

KERNELS OF GOODNESS

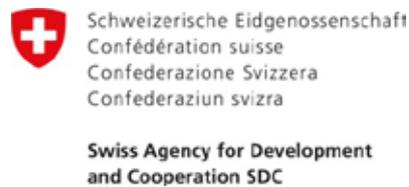
LOCAL SEEDS AND NUTS OF ZIMBABWE

THE ZIMBABWE TRADITIONAL AND ORGANIC FOOD FORUM

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to all who contributed to the production of this booklet, particularly Blessing Muzori, Agnes Zinhu, Charlene Chisvo, Tracy Mapfumo, Nyarai Kurebgaseka, Sarah Lilford, and Andrew Mhaka.

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Written by: Anna Brazier, Jennifer Mayer and Caroline Jacquet

Edited by: Jennifer Mayer

Photography: David Brazier, Thomas Heyland,
Faizel Kara and Farai Wallace

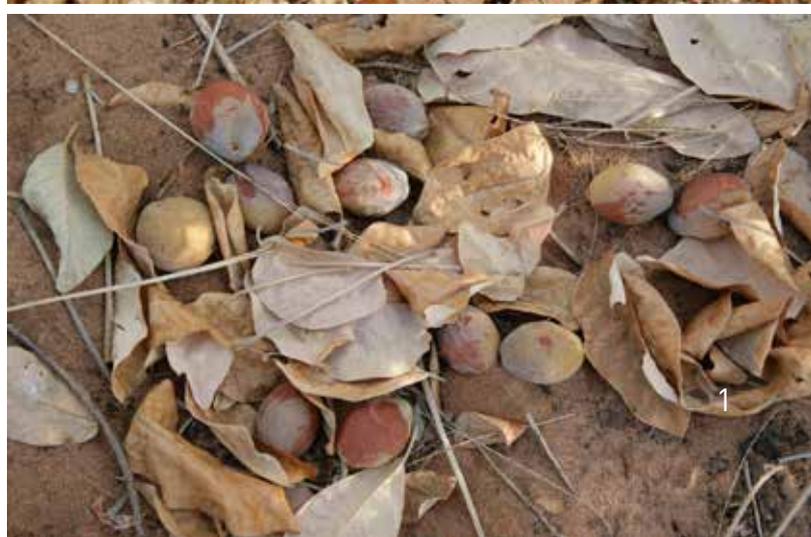
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FOREWORD

The Zimbabwean diet has degraded over the last century. Due to historical factors and globalisation, people no longer eat a wide range of grains, legumes, nuts and seeds, fruit and vegetables. Consumption of unhealthy processed foods, sugary and oily foods has become the norm. This has led to malnutrition and an alarming increase in diet-related diseases including cardiovascular conditions, diabetes, obesity and some cancers.

As the diet has changed, the status of traditional foods has declined and farmers have switched to production of mainly foreign crops which are not tolerant to local climatic, soil or pest and disease conditions. This makes farming challenging especially for those who cannot afford or do not want to use expensive fertilisers and pesticides.

This booklet was developed by the Zimbabwe Traditional and Organic Food Forum, a group of organisations working together to combat these challenges by promoting local and organic seeds and foods. Each year for the past 7 years, the Food Forum has organised the Good Food Festival to celebrate these products and bring farmers, businesses and consumers together. Each year attendance at the festival grows and grows, a reflection of Zimbabweans' huge interest and growing pride in their own local foods, health and nutrition.

This year's booklet highlights Zimbabwe's incredible indigenous nuts and seeds, along with stories from the people who grow, harvest, and process them. These amazing little kernels are not only full of flavour but also rich in oils with powerful health and beauty properties.

GO NUTS!

Nuts and seeds were some of the earliest foods consumed by humans and have played an important role in diets across the world. Nuts and seeds can be eaten raw, roasted or processed in so many ways.

PACKED WITH GOODNESS Research suggests that because they are high in unsaturated fatty acids, fibre, protein, vitamins and minerals, eating nuts and seeds on a regular basis may reduce the risk of diabetes and heart disease. Because they are high in fibre, nuts are digested slowly, helping you feel full and satisfied for longer. So even though they are a high calorie food, eating a handful of nuts or seeds each day may actually help you lose weight. Nuts are a great source of vitamin E, magnesium, potassium, calcium, iron and zinc, and are rich in cancer-fighting antioxidants.

INCREDIBLY VERSATILE Nuts and seeds can be used to make an amazing array of dairy and meat alternatives that actually taste good! Nut-based “milks” are taking off around the world, and more nut- and seed-based products are introduced on the market each year. As the climate crisis worsens and the global dairy and meat industries’ contribution comes under greater scrutiny, consumers are turning to nuts and seeds as an alternative—something Zimbabweans have practised for generations.

EASY TO ENJOY Eating nuts and seeds raw or lightly toasting them in an oven or hot pan is the best way to preserve their nutritional value. When nuts or seeds are roasted with vegetable oil, it introduces cholesterol-raising trans (bad) fats to a snack that is naturally rich in good fats, and what’s the point of that??

Nuts and seeds can be kept in air-tight containers at room temperature, but if you need to store them longer they should be kept in a fridge or freezer.



LET'S GET CRACKING

Several of the indigenous trees that produce edible nuts happen to grow best in the hot, dry regions of Zimbabwe and therefore are an important food in areas where conventional crops struggle. Well known as ingredients in traditional snacks, Zimbabwe's local nuts are increasingly popular with chefs and food companies alike. Many of the nut varieties are also processed for their oils, prized by the cosmetics industry for their skin and hair care properties.

MARULA NUTS *Marula tree, Sclerocarya birrea. Mupfura (Shona) / Umganu (Ndebele)*

The marula tree is famous for its delicious fruits from which the Amarula liqueur is produced. The fermented fruits are also said to be enjoyed by elephants and other wild animals, which also distracts them from going after farmers' crops. The tree grows up to 18m tall and is distributed at low and medium altitudes in open woodlands across Zimbabwe, especially in hot, dryland areas. Marula fruits are gathered and enjoyed fresh in season from January to March, when the pulp is sometimes used to make traditional beer or jelly.

After the fruits are eaten, the hard, inner nuts are cleaned and dried and stored, waiting to be cracked. In the shell, marula nuts store quite well since insects cannot get through their notoriously hard exterior. But this means that the nuts must be cracked carefully to avoid damaging the delicate, delicious kernels inside. The

technique for cracking nuts has been perfected over generations by women living in Zimbabwe's lowveld, requiring just the right amount of force and a skilled hand.

Traditionally, marula nuts are pounded and used to flavour relishes, greens and meat dishes. The oil from the nuts is sometimes used to coat and seal meat before it is dried to make biltong. The kernels have higher protein and oil content than other popular nuts (including walnut, hazelnut, and almond) and are rich in magnesium, phosphorus and potassium.

The oil is highly nutritious and very stable, containing a large proportion of unsaturated fats, vitamins C and E, and antioxidants. It is highly valued as a skincare ingredient.



MONGONGO NUTS

Mongongo or Manketti tree, *Schinziophyton rautanenii*. Mungongoma (S) / Umgoma or Umganuompobola (N)

The mongongo tree has been providing food to the inhabitants of southern Africa, particularly the San people, for over seven thousand years. The trees grow up to 20m tall and are found in Kalahari sands across southwestern Angola, Namibia, northern Botswana, southwestern Zambia, western Zimbabwe, Malawi and northern Mozambique.

Although there are fruits on the trees by the end of the rainy season (April-May), people often wait to pick them until the tall grasses have started to die back (June), to avoid coming face to face with the elephants and other wild animals that eat them too. A single mongongo tree can yield as many as 1,000 fruits in a season. Some years the fruits are so abundant that they pile knee deep on the ground.

To eat mongongo, the fruits are first softened with steam to remove the skins, then cooked to separate the pulp from the nuts. The pulp is often mixed into porridge and the whole nuts are dried and stored, ready for cracking. Cracking mongongo nuts is a tricky business, left for the most part to women who first scorch them in a fire and then use stones or small axes to break the outer shell. Cracking can be done throughout the year, which makes mongongo an important source of income in between agricultural seasons.

Mongongo nuts have a protein content similar to peanuts and are rich in beneficial fatty acids. The nut is also a good source of calcium, magnesium, iron, copper and zinc, with high levels of vitamin E. Mongongo nut oil has been used traditionally as a hair and skin moisturiser and is now extracted commercially for use in cosmetics.

"... WHEN A BUSHMAN WAS ASKED WHY HE HADN'T TAKEN TO AGRICULTURE HE REPLIED: 'WHY SHOULD WE PLANT, WHEN THERE ARE SO MANY MONGONGO NUTS IN THE WORLD?'"

Lee, Richard B.. "What Hunters Do for a Living, or, How to Make Out on Scarce Resources" *Man the Hunter*. Chicago: Aldine; 1968. p. 33





HACHA NUTS

Mobola plum tree, *Parinari curatellifolia*, Muchakata, Muhacha (S) / Umnkuna (N)

The mobola plum is widespread in tropical Africa with the highest concentration in the deciduous woodlands of Zimbabwe and the lowveld region in South Africa. The tree grows to 13m providing a shady evergreen canopy in open woodland, wooded grassland, savannah and on rocky sites. It is so valued that it is often left standing in farmers' fields and is considered an indicator of a high water table.

The fruits are sweet and highly prized and can be harvested from October to January. They are eaten fresh or dried and the pulp is often pounded and used as a flavouring for porridge. The juice of the plum can be brewed into an alcoholic drink.

The nuts are extracted by soaking the fruits in water for 24 hours, then pounding with coarse sand to remove the skin and pulp. The nuts are then rinsed and sun dried for at least two days before they can be cracked. Traditionally the nuts are eaten raw, roasted or crushed and cooked with green vegetables.

Hacha nuts are a good source of protein, calcium, magnesium, potassium, iron and phosphorus. If you love exotic nuts such as almonds or pine nuts, you should know that hacha nuts are even more delicious.

Seeds from gourds and grasses have crossed oceans and continents for millennia, carried by winds, currents and people and adapting to new lands and uses. Durable, versatile and enriching, these seeds have been a source of energy and good health for generations.

WILD MELON SEEDS

Wild melons / Kalahari melons. *Citrullus lanatus* / *C. lanatus* var. *lanatus*. Mashamba (S) / Amajodo (N)

Wild melons originated in the Kalahari region of southern Africa and are the ancestor of the modern-day watermelon. These annual, trailing plants come in a wide variety of shapes and colours and grow all across the Kalahari sands of Namibia, Botswana, southwestern Zambia and western Zimbabwe. They are extremely drought tolerant and can easily be grown from seed. The melons are usually planted at the start of the rainy season and are harvested in late summer. The fruit can be stored for many months and is used as fodder for livestock in the lean months.

Every part of the wild melon is eaten, including the fruit, leaves and seeds. The flesh is sometimes boiled with whole dried maize to make a type of soup. The seeds can be eaten raw or roasted and are often pounded into a flour which can be enjoyed a number of different ways—cooked with vegetables, stirred into maize porridge or steeped in boiling water to make a refreshing drink.

Wild melon seeds are a good source of protein, iron, phosphorus, magnesium and zinc. The oil extracted from the seed will not clog pores and is therefore excellent for acne-prone skin.



PUMPKIN AND SQUASH SEEDS

Cucurbita maxima, *Cucurbita moschata*
Mubovora, Manhanga (S) / Ijodo (N)

Although they originated in South and Central America, many varieties of pumpkin and squash have been grown across Africa for centuries. In Zimbabwe, the vines are grown mostly by women farmers, planted at the start of the rainy season on mounded soil to help with drainage and pest control, and harvested at the end of summer. Once harvested, they can be stored for many months.

Pumpkin leaves—muboora—are a huge seasonal favourite in Zimbabwe, usually cooked with onions and tomato or peanut butter. Pumpkin and squash flowers are also popular and are often harvested at the expense of fruit production. The fruit's flesh is used to make the much-loved traditional dish nhopi, boiled pumpkin thickened with maize meal and blended with peanut butter.

Pumpkin seeds are sundried before storing, then roasted and eaten as a salted snack. The seeds can also be pounded and rolled into balls called mabumbe, a kind of meatless meatball. This preparation (found in the recipe section of this booklet) makes a great meat substitute as pumpkin and squash seeds are high in protein and are also good sources of iron, calcium and magnesium.





SESAME SEEDS

Sesamum indicum, Runinga (S) / Inkunzana (N)

Sesame is indigenous to Africa and three wild varieties occur in Zimbabwe. This tough, bushy, annual plant grows to 1m tall, is extremely drought tolerant and often found growing wild on disturbed soils and fallow agricultural fields.



Modern sesame varieties are grown commercially, particularly as a valuable oil seed. The crop is planted at the start of the rains and the seeds which form in small oval capsules can be harvested after about three months from planting. The seeds must be harvested when they are completely dry.



The soft young leaves can be cooked and eaten as a vegetable. The seeds can be eaten raw, roasted or ground into a paste (also known as tahini) that is used in cuisines around the world from the Mediterranean to Africa to Asia. The seeds are also widely used in the baking and confectionary industries. The oil is used in Asian cooking and in the cosmetics industry.

Sesame seeds have one of the highest oil contents of any edible seed, rich in protein and also an excellent source of calcium.



SOWING THE SEEDS OF SUCCESS

Stories from the people who grow, harvest and process Zimbabwe's nuts and seeds.

TURNING WILD MELONS INTO TIDY PROFITS

Blessing Muzori is a farmer from Mutoko who grows wild melons to feed her cows and pigs. Sometimes she uses the melon pulp to make delicious nhopi with peanut butter or the seeds to make a traditional relish eaten with maize. People in Blessing's community have also used the melon seed oil as a body lotion. But Blessing never realised wild melons could make her money until she started growing it for sale to Kaza Natural Oils.

"We plant the melons in November inter-cropped with sunflowers and groundnuts and we usually harvest them early June. When the mother plant starts drying up it's a sign that the fruit is ready to be harvested. We harvest them without removing the stem, so the fruit does not start rotting," Blessing explains. The crop is tough and does not require any fertilisers. It is also resistant to pests and diseases.

In 2019 Blessing earned enough money from the sales of her wild melon seed to buy a new breed of pig for her livestock project.





THE GIVING TREE

Agnes Zinhu of Tsike Ward, Mutoko became a commercial hacha harvester in 2018, but she and her neighbours have always known how good the fruits and nuts from the hacha tree are. “We enjoy eating the fruits and we also use the nuts to make a skin cream which we extract after roasting and then pressing them. When the fruit is ripe it falls to the ground and we harvest it from there.”

The hacha tree also has religious and cultural significance for the Shona people, used in ceremonies and as a shrine to ancestral spirits. Agnes explains, “the trees belong to the whole community and are protected by our traditional leaders who have made rules about when and how we can harvest the fruits. No one person is allowed to harvest or sell all of the fruit from a given tree. Fruit must be shared among the whole community and some also left for wild animals to prevent them from coming to steal crops.”

Some people in Agnes’s community use the leaves of the hacha tree to speed up the fermentation process in making traditional beer while others use the bark to treat common poultry diseases and even stomach ailments in people.





DISCOVERING DELICIOUS TRADITIONS

Charlene Chisvo always had a deep love for food and cooking growing up. She found herself doing the odd catering and baking jobs to make some extra cash but her interest in traditional ingredients was piqued after she manned a food stall at the 2015 Good Food Festival and was inspired by Zimbabwe's amazing local fruits, grains, nuts and seeds. Growing up in Harare, Charlie (as her friends call her) didn't have much exposure to traditional foods and techniques but now she is a traditional food fanatic and even teaches her mother how to prepare local dishes using indigenous ingredients. Charlie spends a lot of time travelling to rural areas, learning about local plants and foods and swapping recipes with communities.

In 2017, Charlie started working with Hutano Foods, producing a line of breakfast cereals and snacks made from indigenous nuts, fruits and grains. "Working for Hutano Foods is exciting because I get to be part of the whole drive to get nutritious, delicious traditional foods into retail outlets and supermarkets," Charlie explains. Most of the products are naturally gluten-free as well, which makes them even more popular with today's health-conscious customers.

"We aim to promote speciality foods but at a cheaper price than the equivalent imported products. There is a perception that wild-harvested foods should be cheaper than those that are cultivated but their price reflects the fact that the harvesters are getting a fair price for their produce, so that they see real value in keeping their forests intact rather than clearing them for agriculture or fuel wood."

Find out more about Hutano Foods by visiting their website at www.hutanofoods.com.



SERVING UP INSPIRATION

As a child, growing up in rural Mashonaland Central, Tracy Mapfumo watched her mother successfully run her small business and was inspired to follow in her footsteps. She had always loved working with local plants and seeds and in 2018 her passions for entrepreneurship and cooking converged when she started Eny's Treats, a range of sesame-based snack bars named for her mother, Eny.

As part of sourcing ingredients for her snacks, Tracy works with farmers and provides a market for their sesame harvest and other local products. "Sesame has been grown and used in traditional cooking in Zimbabwe for centuries, but most is sold to Mozambique where there is a huge demand for it. Meanwhile, most sesame seed sold in Zimbabwean shops is imported. My granny used to make sesame butter when I was a kid," says Tracy. "She had an amazing way of cooking tilapia fish in sesame butter. So, there are local markets for these products, but farmers and others don't realise this."

Tracy had all of this very much in mind when she formulated her snack bar recipes. "I wanted to make a link between local farmers and local markets for indigenous products," says Tracy. "I decided to focus on making snacks because they are portable and long lasting."

Eny's Treats are starting to take off, finding customers in specialty food outlets, health spas and farmers markets. "I even have customers in Bulawayo and Victoria Falls!" Tracy exclaims. But she has even bigger dreams: exporting her snacks to consumers across the region. "We still have work to do with the farmers in terms of quality, especially when it comes to shelling and processing the sesame," says Tracy, but the future is bright.

Find out more about Eny's Treats by visiting their website at www.enystreats.co.zw.



EXTRACTING LIQUID GOLD

Nyarai Kurebgaseka is a trained biochemist who has been working to promote and commercialise indigenous plants her whole career developing a wide range of products including food, drinks and cosmetics.

In 2016, Nyarai helped launch Kaza Natural Oils, a company working with producer communities throughout Zimbabwe to supply high-quality natural plant oils to the global cosmetics market. Amongst their most prized oils are those pressed from marula and mongongo nuts, as well as wild melon seeds.

“The nuts and seeds all have different properties,” Nyarai explains. “Mongongo nut oil has sun protection properties for use on both skin and hair. It was used in the past by the Bushman communities living in the Kalahari to protect them from the harsh desert sun. It prevents sun damage and soothes after sunburn. Marula oil is better for delicate and sensitive skin. It is a gentle, quick-absorbing oil that does not leave a shiny film on the skin, so it is excellent for facial products. It also has anti-aging properties as it improves skin elasticity. Wild melon seeds exude a very light oil that does not clog pores. It is good for young, acne-prone skin.”

Kaza takes pride in the purity of their cold-pressed oils, never using chemical additives or solvents. “A huge amount of effort goes into quality control,” Nyarai says. “We work with the collectors and farmers to ensure that they give us the best quality, uncontaminated nuts and seeds.” Kaza’s oils are sold mainly in bulk to cosmetics and pharmaceutical companies around the world, but they also produce a hair and skin care range for the Zimbabwe market.

Find out more about Kaza Natural Oils by visiting their website at www.kazanaturaloils.com.



FOLLOWING HER BLISS

Sarah Lilford grew up on a farm in Guruve, where food and family were very much part of daily life. After she left school, Sarah completed a short cooking course and travelled the world cooking and eating and learning from many different cuisines. When Sarah returned to Zimbabwe, she started a small catering business and line of homemade food products. "I have always used locally grown ingredients in all my work," Sarah insists. Her cookbook, *Dusty Road – A Taste of Farm Life and Living in Zimbabwe*, is a celebration of those ingredients and the richness of Zimbabwe's culture and people.

In 2019, Sarah started Dusty Road Township Experience in the Chinotimba Township of Victoria Falls. The beautifully renovated house and garden is filled with bright and inventive accents, many of which are recycled from markets, farmsteads and

neighbourhoods across the region. The resulting space is a charming oasis where African humour and ingenuity are celebrated in every detail, especially the food.

Food specialist Orpah Muza shares her friend Sarah's passion for all things local and has lent her vast knowledge of traditional culture and ingredients to the development of Dusty Road's delicious dishes. Mama O, as she's affectionately called, introduced Sarah to some of the indigenous nuts, seeds and fruits that are now her favourites. "Indigenous products have great market potential," enthuses Sarah. "There are so many health benefits as well. These products are so versatile and of course provide economic development for Zimbabwean suppliers"

Find out more about Sarah Lilford's Dusty Road Township Experience by visiting their website at www.dustyroad.africa.



RECIPES



SUN DRIED TOMATO, BASIL AND HACHA NUT DIP

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup sun dried tomatoes
(or 2 heaped Tbsp tomato paste)
- 1 ½ cups lightly roasted hacha nuts
- 1 clove garlic
- 4 Tbsp tomato puree
- 1 Tbsp sugar
- 1 Tbsp plain yogurt
- 1 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1 cup olive oil
- 1 Tbsp grated parmesan
- 1 Tbsp fresh basil leaves, chopped
- Salt and black pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Keeping a handful of nuts aside for garnishing, combine all ingredients in a blender or food processor and blend together until smooth.
2. Taste and adjust seasoning and consistency, adding a little more yoghurt if the mixture is too thick.
3. To garnish, sprinkle with reserved hacha nuts and a fresh basil leaf. Serve with crusty bread or crackers.

Recipe courtesy of Dusty Road

MARULA NUT PESTO

INGREDIENTS

- 3 packed cups fresh basil or coriander leaves
- ½ cup marula nuts, lightly toasted
- ½ cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- ½ clove garlic
- 3 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Add the garlic to a food processor or blender and pulse a few times just to break it up, then add the marula nuts and pulse.
2. Next, add the basil leaves, pulse to a rough-chopped texture and add the grated parmesan, pulsing to combine.
3. Then, with the processor or blender running, slowly pour in the olive oil until the mixture is smooth. If the mixture is too thick for your liking, add more olive oil.
4. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
5. Add to pasta, cooked or raw vegetables, or sandwiches and wraps!





MARULA NUT BUTTER

INGREDIENTS

- 200g marula nuts
- ½ tsp salt
- A splash of oil for blending

DIRECTIONS

1. Toast the marula kernels over medium-high heat until lightly toasted and aromatic.
2. Once the nuts are cool enough to handle, rub them lightly between your palms to remove skin.
3. In a high-speed blender or food processor, add the nuts and salt and begin blending. You can add a small amount of vegetable oil as you begin if you find the nuts are not blending easily.
4. You will notice that the nuts go through different phases as you blend them. First the nuts will have a crumbly texture then they will clump into a ball. Next they will form a sandy or gritty paste and finally a creamy, smooth consistency.
5. Marula nut butter can be used just like peanut butter. Try it in baking, on sandwiches or add it to soups, sauces and stews.



TAHINI - SESAME PASTE

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup sesame seeds
- 3 Tbsp seed oil or olive oil

DIRECTIONS

1. Toast the sesame seeds in a pan, stirring constantly until they are golden brown. Be careful not to burn them!
2. Once the seeds have cooled, add them to a food processor or mortar and pestle.
3. Add the oil and process the mixture into a paste. If the paste seems too thick, add more oil in small increments to reach the desired consistency.
4. Store the tahini in an airtight jar. It will keep in the fridge for up to six months.
5. Tahini is full of flavour and a great addition to soups, stews, dips and sauces.



WILD NUT AND PEANUT COOKIES

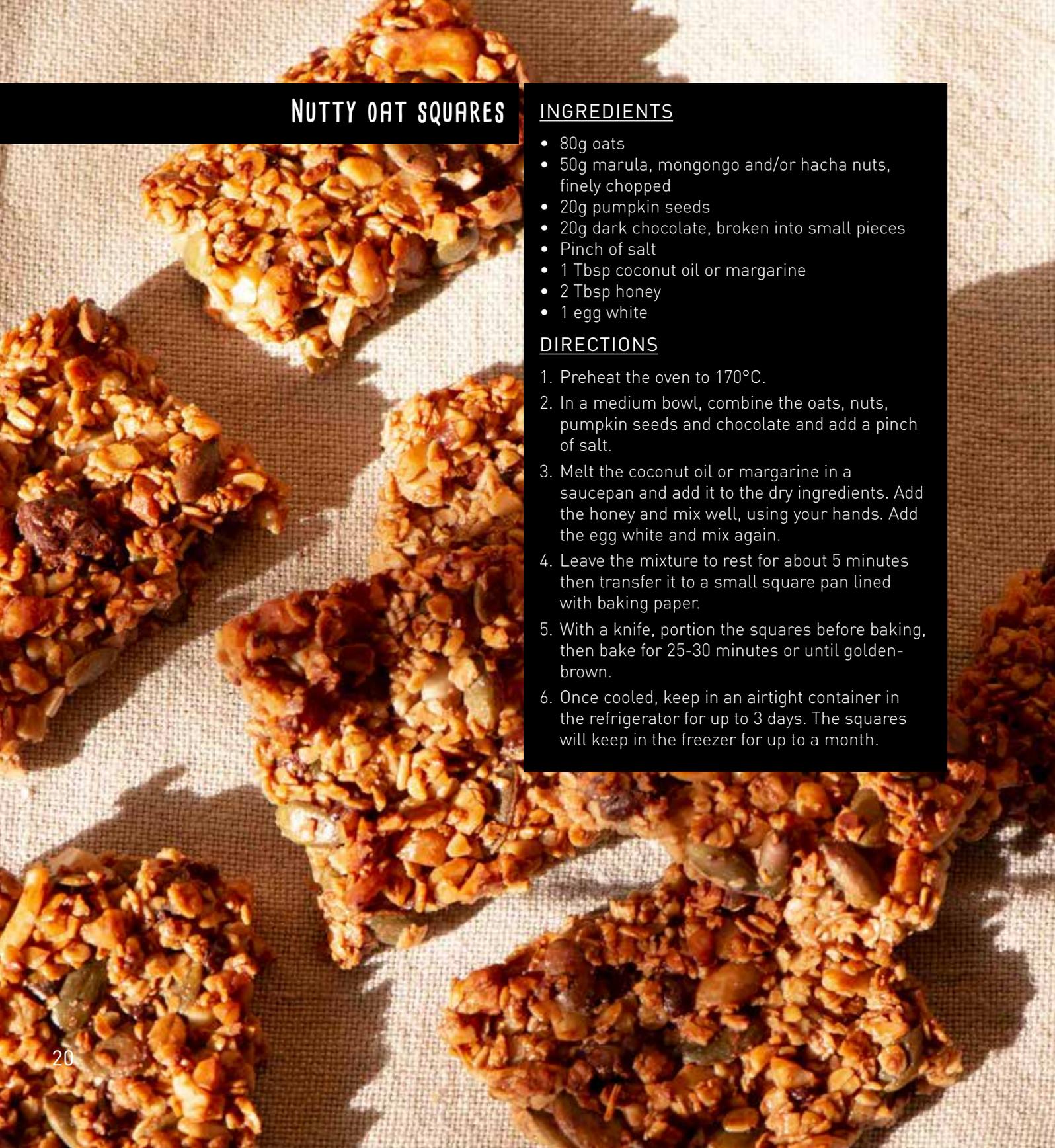
INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup butter, softened
- ¾ cup peanut butter
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 1 cup plain flour
- ½ tsp baking powder
- pinch of salt
- 4 Tbsp chopped marula, mongongo and/or hacha nuts

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 180°C and grease a baking tray.
2. In a medium bowl, beat together the butter and peanut butter. Add the sugar and beat until fluffy.
3. Add the egg and stir to combine well.
4. Sift flour, baking powder and salt together and stir into the peanut butter mixture.
5. Add the chopped nuts and bring together to make a soft dough. Wrap the dough in cling film and leave to chill in the freezer for 30 minutes.
6. Form the dough into small balls and evenly space them on the baking tray, then flatten each ball with a fork.
7. Bake for 15-20 minutes until lightly golden, allow to cool for a few minutes before removing them from the tray.

Recipe courtesy of Dusty Road



NUTTY OAT SQUARES

INGREDIENTS

- 80g oats
- 50g marula, mongongo and/or hacha nuts, finely chopped
- 20g pumpkin seeds
- 20g dark chocolate, broken into small pieces
- Pinch of salt
- 1 Tbsp coconut oil or margarine
- 2 Tbsp honey
- 1 egg white

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 170°C.
2. In a medium bowl, combine the oats, nuts, pumpkin seeds and chocolate and add a pinch of salt.
3. Melt the coconut oil or margarine in a saucepan and add it to the dry ingredients. Add the honey and mix well, using your hands. Add the egg white and mix again.
4. Leave the mixture to rest for about 5 minutes then transfer it to a small square pan lined with baking paper.
5. With a knife, portion the squares before baking, then bake for 25-30 minutes or until golden-brown.
6. Once cooled, keep in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. The squares will keep in the freezer for up to a month.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 egg white
- 1 Tbsp water
- 4 cups raw nuts
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- 1½ tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp allspice
- ½ tsp ground ginger

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 160°C. Lightly grease a baking sheet with non-stick cooking spray. (Top tip: for easier clean up, line the baking sheet first with aluminium foil and then coat with cooking spray).
2. Whisk together the egg white and water in a large bowl until frothy. Add the nuts and toss to coat evenly with the egg white mixture.
3. In a separate bowl, whisk together the brown sugar, cinnamon, salt, allspice, and ginger, and sprinkle over the nuts. Toss until well coated.
4. Spread the nuts in a single layer on the baking sheet and bake until the glaze is crisp and golden brown, about 15 minutes.
5. Toss the nuts and cook 3-5 more minutes until they are a deep golden-brown. Remove the nuts from the oven, toss, and cool completely.
6. Serve as a snack with drinks or enjoy by the handful any time!

SWEETLY SPICED WILD NUTS



A close-up photograph of a plate of Baobab and Sesame Chicken. The chicken strips are coated in a thick layer of sesame seeds and are arranged on a dark blue and white striped plate. The plate is garnished with fresh green herbs, sliced cucumbers, sliced carrots, and two slices of lemon. The background is a dark blue textured surface.

BAOBAB AND SESAME CHICKEN

INGREDIENTS

- 500g chicken breasts
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1/3 cup baobab powder
- 1/3 cup sesame seeds
- Oil for frying

DIRECTIONS

1. Cut chicken breasts into strips.
2. Coat the chicken strips by dipping them first in the beaten egg, then roll them in the baobab powder to coat, then dip again into the beaten egg and finally roll the chicken strips in the sesame seeds.
3. For extra flavour, sprinkle more baobab powder over the coated strips before frying.
4. In a heavy-bottomed pan, heat about a centimetre of oil over high heat. (Tip: to check if the oil is hot enough, put the end of a wooden spoon in the oil. If the oil bubbles around the spoon, it's ready.)
5. Fry the chicken strips in batches, being careful not to crowd the pan. Cook the strips for about 2 minutes on the first side, or until they begin to brown, then turn them and cook for another minute.
6. Transfer the strips to a clean cloth to drain. Serve hot.



TILAPIA COOKED IN SESAME PASTE (TAHINI)

INGREDIENTS

- 500g tilapia fillets
- 1 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 4 large fresh tomatoes, grated
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 300ml water, divided
- ½ tsp dried thyme
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp black pepper
- 2 Tbsp sesame paste (tahini)
- 2 Tbsp fresh parsley, chopped

DIRECTIONS

1. In a deep skillet or frying pan, heat the vegetable oil over medium-high heat.
2. Add the onion and cook for 2 minutes, then add the garlic and cook for 1 more minute.
3. Add grated tomato and 250ml of the water and allow to simmer for 5 minutes, then add the thyme, salt and pepper and simmer for another 5 minutes to let the flavours combine.
4. In a separate bowl, stir together the sesame paste and 50ml of hot water until smooth, then add it to the tomato sauce. Allow to simmer for 5 minutes.
5. Add the whole tilapia fillets and let them simmer in the sauce until the fish is cooked through and easily flakes apart, about 5 minutes.
6. Taste and adjust seasoning as needed and sprinkle with the chopped parsley.
7. Serve hot, spooned over rice.



PUMPKIN SEED "MEAT" BALLS

INGREDIENTS

Meatballs:

- 3 cups pumpkin seeds, shelled and lightly toasted
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 7 garlic cloves, chopped
- 3 tsp hot water
- ¼ cup dry bread crumbs
- 1 egg, beaten
- Salt and pepper to taste

Sauce:

- ¼ cup peanut oil
- 1 medium onion, thinly sliced
- 4 large tomatoes peeled, seeded, and diced
- 1-2 chilies, seeds removed and minced
- 1 ½ cups water
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 small bunch parsley, stems removed and roughly chopped

DIRECTIONS

1. Using a food processor, grind the toasted pumpkin seeds with 3 teaspoons hot water until ground to a crumbly dough.
2. Add the bread crumbs, chopped onion, garlic, egg, salt and pepper to the food processor and pulse until the mixture becomes smooth. Form the dough into small balls. Set aside.
3. Heat the oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the sliced onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened and beginning to turn golden. Mix in the tomatoes and chilis.
4. Cover and cook for 5 minutes, then add 1 ½ cups water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 10 minutes.
5. Return the sauce to a boil and gently add the meatballs. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes. Reduce heat to medium and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, for 20 more minutes. Finally, reduce the heat to a simmer and cook for a final 30 minutes.
6. Garnish the meatballs and sauce with chopped parsley and serve with steamed rice or sadza.



