

NOURISH YOUR MIND

Food as a Foundation for Mental Health

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**BAXTER
STOREY**
FUEL YOUR INDIVIDUALITY



Mental Health
Ireland



Welcome to Nourish Your Mind.



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1. Why What You Eat Affects How You Feel

When mental health feels heavy, food can often become confusing. Some days, we don't feel like eating. Other days, we just need fast comfort like something to soothe, or simply keep us going.

Ultra-processed foods (UPFs) which are high in sugar, salt, and fats are designed to deliver quick hits. But they don't nourish us in the ways that help us stabilise mood, energy or optimal brain function over time.

This guide isn't about restriction or doing it all perfectly. It's about understanding what balanced nourishment really looks like and how to come back to it gently, consistently and when you are ready.

Food is one of the most powerful tools we have to support our mental wellbeing. Let's explore how.

2. Water

The Most Vital Nutrient

Water is the number one nutrient your body needs in both quantity and importance.

Every single cell, tissue and organ depends on it. Your brain is nearly 75% water, and even mild dehydration can impair how you think, feel, sleep and function.

When your body lacks hydration, your mental

clarity, mood, and resilience are often the first to take a hit.

In times of stress or low mood, it's common to forget to drink. Equally it's easy to misread thirst as hunger, fatigue or anxiety.

Rehydration can gently bring the nervous system back into balance.

Daily Water Baseline Goal:

Weight (kg) × 35ml = Total ml per day

(Example: 60kg × 35ml = 2,100ml or 2.1L)

Hydration Hacks

- Start your day with a glass of water, herbal tea or warm lemon water
- Use a container with a straw as it helps you sip more naturally (e.g., Stanley cups)
- Keep water at hand; on your desk, in your bag or car
- Flavour it up; add lemon, cucumber, mint, berries or herbs
- Include hydrating options like herbal teas, broths, smoothies and water-rich foods (fruits and veggies)
- Rotate in kombucha or kefir if you're craving fizz they support the gut too



3. Macronutrients

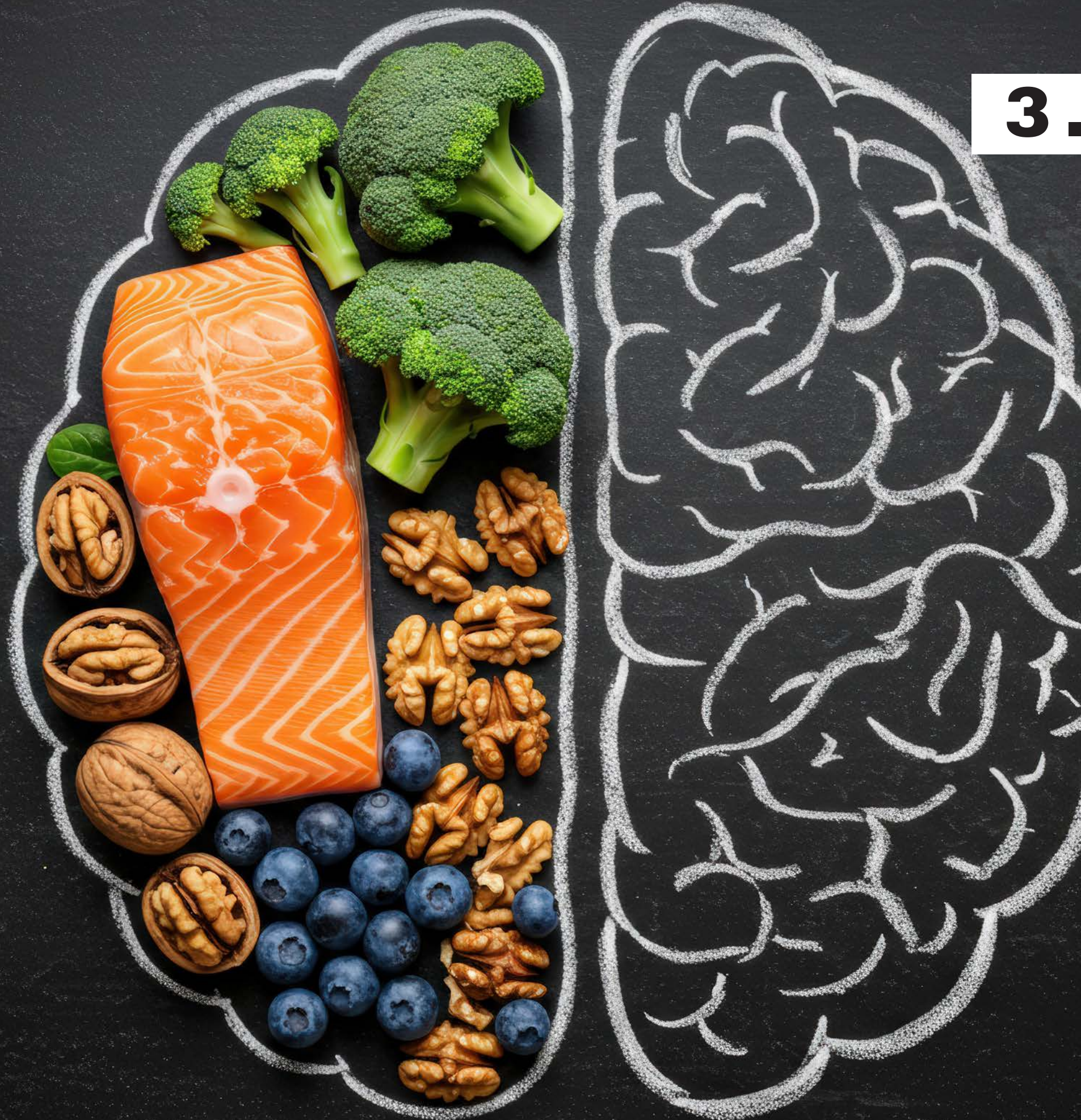
Protein, carbs, fats, fibre and colour. These are the foundations of mental and emotional resilience. Understanding what they are (and where to find them) gives you the tools to nourish yourself, one meal at a time.

Protein

→ Your Brain's Building Blocks

- Needed for neurotransmitter production (like serotonin & dopamine)
- Helps stabilise blood sugar = stabilised mood
- Keeps you fuller longer less reactive snacking calmer state
- Sources: eggs, oily fish, pulses, yoghurt, tofu, chicken, offal, nuts & seeds

Protein isn't just for muscles: it's how you make the mood chemicals that help you feel steady, focused and well.



Fats

→ Brain Structure & Anti-Inflammation

- Omega-3 fats reduce neuroinflammation
- Essential for brain cell membranes + nerve signalling
- Fat = 9 kcal/g, which is denser than protein/carbs (4 kcal/g), but doesn't mean it's bad
- Focus on: oily fish, seeds; chia, flax, hemp and walnuts.

Healthy fats have been wrongly feared. But your brain is 60% fat and it needs the right kind.

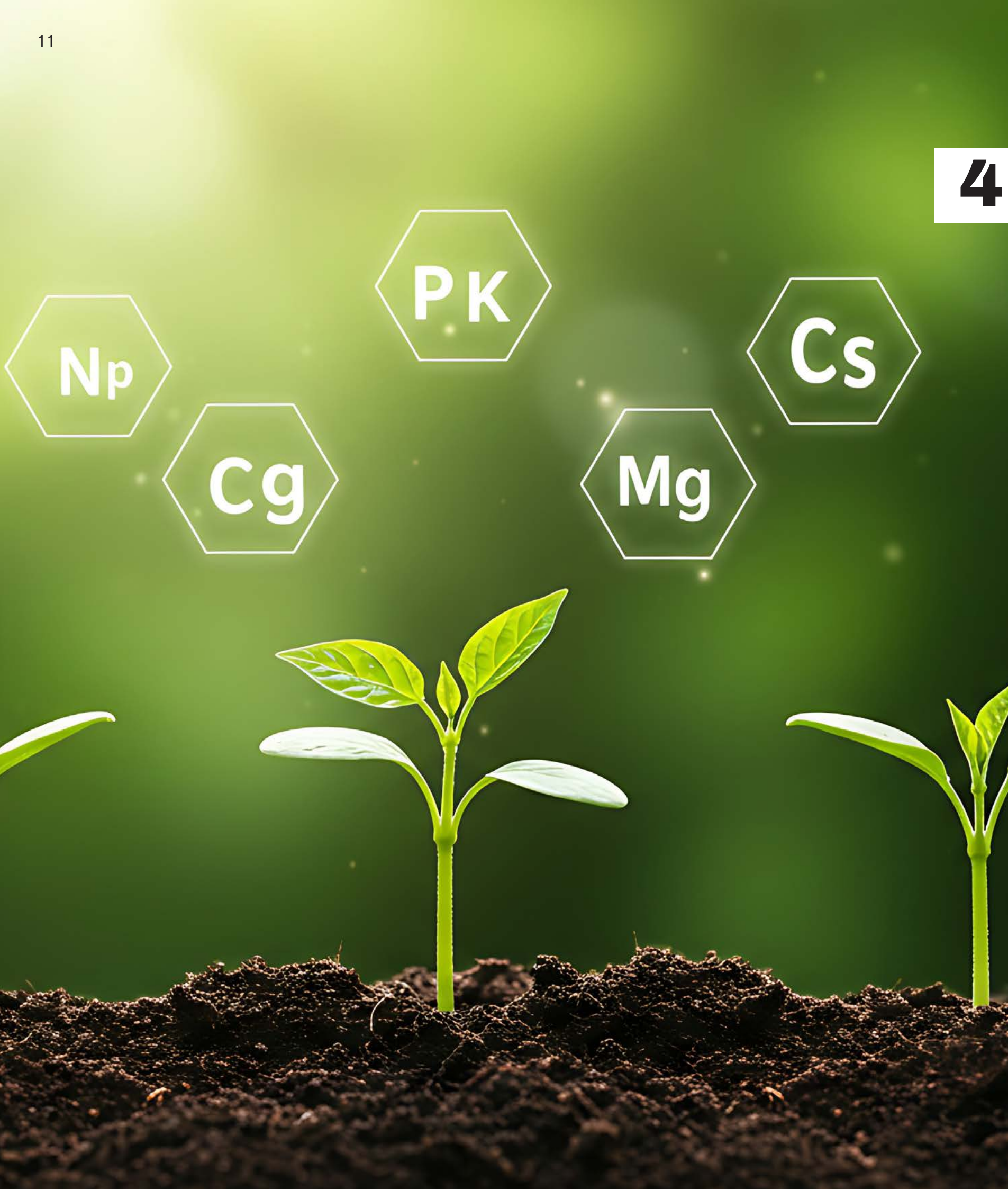
Carbohydrates

→ Fuel & Feel-Good Chemistry

- Glucose = your brain's primary energy source
- Support serotonin production (esp. with protein + B vitamins)
- Whole food carbs stabilise mood vs refined carbs spike and crash it
- Best sources: root veg, whole grains, fruit, and pulses

Choose carbs that come from the earth not highly processed.





4 . Micronutrients

Micronutrients are the vitamins and minerals your body needs in smaller amounts. They play huge roles in mental and physical health. They're the cofactors behind energy production, hormone balance, immune defence and neurotransmitter function.

Micronutrient Power Players

Nutrient	Mental Health Role	Top Food Sources
B Vitamins (esp. B6, Folate, B12)	Make Serotonin & Dopamine, Support Energy & Mood	Leafy Greens, Eggs, Pulses, Wholegrains, Meat, Nutritional Yeast
Magnesium	Calms The Nervous System, Reduces Anxiety, Supports Sleep	Pumpkin Seeds, Leafy Greens, Dark Chocolate
Zinc	Cognitive Function, Gut Health, Immunity Support	Shellfish, Seeds, Chickpeas
Iron	Oxygen Transport To The Brain, Prevents Fatigue	Red Meat, Lentils, Spinach, Dried Apricots
Vitamin C	Supports Stress Resilience, Adrenal & Immune Health	Citrus Fruits, Berries, Uncooked Fruits/Ve G
Vitamin D	Regulates Mood, Supports Immunity, Reduces Depression Risk	Sunlight, Oily Fish, Eggs, Fortified Foods, Mushrooms

5. Feed Your Gut, Fuel Your Mind

1. The Gut-Brain Axis is Real

- 90–95% of serotonin (your mood-stabilising chemical) is made in the gut.
- Gut and brain are in constant two-way communication via the vagus nerve.

2. Microbes = Mood Mediators

- A diverse gut microbiome supports lower inflammation, better focus, improved resilience.
- Dysbiosis (imbalanced gut bacteria) is linked to anxiety, low mood, fatigue, brain fog.

3. Fibre is Fuel for Microbes

- Prebiotic fibres (in fruit, veg, legumes, oats) feed good bacteria, who then make short-chain fatty acids that positively influence brain function.

4. Fermented Foods Are Nature's Probiotics

- Think: kefir, kombucha, kimchi, sauerkraut, yoghurt, miso.
- Daily inclusion helps enhance microbial diversity and gut-brain signalling.





Recipes

Designed to be:

- *Simple*
- *Versatile*
- *Full of Flavour & Function*
- *Easy to repeat, tweak & love.*

Strawberry & Protein Smoothie

Ingredients

- 1 cup strawberries (fresh/frozen)
- ½ banana
- 1 scoop protein powder (dairy/vegan) 200 ml oat, rice, or dairy milk
- 1 tbsp Greek yoghurt (optional)
- 1 tsp honey or maple syrup (optional) 1 tsp flaxseeds
- Ice cubes

Method

Blend until smooth and creamy. Adjust thickness with more milk or ice.

Key Benefits:

Strawberries: Antioxidants & Vitamin C for brain health

Protein: Builds neurotransmitters (serotonin, dopamine)

Flax: Omega-3 & fibre = mood + gut balance

Milk/Yoghurt: Calcium & B12 for mood stability

Banana: Natural carbs & potassium to reduce stress

Approx. 315 kcal with 26g protein, 37g carbs, 6g fibre, 5g fat and 710mg potassium per serving.



MIXED BERRY & BEETROOT SMOOTHIE

Ingredients

- 1 cooked beetroot (peeled and chopped)
- 1 cup mixed berries (fresh or frozen)
- ½ banana (optional for sweetness + texture)
- 200 ml oat milk, rice milk, or coconut water
- 1 tsp flax or hemp seeds
- 1 tsp maple syrup (optional)
- Ice cubes

Method

Blend until smooth and creamy. Adjust thickness with more liquid or frozen berries.

Key Benefits:

Beetroot: Boosts brain oxygen flow + improves focus

Berries: High in antioxidants + vitamin C to reduce stress

Banana: Balances blood sugar + provides mood-calming potassium

Flax/Hemp Seeds: Plant omega-3s + fibre for gut-brain harmony

Approx. 190 kcal with 4g protein, 42g carbs, 9g fibre, 2g fat, and 550mg potassium per serving.



CHICKEN POKE BOWL WITH THAI BROTH & PICKLED CARROT + CABBAGE

Ingredients

- 4 boneless chicken thighs/breasts
- 1 cup jasmine rice
- Thai broth: lemongrass, galangal, lime leaves, veg stock
- 1 carrot
- 1 cup shredded cabbage
- 1 avocado
- ½ cucumber
- 4 radishes
- ½ cup edamame
- Fresh coriander
- 1 lime

Method

1. Marinate + Cook Chicken: Combine soy sauce, garlic, ginger. Marinate chicken thighs 15–20 mins. Pan-fry over medium heat for 6–8 mins each side. Slice.
2. Make Thai Broth: Simmer veg stock with lemongrass, galangal, lime leaves for 15 mins. Strain.
3. Quick Pickles: Thinly slice carrot + cabbage. Heat ½ cup vinegar + ½ cup water with 1 tbsp sugar + 1 tsp salt. Pour over veg. Let sit 20+ mins.
4. Cook Rice: Follow packet instructions. Fluff with a fork.
5. Prep Veg: Slice cucumber, radish, avocado.
6. Assemble Bowl: Layer rice, veg, chicken, pickles, edamame, broth. Top with coriander + lime.

Key Benefits:

Chicken: Protein + B vitamins for neurotransmitters

Pickles + Veg: Fibre + probiotics for gut-brain support

Avocado: Folate + healthy fats for mood + brain resilience

Thai Broth: Aromatics that soothe stress + inflammation



CREAMY BEAN WHIPS

Ingredients

- 1 can cannellini beans (or butterbeans), drained and rinsed
- 1-2 garlic cloves
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1-2 tbsp water
- 1 tbsp tahini
- Pinch of sea salt
- Fresh herbs like parsley, chives, or basil

Method

1. Add all ingredients to a blender or food processor.
2. Blitz until smooth and fluffy.
3. Adjust seasoning and texture: add more lemon for zing or olive oil for richness.
4. Spoon into a jar or bowl. Keeps in fridge for 3-4 days.

Use as a dip, toast spread or soft base under grilled veg, eggs or nourish bowls.



QUICK PICKLED

Ingredients

- 1 carrot, julienned
- 1 cup shredded red or white cabbage
- ½ cup vinegar (apple cider or rice vinegar)
- ½ cup water
- 1 tbsp sugar or honey
- 1 tsp sea salt

Optional Additions

- 1 clove garlic (sliced)
- 1 tsp mustard seeds or peppercorns
- A few sprigs of dill or parsley

Method

1. Prep Veg: Thinly slice carrot and cabbage (or sub in radish, cucumber, or onion).
2. Make Brine: In a saucepan, heat vinegar, water, sugar, and salt until dissolved.
3. Pour + Pickle: Pour hot brine over veg in a jar. Add optional extras.
4. Let Sit: Cool for at least 30 minutes. Best after 1–2 hours.
5. Store: Keep in fridge for up to 1 week.

Key Benefits:

Fermented acids + vinegar support digestion + reduce inflammation

Raw veg + fibre feed your microbiome - key to serotonin production

Crunchy, zesty and helps balance meals by supporting blood sugar



IRISH STOUT SODA BREAD

Dry Ingredients

- 120g strong white bread flour
- 300g wholemeal flour
- 10g bread soda (bicarbonate of soda)
- 1 tsp salt

Wet Ingredients

- 225g Guinness or other local stout
- 300ml buttermilk
- 150g dark treacle
- 30g cold-pressed rapeseed oil

Method

1. Preheat oven to 200°C. Line or grease a loaf tin.
2. In a large bowl, combine all dry ingredients.
3. In a separate jug, whisk together the wet ingredients until smooth.
4. Pour wet into dry and mix until just combined (do not overmix).
5. Pour into tin, sprinkle with seeds, and bake for 40–45 minutes until a skewer comes out clean.
6. Cool on a wire rack. Enjoy sliced and topped with butter, soup or masala butter beans.



MASALA BUTTER BEANS ON TOAST

With Poached Egg & Fresh Parsley Pesto

Ingredients

Masala Butter Beans

- 1 tbsp rapeseed or olive oil
- 1 white onion, finely diced
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tbsp tomato purée
- 1 sprig thyme
- 1 can chopped tomatoes
- 1 can butter beans, drained
- 1 tomato, diced
- ½ red pepper, diced
- ½ block halloumi, roasted or pan-fried

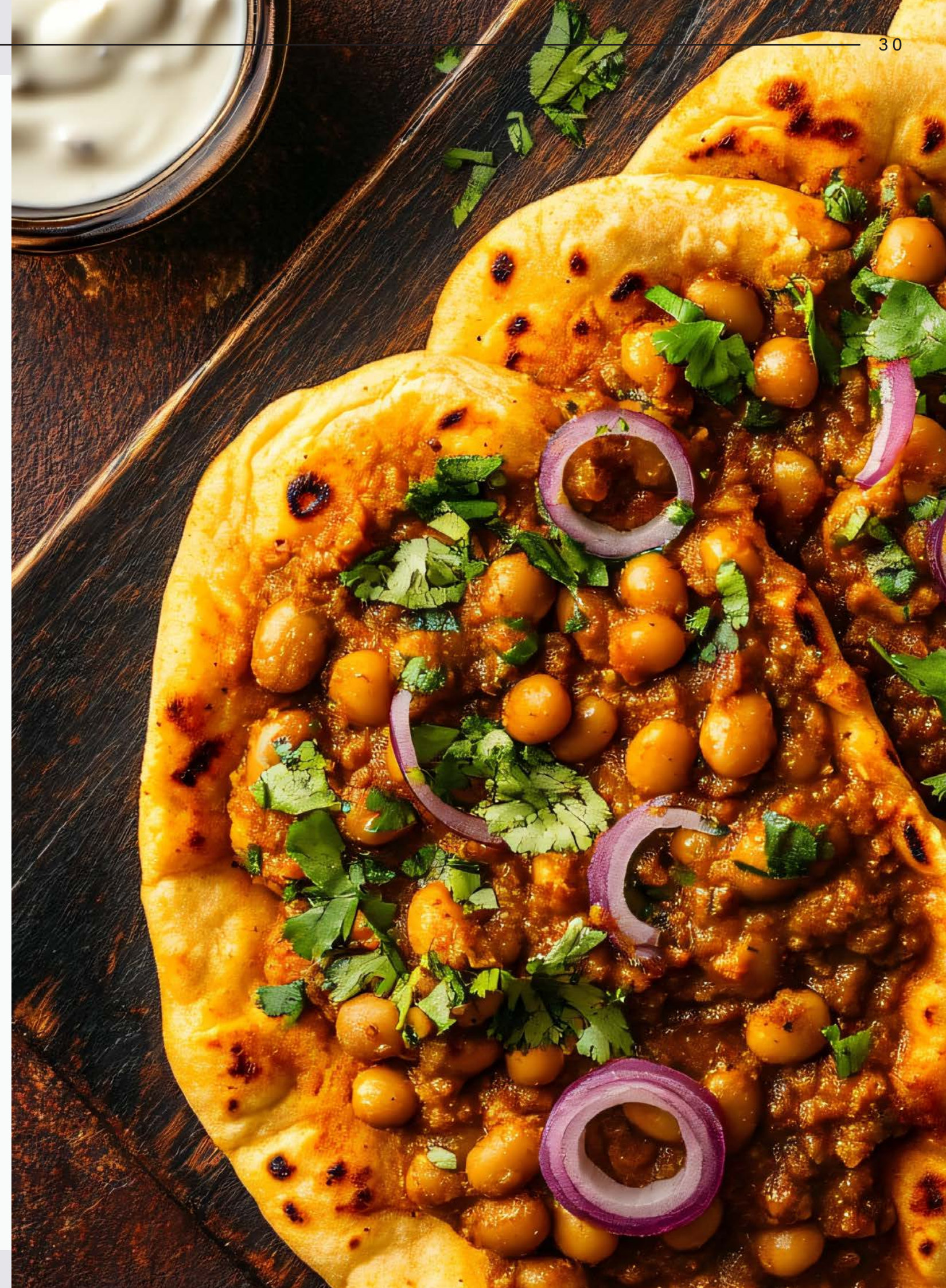
Parsley Pesto

Fresh, zesty and full of healthy fats.

- 50g fresh parsley
- 25g extra virgin olive oil
- 1 garlic clove
- Zest of ½ lemon
- Pinch sea salt and white pepper

Assembly

1. Sauté onion, garlic, paprika, cumin and thyme in oil until soft.
2. Stir in tomato purée, chopped tomatoes, beans, fresh tomato and pepper. Simmer 8–10 mins.
3. Add roasted halloumi at the end.
4. Toast your bread, top with masala beans, poached egg and drizzle of parsley pesto.



MOOD-BOOSTING BARS

Ingredients

- 1 cup oats
 - ½ cup almond or sunflower seed butter
 - ¼ cup ground flaxseed
 - 2 tbsp chia seeds
 - 2 tbsp cocoa powder or cinnamon
 - 1 tbsp honey or maple syrup
 - 1 tsp vanilla extract (optional)
 - Pinch of sea salt
- Optional:
- 2 tbsp protein powder
 - 2 tbsp dark chocolate chips
 - 1 tbsp maca powder or collagen

Method

1. Mix all dry ingredients in a bowl.
2. Warm nut butter and honey until soft, then stir into dry mix.
3. Add optional extras.
4. Press into a lined tray and chill until firm.
5. Slice into bars and store in the fridge.



How to Build Your Own Nourish Bowl

Method

1. Choose Your Base

- Rice (red, white, black, brown)
- Quinoa
- Bean Whips/Hummus
- Roasted sweet potato/ swuash
- Leafy greens (rocket, spinach, kale)

2. Add Your Protein

- Boiled eggs
- Chicken
- Oily fish, tinned works too (sardines, mackerel, salmon)
- Lentils or chickpeas or any pulse
- Tofu or tempeh
- Halloumi or feta

3. Pile on the Veggies

- Steamed broccoli/ green beans
- Roasted beetroot or carrots
- Shredded cabbage or raw salad
- Courgette ribbons
- Sauerkraut or kimchi (for probiotics)

4. Add Healthy Fats

- Sliced avocado
- Nuts/seeds (pumpkin, sunflower, sesame, walnuts, hemp)
- Drizzle of extra virgin olive oil or tahini

5. Boost with Extras

- Fresh herbs (parsley, mint, coriander)
- Pickled veggies
- Miso broth or a soft-boiled egg
- Sprouts or microgreens

6. Top It Off with a Dressing

- Tahini + lemon
- Garlic yogurt
- Soy + ginger
- Apple cider vinegar + olive oil



8. Shopping List Nourishers

This list is to help you to consider having nourishing ingredients within reach so wholesome food becomes your default. These core foods support energy, gut health, blood sugar balance and long-Protein Sources term mental clarity.

Protein Sources

- Organic eggs
- Tinned wild oily fish (sardines, mackerel, salmon etc.)
- Natural yoghurt or kefir or soya
- Tofu or tempeh
- Pulses & Legumes

Vegetables & Fruit

- Leafy greens (spinach, kale, rocket, cos)
- Root veg (beetroot, carrot, parsnip)
- Avocados, courgettes, cucumber
- Berries, apples, bananas, citrus
- Herbs: parsley, mint, coriander, basil
- Cress/microgreens

Healthy Fats & Oils

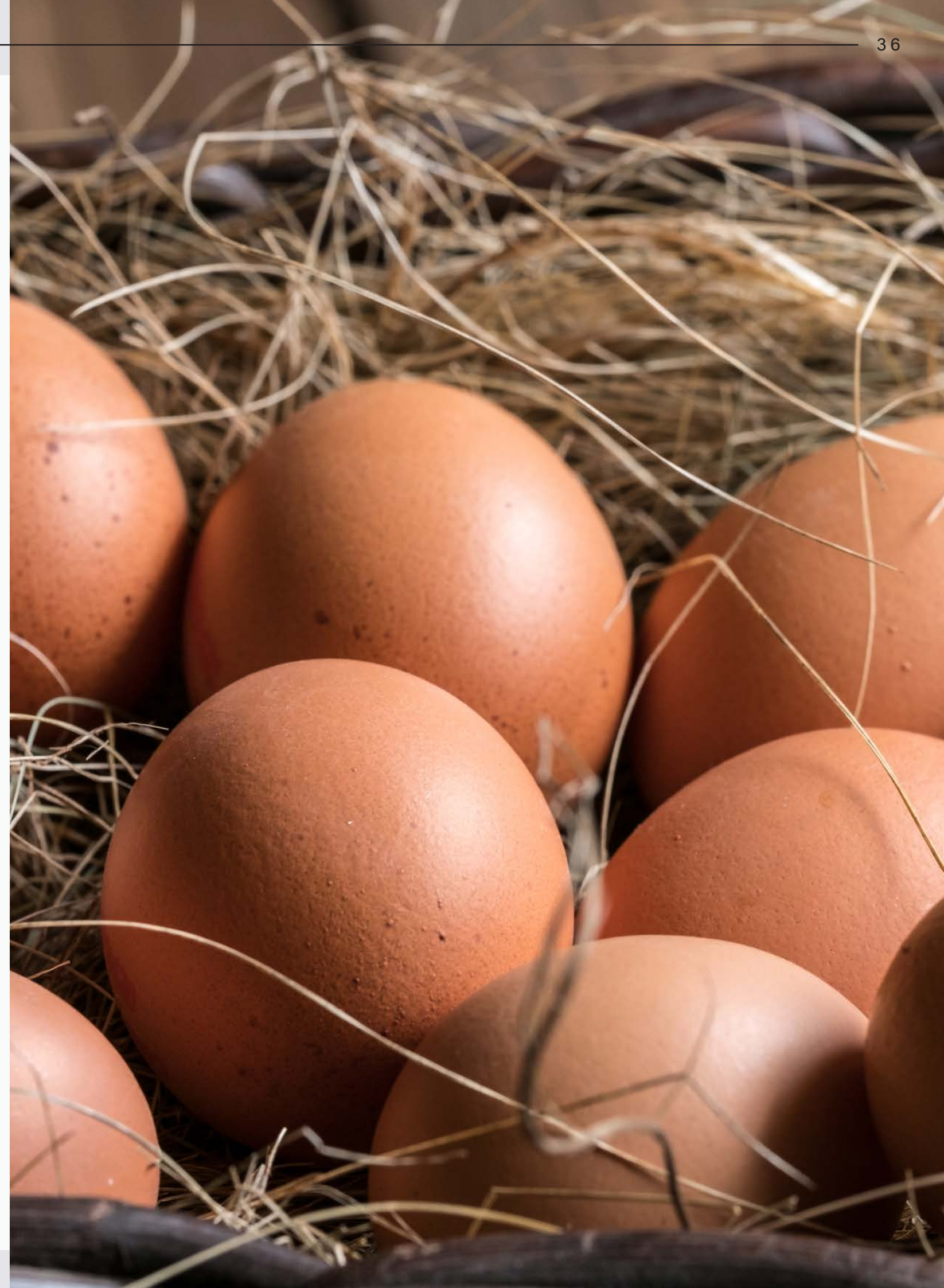
- Extra Virgin Olive oil (cold pressed)
- Avocados
- Nut and seed butters (almond, sunflower, tahini)
- Mixed seeds: pumpkin, chia, flax, hemp
- Nuts: walnuts, almonds, brazil, pistachios

Flavour & Ferments

- Apple cider vinegar
- Pickles or sauerkraut
- Kimchi
- Kombucha
- Broth cubes or miso paste
- Garlic, ginger, turmeric
- Potted herbs

Pantry Staples

- Brown rice, quinoa, oats, soba noodles
- Coconut milk (reduced fat)
- Tinned tomatoes
- Dried herbs + spices (cinnamon, cumin, oregano)
- Sea salt, black pepper, chili flakes



Lifestyle Add-Ons

Sunlight & Nature

- 10–15 minutes of natural sunlight helps reset your circadian rhythm.
- Natural light exposure boosts vitamin D + mood-regulating hormones (only in April to Sept in Ireland)
- A short walk in nature/ green natural environments lowers cortisol and calms the mind.

Breathwork

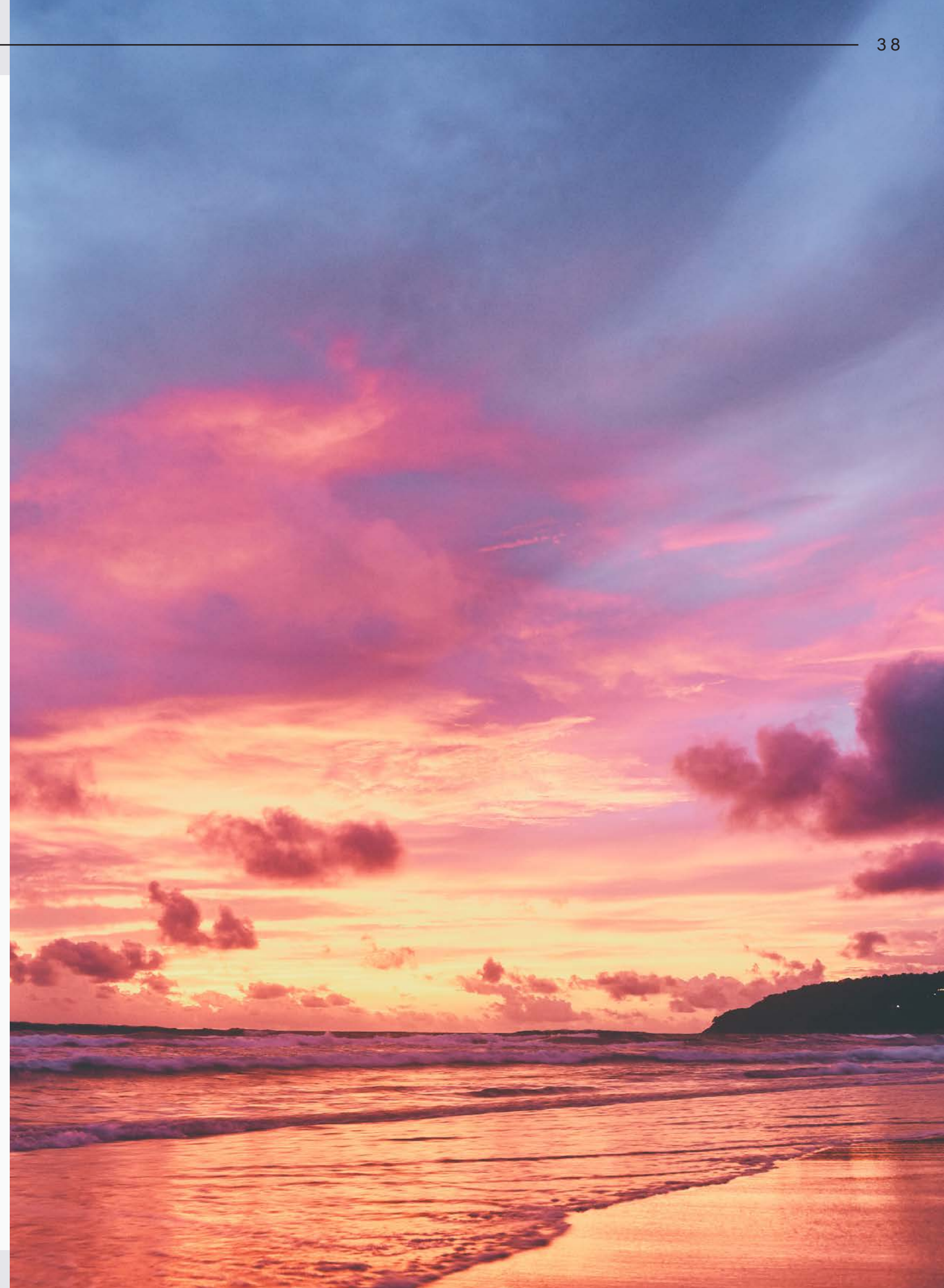
- Breath is your quickest tool to shift stress.
- Try Box Breathing:
- Inhale 4 – Hold 4 – Exhale 4 – Hold 4 (Repeat for 3–5 rounds to calm your system.)

Sleep

- Sleep is non-negotiable for mental clarity, memory and hormone balance.
- Aim for 7–9 hours per night, ideally winding down screens 1 hour before bed.
- Try magnesium-rich foods (greens, seeds, dark chocolate) to support sleep.

Rhythm + Routine

- Anchor your day with regular meals, movement and healthy habits.
- It's not about overhauling your life. It's about stacking small wins that add up.



10. Toolkits & Takeaways

Snack Smarts

Keep these in your bag, drawer, or glovebox:

- Protein balls/bars
- Nuts
- Dark chocolate squares
- Tinned fish + oatcakes
- Herbal tea sachets, oily fish, pulses, yoghurt, tofu, chicken, offal, nuts & seeds

Check in with Yourself

- Before grabbing food pause:
Am I hungry? Thirsty? Tired? Stressed?
- Awareness is your strongest tool. Then nourish accordingly.

THIS ISN'T ABOUT BEING PERFECT. IT'S ABOUT BEING PREPARED, PRESENT AND KIND TO YOURSELF.

NOURISH YOUR MIND

You don't need to be perfect, you need to be fuelled.
You don't need more willpower, you need the right support.
Mental health isn't separate from food, sleep or stress.
It's all connected and you get to take your power back, one
choice at a time.

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