someone doesn't like, say cauliflower or kale or fish, I'll pull out a killer dressing, sauce or pesto—it's a game changer!"

Naturally, Hemsley is a fan of all the recipes in her latest book, but she admits she's particularly fond of the spiced lamb aubergine boats, the duck pancakes with hoisin sauce, the spiced quinoa haloumi tabbouleh and the broccoli falafel wraps.

"My book is all about using what you have, rather than wasting food," she adds. "It saves you money, time and is a positive, easy habit we can all get into." **C**



### THE COSTCO CONNECTION

Look for Melissa Hemsley's *Eat Happy: 30-minute Feelgood Food* at your local Costco warehouse.

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### LITTLE CHOCOLATE POTS

180 ml any milk  
 120 to 140 g dark (70% to 85%) chocolate, broken into squares  
 45 ml (3 tablespoons) maple syrup  
 1 egg  
 5 ml (1 teaspoon) vanilla extract

#### TO SERVE (OPTIONAL)

Sea salt flakes  
 1 handful fresh raspberries, cherries or a mixture

Gently heat the milk in a saucepan for about 45 seconds until hot all the way through. Place 120 g of the chocolate in a high-powered blender or food processor with the maple syrup, egg and vanilla extract.

Very carefully pour a quarter of the hot milk into the blender or food processor (or use a ladle, if you prefer) and blend until smooth, then repeat, adding a quarter of the milk at a time, until all the milk is combined and the mixture is silky smooth. (You need to add the hot milk slowly so that it doesn't scramble the egg.)

Pour into 4 small ramekins or glasses and leave in the fridge for a minimum of 1½ hours, or 1 hour in the freezer, to set. When you're ready to serve, grate over the remaining dark chocolate or top with a sprinkling of sea salt flakes or a few fresh raspberries or cherries.

Makes 4 servings.

*Recipe adapted from Eat Happy by Melissa Hemsley. Photography by Issy Croker.*

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