

FAMOUS FOODIES' DIETS

By *Toni Gardner*

YOU'D THINK CHEFS and other high-profile foodies would have no trouble eating well – after all, they're surrounded by good food most of the time. But, in fact, professional foodies sometimes have the worst habits, thanks to frantic schedules and easy access to rich food-and-wine temptations.

Things are changing, though, with the biggest names juggling time in the kitchen with business and media commitments that would exhaust most CEOs. They start early and finish late, meaning they need the staying power of an elite athlete.

We talked to three of Australia's highest-profile foodies to find out how conscious they are of their own diets, and what "super fuel" foods they crave when they're on the downward slide. Then we asked expert nutritionist Zoe Bingley-Pullin to give her verdict on their choices.

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PUT TO THE TEST

LUKE MANGAN

One of Australia's busiest chefs, with four cookbooks to his name, plus restaurants in Sydney, Melbourne, Tokyo and aboard a cruise ship, surely Luke Mangan is a prime candidate for nutritional neglect.

“Actually, I eat pretty healthily. But that's because I like light, simple foods,” he says. “I eat restaurant food only when we're coming up with new dishes, or when I'm in the kitchen tasting and testing.” He's very disciplined, and conscious of the need to stay well fuelled. “I have a routine when I travel. I'm always having a business lunch or dinner, so I keep it simple. But when I'm in Sydney it's fruit and yoghurt for breakfast, and lunch is steamed fish and salad at the restaurant. Dinner is either the same, or chicken or steak with vegies.”

All very healthy and commendable. But what does he reach for when he needs an instant energy burst?

LUKE MANGAN'S SUPER FUEL

“A banana smoothie with honey and yoghurt. Or I go to our pastry section and start sampling desserts!”

OUR NUTRITIONIST'S VERDICT

This option is understandable with the nocturnal lifestyle of a chef; energy is what they crave most. But I'm not sure Luke's banana smoothie is the best option – it could have a little too much sugar. I'd suggest he add protein powder to curb the appetite, or Spirulina for energy; the pastry section *will* provide that high, but it will plummet quickly, sending him back for more. It isn't a sustainable form of energy. ▶

PHOTOS:





“No matter what has happened during my day, dinner is always a relaxed meal and one that I take time to enjoy”

MAGGIE BEER

Pioneering food entrepreneur, TV presenter, author, restaurateur and Australian Senior of the Year are just some of Maggie's roles. With a schedule like hers, we're guessing her nutrition intake is as carefully allocated as her time.

“I'd love to tell you I was that organised! Like everything in my day-to-day life, my eating habits tend to be based on what I'm doing, where I am and how much time I have. If I'm working from home I have the indulgence of picking produce from my garden, in which case I might have a salad of bitter greens, chickpeas, fennel and preserved lemon, which feels incredibly virtuous. If I'm on the run I may just grab a couple of slices of bread and a wedge of cheese to nibble.” But each day she ensures there's one meal that's all about time out:

“No matter what has happened during my day, dinner is always a relaxed meal and one that I take time to enjoy.”

And what's her top choice of pick-me-up?

MAGGIE BEER'S SUPER FUEL

“Chicken noodle soup, made with Barossa egg noodles, a beautiful Barossa Farm Produce chook and plenty of fresh herbs from the garden. Truly a miracle cure.”

OUR NUTRITIONIST'S VERDICT

Chicken soup is a big winner. I love her obvious passion for produce. There's a healthy amount of vitamins in there, and it's so true what they say about a beautifully cooked soup or broth: high in enzymes and incredibly healing. I'd recommend laying off the egg noodles and bumping up the vegies; noodles can spike your blood sugar levels. But basically this is a good, rounded meal.

PHOTOS:

MATT MORAN

With high-profile restaurants in Sydney and Brisbane, various TV and radio commitments, two cookbooks and a range of promotional duties representing Australian food to the world, Matt - in contrast to many chefs - is also a picture of health and fitness, with all the hallmarks of being a conscious eater.



“I'd hate to think what I'd be like if I wasn't; I'd be the size of a house. It's all about balance. I used to tell people I had one meal a day - it started at 8am and finished at midnight. I can't do that anymore! Having little ones changes everything.” For Moran, thinking about the food his children eats has made him much more aware of what he's putting in his own mouth. “I try not to eat carbs after midday, they just weigh you down. And I get to the gym three afternoons a week. I think that between the ages of 30 and 50 you're really setting yourself up for your future. I try not to eat fatty foods and I'm a big believer of everything in moderation. I don't go overboard worrying about what I eat, I just watch the quantities.”

If time and energy are of the essence, what does he reach for?

MATT MORAN'S SUPER FUEL

“A bit of red meat.”

OUR NUTRITIONIST'S VERDICT

As long as he sticks to his mantra of everything in moderation, lean red meat is a good option. Being the good carnivore dominant male that he is, this is highly appropriate for Matt. It's very high in B-vitamins and iron, and is a good high-energy food. But it all comes down to portions. Keep the portion size down and sauces to a minimum. It won't be healthy if you're overdoing it. For Matt, this is a very smart option.

“I try not to eat fatty foods and I'm a big believer of everything in moderation”



ZOE'S TOP FIVE SUPER FUEL PICKS

We've heard Zoe Bingley-Pullin's opinions on our super foodies' choices, but what are her own top picks? What does the busy nutritionist and author of *Eat Taste Nourish* reach for when she needs an energy boost?

1 STRAWBERRIES

This low-GI, high-fibre fruit will help keep your energy levels fighting fit. Low GI foods release their energy very slowly, therefore they don't trigger the sudden rise and fall of your blood sugar levels, which can contribute to energy lows.

2 ADZUKI BEANS

The Adzuki bean is a nutty, slightly sweet, red bean popular in Japan and China. Adding them to your diet will help increase energy as they contain a variety of minerals and vitamins, including iron and B-vitamins.

3 FISH

Increasing your consumption of fish will help increase your energy levels. Fish contains Essential Fatty Acids, or EFAs, which help increase energy levels, improve your sense of physical and psychological wellbeing (mood), bring about more relaxed feelings and an improved ability to deal with stressful situations. EFAs affect the nervous system and help the body to foster a feeling of calmness.

4 WATER

Dehydration is one of the major causes of daily energy slumps - and to think, prevention is as simple as sipping 2.5 litres of liquids each day! You can drink water, herbal teas or watered-down juices. Try keeping a bottle of water with in the car and by your desk.

5 HAZELNUTS

This humble nut is high in coenzyme Q10, which helps increase energy in both sedentary individuals and in athletes by facilitating the conversion of carbohydrates into energy. The other benefit of CoQ10 is that it's a very powerful antioxidant. ●