

Good Life

Food

Cut down on starch and fatty meats

By **Londiwe Dromo**

The colder months of the year can often derail those who are on their healthy eating journey. Foods that are not that good for us often are the most enticing during this time.

Sowetan spoke to Kgadi Moabelo, a registered dietitian and Association for Dietetics in SA (ADSA) spokesperson, about what foods we should be eating in the cold season.

What foods should we be eating to maintain a healthy diet in winter?

Have cooked oats for breakfast

Oats is high in fibre, which has many health benefits including lowering the risks of diabetes and heart diseases. It can be cooked by water or milk.

A lot of people like to take oats with sugar or honey and/or butter. These two must be taken with caution though.

Have your warm hearty stews

Stews can be incredibly warm to have in low temperatures. Whether it is chicken or ostrich, beef or mutton, whichever type of meat you choose to have, trim off the visible fat and get rid of that chicken skin too before putting it into your pot. Add a variety of vegetables and herbs into your stews. Vegetables and herbs provide a protective and anti-inflammatory properties respectively.

Have a bowl of soup

We all know that if you catch cold, grandma is going to make a lovely bowl of soup to keep you warm and give your immunity a boost.

It is the ingredients in the soup that actually help us fight off illnesses. The beans and lentils, the herbs and the vegetables are all packed with antioxidants that protect your body against harm.

Sweet potatoes

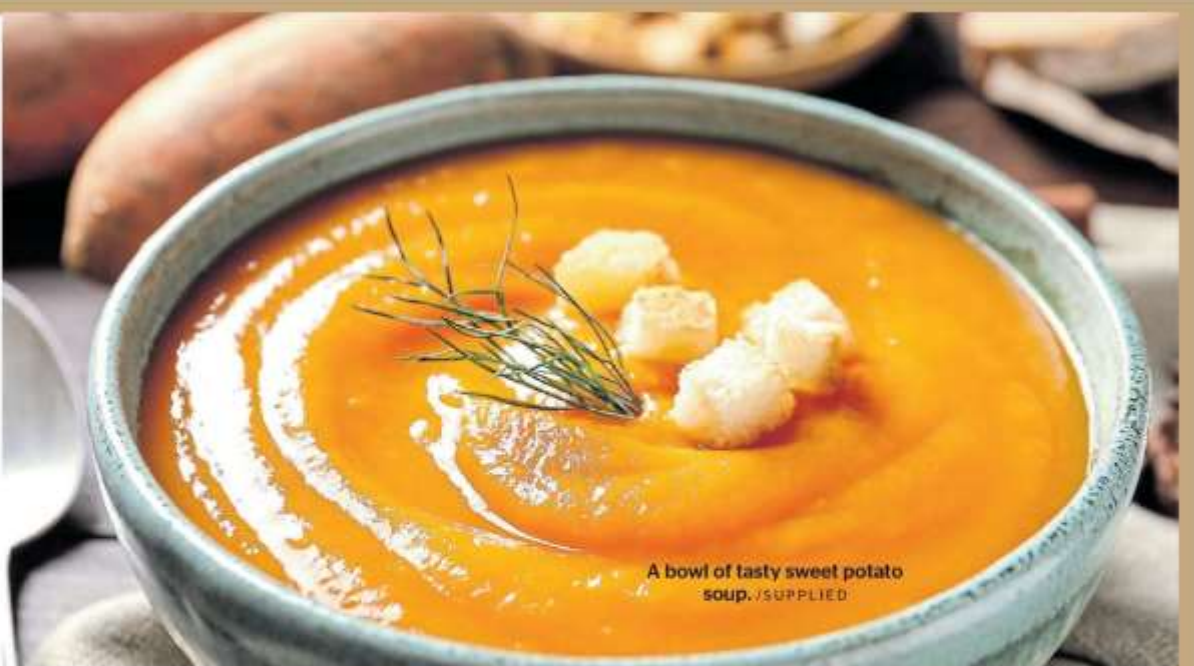
Sweet potatoes are an amazing source of vitamins and minerals as well as fibre. Their rich colour comes from antioxidants which offer protection to your body cells.

Butternut squash

Amazing when roasted and can be served with grilled chicken along with vegetables. Butternut squash is also a good source of many vitamin and minerals to help our bodies fight against illnesses.

Cabbage

A budget-friendly vegetable, packed with essential nutrients to give your immunity a boost. Cabbage goes along nicely with many dishes and it



A bowl of tasty sweet potato soup. /SUPPLIED

How to eat well and stay healthy this winter

is very important to mind the amount of oil when preparing this vegetable.

Are there foods we should be avoiding and why?

There is a great desire for most people to eat high fat meals when it is cold. However, a lot of people already have enough fat in the body that serves as an insulator and therefore do not need to add excess fat for the purpose of keeping warm.

The explanation that high fat meals take longer to digest and therefore generate more heat is true, but it is the high protein meals that produce a greater thermic effect of food than high fat meals.

Fat cakes (aka amagwinya), koeksisters and hot chips

Although easily accessible and affordable, these types of foods are detrimental to your health. They are high in trans fats that raises your blood cholesterol leading to heart diseases.

Kota

Very dominant in the townships, kotas are normally prepared with white bread, processed meat, atchar and hot chips. This is a high GI meal, contains high bad fats and high salt. This meal increases risk of diseases such as hypertension and diabetes.

Tripe (aka manamogoda)

Cooked tripe is one of the most loved traditional dishes in SA. It contains numerous minerals but high in saturated fats which is not good for your heart health.

What traditional SA foods are suited to winter?

Samp and beans

One of SA's loved dishes, *umngqusho* (cooked samp and beans combo), is dominant in



Kgadi Moabelo is a registered dietitian and shares some insight on foods to take and avoid this winter. /SUPPLIED

the Xhosa diet. What we need to be careful of with this dish, however, is the ratio of the samp to the beans. There should be more beans than samp so that we are able to meet our protein needs and at the same time not overindulge on the starch of the samp as beans are also starchy.

Poitjiekos

Like stews, poitjiekos must be prepared with lots of various vegetables and again with leaner types of meats.

Dumplings

Served with your stews, it can be awesomely delicious. Dumpling vary from one location to the other in terms of preparation. You can make it healthier by using oatmeal flour, adding ingredients like mustard seeds and putting less sugar and oil.

Briyanis

Briyanis are perceived unhealthy and this is mostly because of its high calories and fats used when preparing this dish. But you can make your briyani healthier by controlling the amount and type of oil to use. The lentils are good source of protein and fibre; the turmeric, garlic and ginger are great antioxidants, bay leaves, onions, and seeds offer protective properties. People with gastritis and ulcers might want to think twice before having this type of meal.

What are some yummy snacks that are great in cold months?

Healthy muffins/rusks. You can make use of oat-bran, high-fibre cereals like all-bran as well as some fruits to prepare your yummy muffins or

rusks to serving them with your hot beverages in colder days. It's a season for avocados. They can be a creamier spread for your toasted bread and crackers. Avocados are good sources of omega 3 fatty acids, which are a good fat for your heart health.

Sweet potatoes with pecans or with cheese. Pecans are nuts, source of protein and contains healthier type of fat. When using cheese, go for a low-fat type of cheese.

What beverages should we avoid during the colder months?

Hot chocolates

Cocoa used in the manufacturing of hot chocolates has shown many health benefits, however most hot chocolates are made from processed cocoa and contain high amounts of sugar and salt.

Alcohol

Alcohol is a diuretic, meaning that it causes an increased passing of urine which might leave one dehydrated. Dehydration in return may cause body temperature to drop.

Juices and fizzy drinks

Besides that juices and fizzy drinks are served cold, which might not really help when temperatures drop, they also contain high amounts of sugars.

Energy drinks

You will not need energy drink if you eat your balanced meals and take healthy snacks in between meals. Energy drinks are known for their high sugar and caffeine content. Be careful of the amount of sugar you put in your tea, especially if you are going to have a lot of cups in a day.