

The Hairy Bikers GO VEGGIE



Hairy Bikers' tip

COOK WHAT'S IN SEASON - 95% OF GOOD COOKING IS ABOUT GOOD INGREDIENTS

Si King and Dave Myers, aka the Hairy Bikers, are the last people on earth you'd imagine worrying about their meat consumption or discussing the merits of beans and pulses. They tell **Tiffany Daneff** just what's turned their heads and, more importantly, how they've managed to give veggie fodder their famous northern zing

Si, far left: We'd talked about a veggie book before and how it came about, to be honest, is that Dave has a house in France and I was in Italy on holiday – my sister lives in Italy – and the two of us oscillate between the two countries. Because we're always on the phone to each other I'd be, 'What are you eating... what have you got? What's happening in the markets... what's going on?' And I said to Dave, 'D'you know what, I haven't eaten meat in ages'. And Dave was like, 'No, neither have I'.

Dave: That's because I started growing and cooking my own veg. There's that thing people always say – there's nothing better than a homegrown potato... but by God, these potatoes were like culinary crack! They were so tasty.

Si: It's interesting how times have changed, how meat has become so consumable. I remember when I was little, as does Dave, that meat was a treat because it was so expensive. So you'd have loads of veggies, you'd have loads of potatoes or maybe some bread, you'd eat lots of pulses because the meat that you had was a treat. I still eat meat, and so does Dave, but...

Dave: ...I want really good meat.

Si: We both want very good meat but the amount that people consume now is just not sustainable.

Dave: The amount of processed meat...

Si: It's just insane.

Dave: I remember in the 1980s going to vegetarian restaurants and you used to look at the menu and go, you know, 'It's which plate of brown do you want?' And three forkfuls in and it's fine, but then you're...

Dave and Si together: ...bored.

Dave: What we wanted to do, more than anything, was first of all make the food really, really good and tasty, full of colour and flavour and texture – but not complicated. It's veggies for meat eaters. And then we found by cutting out the meat it lowered the calories.

Si: We've just been filming in Sardinia [for a new BBC series due to be broadcast early next year] up in the mountains with the shepherds and it's one of those blue zones – those five spots on the planet where people seem to live longer – and the shepherds up there were in their fifties and they looked in their late thirties.

Dave: There were two words they used all the time: one was 'simple' and the other one was 'natural'.

Si: 'Naturale.' People ate a lot of pulses, that's one of the common things between the blue zones. Even today, right across Italy, meat is the smallest thing that you eat as you go through dinner because it's expensive. These were normal people but their food knowledge was immense. They knew what to pick, when to pick it, what to use with it, so it was always regional, always seasonal and it was always what was the very best >

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**THESE
POTATOES WERE
LIKE CULINARY
CRACK! THEY
WERE SO TASTY**



CUPBOARD VEGGIE *Flavour boosters*

Mushroom ketchup

Great alternative to Worcestershire sauce, which contains anchovies

Tomato purée

Packaged sunshine
Vegetable stock
Fresh, powder or cubes

Preserved lemons

Give a heavy citrus punch

Capers

Salty, peppery, vinegary

Olives

Slice into sauces

Sun-dried tomatoes

Add depth of flavour

Harissa paste

For a bit of heat

Smoked paprika

This magic ingredient gives a lovely tangy flavour

Smoked tofu

A great alternative to bacon. The boys are great fans.



**Less is more
SPICES DON'T LAST
FOR EVER. BUY
SMALL AMOUNTS
AND REPLACE
THEM OFTEN**



**Save
money**

TO CUT DOWN ON
FAT USE AN OIL SPRAY.
NO NEED TO BUY ONE
- FILL A PLANT SPRAY
BOTTLE WITH YOUR
FAVOURITE OIL

RECIPE**Artichoke
and lemon dip**

**50 CALORIES
PER 50G
SERVING
PREP: 10
MINUTES**

Those roasted artichokes in oil you can buy from the deli counter or in jars are just right for this – better than the ones in brine. But you do have to drain and rinse them thoroughly to keep the calorie count down. You still get a nice creamy dip that makes a great snack with some cucumber, celery and other raw veg. This recipe is a life-saver for those snack-attack moments.

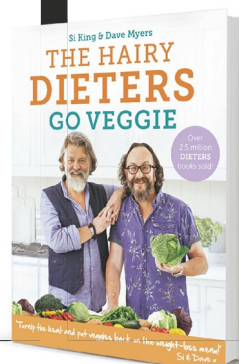
200g (7oz) roasted artichokes
Grated zest of 1 lemon
Juice of ½ lemon
1 garlic clove, crushed
Small bunch of basil, leaves only
15g (½oz) vegetarian Parmesan-style hard cheese, grated
150g (5oz) half-fat crème fraîche
Sea salt and black pepper

- 1 Drain the roasted artichokes and rinse them thoroughly.
- 2 Put the artichokes in a food processor with the remaining ingredients and season well with salt and pepper.
- 3 Blitz until the mixture is fairly smooth – it's good to keep a little texture, but you don't want the dip to be lumpy or fibrous. You may need to push the mixture down with a spatula a couple of times.
- 4 Cover and store the dip in the fridge until needed. It will keep well for a couple of days.

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◁ with the simplest cooking. There were some little tricks that we found out, but a lot of it was really easy.

Dave: A lot of good olive oil.

Si: Orange and lemon zest, real old-fashioned but it works. I was surprised in Calabria the amount of orange zest we saw – because it was in season. And there's something just lovely with the markets as well. We don't have the same weather because we live in northern Europe and we don't have the same facilities, the same infrastructure with people bringing their stuff from their gardens to market places.

Dave: Having said that, we are so multicultural we get the benefit of easy access to Asian ingredients, oriental ingredients and spices. Thai food is brilliant for vegetarians because the flavours are so pungent you don't really miss the meat. It's all about that 'yum factor'.

Si: It's the same with Indian cuisine as well. And Vietnamese. There is absolutely nowhere that we can think of – that Dave and I have travelled to – where you can eat your way around the world like you can in the UK. In France, fresh coriander is not generally on the shelf – it's flat-leaf parsley, dill and mint.

Dave: I've got this funny feeling at the back of my head, you know like smoking is now, it's almost like, nah, it's a bit naff, and most people don't smoke. At one time it was the other way around and I reckon in 50 years' time we'll all be veggie. **S**

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**RECIPE****Instant
banana
ice cream**

**129
CALORIES
PER SERVING
(4 SERVINGS)
PREP: 10 MINUTES
+ FREEZING
TIME**

This sounds bonkers, but it's brilliant. It's the speediest ice cream ever and tastes like a real treat, even though it contains very little fat and sugar. All you need to do is think ahead and get the bananas into the freezer.

Serves: 4-6

4 very ripe bananas
Juice of ½ lime
Grated zest of ½ lime, plus extra to garnish
½ tsp cinnamon, plus extra to garnish (optional)
A few drops of vanilla extract
2 tbsp soft light brown sugar or maple syrup
100ml (3½fl oz) yogurt or half-fat crème fraîche

- 1 Peel the bananas and cut them into fairly small chunks.
- 2 Toss these in the lime juice and spread on a baking tray. Freeze until they're completely solid all the way through – this will take at least 2 hours, but overnight is best.
- 3 Put the frozen bananas in a food processor with the lime zest, cinnamon, vanilla extract, sugar or maple syrup and the yogurt or crème fraîche. Blend until the mixture is smooth and creamy.
- 4 Serve sprinkled with extra lime zest and cinnamon, if you like.