



The festive period can be one of excess on the food front, and the foods we tend to eat more of at this time of year can often be those that lack the vitamins and minerals we need for our bodies and minds to stay healthy. This can not only affect brain function but also energy levels.

So try making sure you eat satsumas as well as mince pies and include some leafy greens alongside your ham!

**With best wishes for the festive season
Hannah and the Project Food team**

Food and Mood—Vitamins and Minerals

There are some particular vitamins and minerals that can affect your mood more than others, and that you should try to include in your diet to help.

You should aim to get them from real foods rather than from taking supplements wherever possible as they are most readily available to use by your body this way (also called 'bioavailability').

If you have a wide variety of fruits and vegetables in your diet, together with some protein foods including oily fish, then you are likely to give your body a good supply of the nutrients it needs – including a full range of vitamins and minerals.

Iron

If you don't have enough iron in your diet, you may develop anaemia which will make you feel weak, tired and lethargic – and can also affect your mood.

You can increase your iron intake by eating red meat, chicken and turkey, fish, beans and pulses, and fortified cereals. Dark leafy greens such as spinach, kale and cabbage are also good. **See our recipe overleaf.**

You can also help your body to maximise its iron uptake from the foods you eat, by avoiding drinking tea with meals.

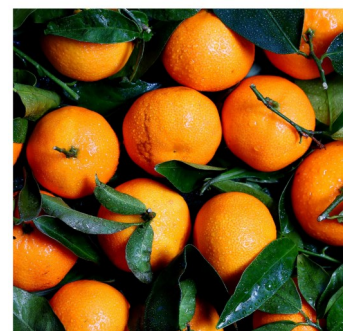
Vitamins B1, B3, B5, B6 and B12

You may feel tired, depressed and stressed if you lack any of the essential vitamins B1, B3, B5, B6 and B12. People with low levels of B12 have also been found to have higher rates of dementia.

You can find these vitamins in wholegrain cereals, fruit & vegetables, fortified foods, and animal proteins such as meat, fish, eggs and dairy. Vegans will need to take a supplement of vitamin B12, as this vitamin is not found in any plant-based foods.

Vitamin C

A deficiency of Vitamin C in your diet can cause you to feel depressed. Vitamin C is found in fresh



Folate

If you lack folate in your diet, this can increase the chance that you will feel depressed and anxious (especially if you are older).

Folate is found in green leafy vegetables, citrus fruits (including oranges), beans, liver and fortified foods (including marmite).



Selenium

A lack of selenium has been associated with depression and other low moods. You can find selenium in brazil nuts, wholemeal bread, fish (particularly mussels), meat, garlic and sunflower seeds.

Zinc

Zinc helps to control the body's response to stress, and low levels of it can cause depression. Zinc is found in beans and pulses (including chickpeas and lentils), fish like salmon and mackerel, eggs, dairy, nuts and seeds.



Magnesium

A deficiency of magnesium in your diet can lead to irritability, insomnia and depression. Magnesium is found in nuts, seeds and green vegetables.

Spinach and Cheese Omelette

Serves 2 adults

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp olive/rapeseed oil
- 1 small onion, thinly sliced
- 200g spinach
- 2 medium potatoes (leftover boiled or roast potatoes would also work well)
- 4 medium eggs
- 30g cheese—you can use cheddar, goat's cheese, feta—most cheeses work well

Optional

- Grated nutmeg
- Black pepper

Method

Preheat the grill to medium

1. If using raw potatoes, peel, slice/cube and boil for 5–10 minutes until just soft. Drain.
2. Whisk the eggs together with a black pepper and nutmeg, if using.
3. Heat the olive oil in a frying pan and gently fry the sliced onions for 3-4 minutes until softened.
4. Add the spinach and stir round until wilted. You can use a lid on your frying pan if you have one to speed up this process. If you're using baby leaf spinach there's no need to chop, but if you are using large leaf you will need to roughly chop first.
5. Add the potatoes.
6. Add the egg mixture to the frying pan and cook on a medium heat for about 3– 4 minutes, until the sides start to set.
7. Scatter the chopped goat's cheese on top of the eggs and place under the grill for about 5 minutes until puffed up and golden.

Top tips

- This is a full meal by itself as it has protein in the egg/cheese, dairy in the cheese, starch in the potatoes. It is delicious served with a side salad and could be the main meal of the day.
- This kind of omelette (often called a tortilla/ frittata) is delicious eaten hot or cold. It will keep for 2 days in the fridge, so why not make a bigger one and have the leftovers the next day?
- Omelettes are a brilliant choice for a quick, simple meal and can be made with many different kinds of veg—peppers, courgettes, mushrooms all work well. They are a great way of using up