

Sugar tax: What's been the outcome so far?

Sugar tax: What's been the outcome so far? Could [Lo Han Guo/Monk Fruit](#) be the new sugar?

Back in April we wrote about how a sugar tax in the UK had recently been implemented for soft drinks ([read here](#)). Therefore we thought we'd give you a little update 6 months on to see how this has progressed...

How revenues from Sugar tax will boost funding in over 1,700 schools..

Today we found on the UK government website that so far, soft drink manufacturers have paid an extra £153.8 million in tax since April! That's great news and even better news is just how this money is going to be spent. One of the ways in which it will be spent is to boost funding for breakfast clubs in over 1,700 schools. This money will also be used to support pupil health and well-being programmes such as primary physical education and Sport premium.

And if the sugar tax on soft drinks wasn't enough, Public Health England (PHE) have also announced today that more is needed to be done to tackle food manufacturers adding high amounts of sugar in foods. Their concerns have been sparked due to an overwhelming response from a recent survey whereby consumers expressed that they would like the food industry to reduce sugar by 20% in everyday foods.

Dr Alison Tedstone, chief nutritionist of PHE said, 'severe

obesity in 10-11 year olds is at an all time high. Plans to improve the nations' diet are often described as 'nanny state' interference, but it's clear people want healthier food and they expect the industry to play their part in this.' It's pleasing to hear that those involved within PHE are making a stance to shake up the food industry. Consumers are misled all the time on certain foods so it's great to see the government is finally noticing that we need to start with the source of the problem.

It appears as though it's going to be another intriguing year for the Sugar industry in 2019 and hopefully an even more exciting year for the lo han guo / monk fruit market ☐

References:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/sugar-tax-revenue-helps-tackle-childhood-obesity>

https://www.foodmanufacture.co.uk/Headlines/Ingredients/UK-health-body-calls-out-food-manufacturers-on-sugar-targets?utm_source=copyright&utm_medium=OnSite&utm_campaign=copyright

I'm confused, what should I

be eating?

It's an ever changing world out there, one minute fats bad for us then it's good, we shouldn't be eating red meat, then we should. More recently coconut oil has been branded as 'poisonous' by the media, this was only a few weeks ago. Then today I read in the paper that cooking rice with coconut oil slashes 60% of calories and is great for weight loss (apparently so, [read here](#) if you haven't seen this latest news story). I thought I was indecisive but the media seem to be on another level. All of this indecisive reporting leaves us scratching our heads and asking 'what should i be eating?'

It's true, don't believe what you read in the media, it's a circus out there and these articles are only out there to grab your attention, and annoyingly they do. However we need to realise that some of these statements are not entirely true or are not true for everyone.

Listen to your body & what works for you.

What we really need to start doing is listening to ourselves and figuring out which foods work for you and which don't. It's all down to taste preference, lifestyle choice and how foods interact with our minds and bodies. It can take years to fully understand how your body interacts with different foods, and even then we still won't really know.

I'll give you a personal example, you may have heard at some point that 'we shouldn't eat bread as gluten is bad for us' or 'bread makes us fat'. Now suddenly we're all gluten intolerant or terrified to eat bread. For me when I eat certain types of bread I get that bloating stodgy feeling but it's not because of the gluten necessarily. The reason is actually because of

how the bread has been made. Certain breads contain ingredients to help preserve their shelf-life and when I use to consume these breads I felt like this. However, when I eat fresh bakery bread I don't feel like this and also not forgetting the taste is waaayyy better and that smell, 'mmmmm'. That's not to say that if I over indulged on the fresh, bakery bread that I wouldn't feel like I'm in a bread filled coma. However if I eat 1 or 2 slices of this type I don't feel like this. Just remember also this is a personal experience of mine, of course this won't work for those who are gluten intolerant.

It's all about moderation.

I've said it before and I'll say it again, it's all about moderation and establishing what works for you and what doesn't. It can take years to understand how our bodies react to certain foods and even then we still probably won't fully understand. We all work in a different way, each and every one of us are mechanically made differently, it's what makes us all interesting. We all know that somebody who can eat everything and anything and still not gain weight and for some of us this doesn't quite work.

So I guess the morale to this blog post is to not get sucked into fad diets and take what you read in the paper with a very large pinch of salt.

If you'd like to keep updated on all things [Buddha Fruit](#) be sure to sign up to our newsletter which will include information on delicious, [healthy recipes](#) using [Buddha Fruit](#).

Vegan Diets: How to stay well nourished

How to stay healthy whilst on a vegan diet...

With veganism on the rise it's important to ensure that those abstaining from animal products are well nourished by incorporating various other food groups into their diet. In fact a study which surveyed 2,500 British vegetarians found that almost a quarter of vegetarians believed that they were malnourished. Those who believed they were complained of a lack of energy (64%), headaches/migraines (26%) and feeling faint (37%) (Huffington Post, 2016).

A meat/fish/dairy free diet can cause deficiencies in all sorts of nutrients such as Vitamin B12, Iron and Omega 3. Therefore it is crucial that when removing these types of foods from our diets that we replace them with plant-based alternatives.

Vitamin B12 & Iron

A lack of vitamin B12 & Iron may be the reason for a cause in feeling faint and lack of energy. These 2 nutrients are crucial in the role of formulating red blood cells within the body. If you have a lack of red blood cell formulation this can cause anaemia. There are not really any reliable sources of planted-based foods which contain Vitamin B12 but many cereals and soy products are fortified with B12. Some good sources of plant-based foods which contain iron include

pumpkin seeds, pine nuts, legumes, lentils, soybeans, tofu, collard greens, quinoa. To note, quinoa is a great grain to include in any vegan diet as it is known to be a complete protein source as it includes all the essential amino acids.

Omega 3

Omega 3's are fatty acids most commonly found in oily fish. These fatty acids are imperative for brain function and could be the reason why those on the study complained of headaches and migraines. A lack of these fatty acids can also cause a lack in concentration. It is difficult to acquire these nutrients from food sources so supplementation would be recommended. When choosing a Omega-3 or cod liver oil supplement ensure that it includes EPA or DHA.

If you are deciding to become vegan then it may be a good idea to reach out to a qualified nutritionist to ensure you are still incorporating various nutrients.

References

[Huffington Post – A Quarter Of Vegetarians Think They're Malnourished, Here's How To Stay Healthy On A Meat-Free Diet](#)

Calories: Why I'm not a fan

of calorie counting

Calorie counting, is it always needed?

You may take a look at the headline for this blog post and presume that I'm going to totally eradicate calories, which I'm not. Personally I just don't believe in the whole counting calories and throughout I will explain my reasons why. Of course everyone is subjective to their own opinions so I would expect a mixture of reactions.

First of all let me give you a scenario, you have to eat 1,000 calories of French fries each day for a week or 1,000 calories of broccoli each day. Which scenario would you expect to gain weight? Realistically it would be a hard slog to eat that much broccoli each day, but it's easy to say you would most probably gain weight with the French fries option. We need to also consider the nutritional content of these food, and from this you would expect to be more well nourished with the broccoli option.

Exchange time spent logging calories for a 20 minute HIIT session?

As a nation we've been fixated with counting calories, I myself have been there, done that. I use to log my food into one of those Apps everyday. For me it was tedious. In the time it took me to log my food I probably could have done a 20 minute HIIT session to help burn off the food I ate. For everyone it's different, some people like to track what they eat, I'm not saying it's wrong, but counting calories, macros and micros is just not for me.

Nutritional value of Lo Han Guo vs other Natural Sweeteners

[Lo Han Guo](#) has Zero calories but so do other sweeteners. The difference between [Luo Han Guo](#) and other sweeteners is the nutritional value and how these interact with your body. In a previous blog post I wrote about how exactly other sweeteners affect your health ([click to read here](#)), but in summary most will cause gastrointestinal distress, overeating and chemical imbalances. Whereas [Lo Han Guo](#) has been shown to have anti-inflammatory properties to reduce the risk of certain diseases. This is the same for a whole host of other foods out there; some foods contain hardly any calories but contain an abundance of vitamins and minerals. On the flip side, certain foods are high in calories but contain very little or no nutritional value whatsoever.

By no means become discouraged about counting calories, if it works for you in achieving your goals then keep going! The purpose of this blog is to help make us more aware of what foods we are all consuming. Is the food you are eating empty calories and by this I mean does it have any nutritional value, and by nutritional value I mean valuable properties to your health.

How to keep trim on holiday

So for many of us the time is almost here to hop onto that plane to explore warmer, sunnier climates, wonder the streets of various places and best of all taste the fine cuisine the world has to offer. Lets face it, holidays are to be enjoyed and there's no way you're going to want to miss out on all the

fun activities, chilling out on that sun lounger and indulge on fine wines and food.

Its time to let loose, but lets not get carried away here. You've worked hard to create a lifestyle which is well balanced, and you can bring some elements of this lifestyle on holiday with you. So here's my top tips on staying trim on holiday.

The tactical buffet

If you're partial to an all-inclusive holiday you may be looking to get your moneys worth. Although you could look at this in a different light, such being 'health is wealth.' Are you even still hungry after a 5 stack of pancakes with maple syrup and then going for the cooked breakfast?

It may be worth looking at the buffet cart more tactically. Instead of gorging on everything all at once, why don't you eat something different each day from the buffet. That way you get to try everything but you won't feel so much of a balloon when you're led out on that sun lounger. Also try to balance your meal with healthy sources of protein, fats and carbohydrates. Greek yoghurt with fresh fruit, omelette etc. are all good choices but if you want to have some pancakes go for it. At the end of the day you're on holiday, you've deserved it, but remember to not go overboard.

Cocktail o'clock time

It's that time of day, the cocktail menu is out in force and you're chilling out deciding on which one to choose. With some tasting like a fruit juice it can be easy to have a few without even realising how much sugar you're consuming. Piña colada is a firm cocktail favourite, although on average it contains 35 grams of sugar, that's almost 9 tsp of sugar!

Imagine having more than 1 of those. Yikes! So if you are going to have a cocktail then maybe stick to just 1. You could even ask the bartender to go easy on the sugar or choose a less sweet cocktail such as a Manhattan.

Water is key

Make sure you keep topping yourself up with a drink of water. Hunger can be mistaken for thirst and with the temperatures rising it's easy to become dehydrated. On average we should be consuming 2-4 litres of water a day but this may increase if we are within a hotter climate. Keep a bottle of water with you at all times and take a sip little and often. Also enjoy the local, in-season fruit which will also help.

Early bird catches the worm

Ok so picture this, you're led out on the sun lounger, cocktail in hand, it's 5pm, do you really fancy that gym session now? Chances are, no. My advice is to get it over and done with first thing in the morning. Sometimes the hotel gym can be a bit depressing, so you could explore your surroundings by going on a scenic run or a quick 20 minute HIIT session to get the day off to a good start. As mentioned in a previous blog post, I like to put on a Joe Wicks youtube HIIT session. A short session is all that is needed on holiday, it will make you feel more energized and set up for the day.

Ginger Flapjacks

Here is our delicious Ginger flapjacks recipe! Be sure to post pics of your tasty treats on Instagram using [#sugarsnaturalrival...](#)

Ingredients

- 120g Butter
- 1 tbsp. honey
- 1 Mashed Banana
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp [golden lo han guo by Buddha Fruit](#)
- Small Pinch Fresh Ginger (cut into small pieces)
- 1 tsp Ground Ginger
- 220g Oats
- 25g Dark Chocolate (Melted)

Method

1. Pre-heat oven to 180° and grease baking tin with parchment paper.
2. Spoon the butter, honey and mashed banana into a saucepan on a low-medium heat. Gently mix together.
3. Next add the [Golden Lo Han Guo](#), fresh ginger and ground ginger. Mix for a few minutes until mixed well.
4. Gradually stir in the oats.
5. Pour the mixture into the prepared tin and pop into the oven for about 20-25 minutes until golden brown.
6. Take out of the oven and leave to cool (if needed pop into the fridge for it to set). Once cool, drizzle over

the melted chocolate, pop back into the fridge to allow chocolate to set. Once chocolate is set, cut into squares and serve

How can I reverse type 2 diabetes?

Yes it's true you can reverse type 2 diabetes or reduce the severity of the symptoms by following a few simple lifestyle changes. There's research out there to prove that these techniques work so why not give these few things a go

Exercise

Sounds simple but actually getting to the gym or going to the park for a run can be a daunting prospect for some of us. It's all about finding something you enjoy, maybe mixing things up to generate and keep an interest. Setting goals or targets can also improve our desire to keep going. As little as half an hour of moderate-intensity exercise, 5 times a week can help, that isn't that bad is it? And if you don't fancy paying those hefty gym fees or venturing out into the cold then you could always make space in your living room in front of the TV.

There's also loads of youtube workouts for you to follow. If I'm low on time I like to switch on a Joe Wick's 15 minute HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training) sessions, nice and short but you really get a sweat on! And the science? Experts say that exercise can reduce your chances of type 2 diabetes by up to 40% (Diabetes UK). You could also make subtle changes to your everyday life such as taking the stairs instead of the lift, cycle to work, walking instead of using the car for those 5 minute journeys etc.

Nutrition

Research has shown that you can significantly reduce type 2 diabetes by adopting 'healthier' eating habits. These habits include [reducing sugar](#), saturated fat, trans fats and alcohol consumption (Hu *et al*, 2001).

Personally I'm not a fan of going on a 'diet' as they usually are a short-term unsustainable fix. It's all about making those better life choices and ensuring you don't restrict yourselves from those 'guilty pleasures' too much. Sure, in the beginning it won't be easy but 3 months down the line making these type of choices will come naturally. Simple swaps can make a huge difference in the long run, whether it's swapping the sugary cereals in the morning for a warming bowl of porridge, swapping a side of fries for a salad or using [Lo Han Guo](#) in your baking/cooking/tea or coffee instead of sugar can all help.

Sleep

We've all heard that we should get about 8 hours of sleep right? But why is this? Well studies have shown that those of us who get less than 5-6 hours of sleep a night are at a higher risk of become obese or type 2 diabetic. If you find it difficult to get to sleep then this increases your chances of type 2 diabetes by 55% and if you are one of those who find it difficult to sleep throughout the night then this increases your risk by 74% (khandelwal *et al.*, 2017).

For those of us who suffer from insomnia there are a few techniques we can do to help us nod off. No not counting sheep (although this may work for some), but again make slight changes to our lifestyle. For most of us we never really 'wind down' before bedtime. And by this I mean cutting ourselves off

from the world by turning our phones off or leaving it downstairs instead of taking it to bed with us.

I have recently used this tactic and I can hand on heart say my quality of sleep has vastly improved, no more 3am wakeup calls checking the work emails. Something a little more difficult to do could be to get rid of the staple TV in the bedroom. The morale of the story is to try to avoid bright lights at least 1 hour before bedtime. Scientists have found that by doing this can immensely help us get off to sleepy land.

References

<https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/managing-your-diabetes/exercise>

Hu. F.B., Manson. J.E., Stampfer. M.D., Colditz. G., Liu. S., Solomon. C.G., Willett. W.C., (2001) *Diet, Lifestyle, and the Risk of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus in Women*, The New England Journal of Medicine, 345:790-797

Khandelwal. D., Dutta. D., Chittawar., Kalra. S., (2017) *Sleep Disorders in Type 2 Diabetes*, Journal of Endocrinology & Metabolism, 21(5): 758–761

Blueberry Muffins

Ingredients:

- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp Golden Luo Han Guo
- 110g Melted Butter
- 110g Plain flour
- 30g Almond Flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- Pinch nutmeg
- 2-3 Handful of blueberries

Method:

Pre-heat the oven to 180 degrees.

In a mixing bowl, whisk up the eggs, then add the Luo Han Guo. Whisk together for about 4-5 minutes, until fluffy smooth texture.

Add the melted butter and whisk for a further 3-4 minutes.

Gradually add the flour, baking powder and nutmeg to the mixture. Combine the ingredients together.

Once mixture is combined, pop into the fridge for about 15 minutes.

Take out of the fridge, gradually add the blueberries to the batter.

Carefully spoon the mixture into the muffin cases, fill each case to just over half way.

Pop into the oven for about 20-25 minutes or until golden brown. Place on a cooling rack to cool and then serve.

Tackling Junk Food Advertising

How do we tackle junk food advertising? With an obesity epidemic on our hands it's hard to believe that adverts promoting junk foods are still in existence. The cuts to the NHS have caused uproar but why are there not more simple, effective things being done to tackle the root of the problem. One suggestion being is to stop junk food advertising.

Make the UK a healthier nation!

A recent documentary on BBC starring Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall has challenged the UK government with that very point. During the programme Hugh is on a mission to help the UK to adopt certain changes to their lifestyle to make the UK a healthier nation. Along the way Hugh has taken the initiative to ask the UK government some very simple questions, so far they have declined to comment. By their silence you may be led to think that these questions are difficult to answer, but here are some of those very questions:

- Will you put a 9pm junk food advertising watershed in, so families can watch TV without being bombarded by unhealthy food adverts?
- What will you do to restrict big-brand discounts and checkout promotions of junk food (which are high in fat, sugar and salt)?
- Will you stop brands from using kids' cartoon characters and superheroes on packaging to advertise junk food?
- Will you protect our kids from online junk food adverts that target them based on where they are, and what they like doing?

They don't look very difficult to answer do they? This has since prompted a trending campaign to be started on social media called #AdEnough as endorsed by TV chef Jamie Oliver. The idea of the campaign is to highlight to the government that we as a nation are fed up of being bombarded with these type of adverts and that we would like to shape a healthier future for the next generations.

Tackle obesity by removing junk food advertising?

So far there has been a success story in which the London mayor, Sadiq Khan, has spoken up to say that he wants to help tackle the childhood obesity by removing junk food advertising across the entire Transport for London network. That's a great start and so may actions like this continue.

We fully support Hugh's quest to get the government to respond and take more action on the obesity crisis. We have signed his letter and if you would like to do so too you can here: <https://www.newcastlecan.com/letter>

Cheesecake

Preparation Time

15-20 mins

2

Cooking Time

10 mins

Serves

Allergy Info

TBC

Method

1. Place digestive biscuits into a sealable bag. With a rolling pin, bash the biscuits until they are crumbled.
2. In a mixing bowl combine the crumbled digestive biscuits with the melted butter and [golden lo han guo](#).
3. Spoon the biscuit mixture into a 20cm spring-form cake tin lined with baking parchment. Press the mixture firmly down with a metal spoon until even. Chill in the refrigerator until set.
4. In a mixing bowl beat together the mascarpone, lo han guo, vanilla extract and lemon juice.
5. Once combined, fold in double cream – mix well.
6. Spoon the creamy mixture onto the chilled biscuit base. Make sure the cream mixture is spread evenly; use a pallet knife to ensure even spread.
7. Place in refrigerator to set for 1 hour.
8. Remove cheesecake from tin and gently place on serving plate. Sprinkle the dark chocolate over the top and add raspberries. All ready to serve

Base Ingredients

- 100g Digestive Biscuits
- 50g Butter (melted)
- Slightly less than $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon (small pinch) [golden lo han guo](#)

Ingredients

- 500g Cream Cheese
- $\frac{1}{4}$ Teaspoon [lo han guo](#)
- 1 tsp spoon Vanilla Extract
- 1 Lemon (squeezed juice)
- 200ml Double Cream

Optional Ingredients

- 10g Dark Chocolate (grated)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ Punnet Raspberries

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Banana Loaf



Courgette Chocolate Brownies

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