

Eat yourself better

Local nutrition and lifestyle health expert Izabella Natrins talks to FOCUSLife about why real food and a supportive lifestyle is our best medicine.

You're an advocate for healthier living, tell us about your approach.

Our current health systems are designed to care for those with acute illnesses and conditions, but they're struggling with an overwhelming number of people with lifestyle driven chronic diseases. My passion (and training) is for food-and-lifestyle-as-medicine, working with clients or patients directly, or alongside a doctor or healthcare provider to educate, equip and support people in making diet and lifestyle changes to achieve their individual health and wellness goals. Health coaches are experts at human motivation, behaviour and health. They support people who are experiencing a wide variety of health problems – sometimes even health crises. In my work, I specifically help women coming into midlife and beyond to create much better health by making food and lifestyle changes. I help them to understand that our health is our wealth – that the way we eat and live can be our best medicine... or it can lead us into chronic ill-health. Society asks a lot of women... we're partners, mothers, chefs, keepers of the home, daughters, friends, confidants, neighbours, colleagues, employees and employers. But health care begins with self-care and we women are very good at putting ourselves last. The pressures of modern living can be isolating, overwhelming and as we move into midlife, we're likely to watch helplessly as our energy, vitality and health tank.

I take a holistic health approach and help women put on their own oxygen mask first, to gain clarity on their future, health goals and motivations.

Then we work together on making changes in diet, daily movement, sleep, stress management, rest and recovery – changes that will restore their energy, vitality and improve (often reverse!) their health issues.

I offer a 30-Minute Health Clarity Consultation to anyone who's struggling... just book via my website.

What is your background?

I was born and educated in Stratford-upon-Avon and after having my sons, I went to Warwick University and graduated in psychology. I went on

Nutrition and lifestyle health expert Izabella Natrins

DID YOU KNOW?
A staggering 75 per cent of people struggling with a chronic health condition or feeling persistently under-par are actually struggling with a 'food-and-lifestyle-driven' condition.

to Birmingham University Medical School as a research psychologist in public health and, after many years working in the NHS as a clinicians' education programme manager and consultant, I took time out to recover from a progressive autoimmune condition. I love food and I'm a passionate cook, so I went to the Ballymaloe Cookery School in Cork and trained as a chef.

Ballymaloe changed the course of my life. As I worked with whole foods, traditional ingredients and learned classic techniques, I deeply connected with the meaning of 'real food'. After working as a private chef, I started a small cookery school, Once Upon a Cook, to teach people to cook 'from scratch'. Many requests to help with health issues led to several years' further training in nutrition and lifestyle medicine with the Institute of Health Sciences in Dublin. Not only was I able to reverse my own autoimmune condition, I've been able to help so many others do the same.

Today, I work one-to-one, online and with small groups, in private practice as a Real Food Nutrition and Lifestyle Medicine Health Coach and Nutritional Chef and I also work to support doctors and GP practices in a similar capacity. I'm a Trustee of the British Holistic Medical Association (and a very proud founder member of its Real Food Campaign UK) and I'm a speaker, author and run a health information website IzabellaNatrins.Com



DID YOU KNOW?
Spices are culinary alchemists – rich in phytonutrients, the powerful plant compounds that disarm free radicals which damage cells, causing illness and

What inspired you to write *The Real Food Solution*?

We're all increasingly concerned about what we're eating and its impact on our health and on the planet. The foundations of health start in the soil and with the food that we eat. The scientific evidence is clear – the way we've been producing and eating our food has been utterly destructive at every level.

We're seeing the ethical and environmental impact of intensive global food production practices and we're witnessing the deteriorating health of our population (family and friends) with epidemic numbers of chronic and degenerative diseases. We're confused by conflicting advice about what to eat and we hear a lot about how going plant-based and even 100 per cent vegan is better for us and better for the planet – but is there valid scientific evidence for this?

I spent two years researching and writing *The Real Food Solution*, to offer an intelligent and evidence-based solution to some of our current food and health dilemmas.

Our food is very much the problem, but it's also a solution. *The Real Food Solution* offers a treasury of evidence-based wisdom for better health for people and for a more sustainable planet. I explain the deep nutrition found in whole, seasonal, local unprocessed foods: meat, eggs, cheese and milk from grass-fed animals; bone and mineral broths; high quality fruit and vegetables grown in clean soils; wild-caught seafood; cultured and fermented foods; herbs and spices. These are real foods and powerful medicine that kept our grandparents healthy – and countless generations before them.

With over 400 pages of information, evidence, recipes, tips, techniques, resources and references, my aim is to inform and inspire everyone – women, men, parents, grandparents, aunties, uncles, the youngsters and the elders – to care where their food comes from and how it's produced. The saying 'We are what we eat' has never been more relevant than it is today and I want my book to help people to become much more conscious consumers, to make better food choices and to flourish and thrive in much better health.

The Real Food Solution is available on Amazon or a signed copy can be ordered directly from me. ★

DID YOU KNOW?
Ginger is a powerful digestive, an antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and antibacterial. Cinnamon controls blood sugar and high blood pressure.

You're invited: An Evening with Real Food

Izabella says: I've always loved collaborating with others and I'm really excited to be collaborating with our local food hero Charlie Wells and her team at The Farm in Snitterfield. Charlie is an extraordinary woman and she's absolutely on my page. We're planning 'An Evening with Real Food' on Thursday, 14th May, when I'll join Charlie, Chef Gary Nunn, Butcher Martin Crombie, and Mudwall's Farm in offering a delicious dining and learning experience, where guests will learn why the food they're enjoying is not only delicious, but nutritious and powerful medicine. Full details will be appearing soon!

'THE RADICAL HEALTH COLLECTIVE'
Coming soon... Local health-creation groups for women – because magic happens when women come together.

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Izabella says: This so-simple recipe is packed with hidden phytonutrient veggies and will soon become a trusty 'go-to' in your culinary repertoire. Serve as a soup, a simple sauce for pasta, polenta, beans, pulses, or a medley of fresh, seasonal vegetables; a topping for pizza; or a delicious support for seafood, grilled, or roasted meats.

In season, I use fresh, peeled tomatoes (just cut a cross in the bottom and dunk them in boiling water for a minute or two and the skin will peel easily). Otherwise, I use good quality chopped tomatoes and, since we're not in sun-blessed Italy or Sicily, a little cinnamon or dark brown sugar cuts the acidity of the tomatoes.

You can ramp up the volume Sicilian-style by adding freshly grated ginger and/or finely diced chilli.

Make the basic ragù in bulk and freeze in portions that suit you – you'll never, ever again, want to buy a processed tomato-based sauce.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:
Celery: 2 sticks
Carrots: 2 medium (peeled)
Onions: 2 medium (peeled)
2 tbsp olive or coconut oil
Garlic: 2 fat cloves (crushed and left to stand for 10 mins)

Tomatoes: 900g (fresh, peeled, chopped) or good quality ready chopped
Tomato purée: 2 tbsp
Bay leaf: 1 (dried is fine)
Oregano: 2-3 medium sprigs (or 1 tsp dried)
Cinnamon: ½ tsp, or 1tsp dark brown sugar (balances acidity)
1 glass of chicken bone broth, mineral broth or filtered water
Maldon salt and freshly ground black pepper
Basil: (fresh, handful optional)

WHAT TO DO:
1 Finely chop (or blitz in a food processor) the celery, carrots and onions and sweat them gently in a large tall pan in olive or coconut oil for 10 mins or until well-softened and very lightly coloured.
2 Add the garlic, tomatoes, bay leaf, oregano, tomato purée, cinnamon/brown sugar, water, salt and black pepper. (More amazing phytonutrient variations you could at this point include: mushrooms, red peppers, stoned black or green olives, aubergines, courgettes, celeriac, red onions, green beans, choice of herbs & spices.)
3 Mix well, cover with a lid and allow to simmer on a low heat for approximately 10 minutes for fresh tomatoes or 30 if using ready chopped; stir frequently and lower the heat if it's reducing too quickly. Adjust the seasonings to taste.
4 Leave the sauce chunky, or blend to your desired consistency (take out the bay leaf and oregano stalks) with a stick blender and add the basil just before serving.
The ragù keeps in the fridge for several days, and freezes perfectly – add a little water when reheating.