

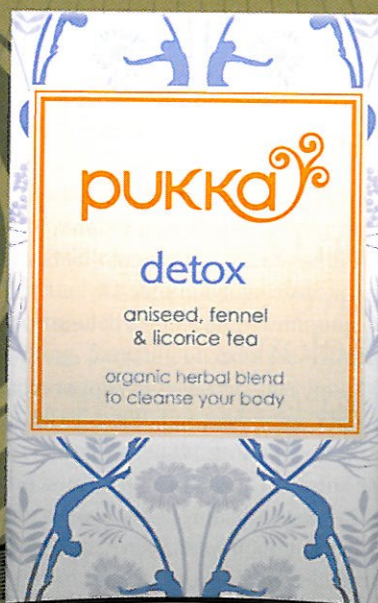
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TEA, NO SUGAR

WITH A FEW CLEVER TWEAKS, AFTERNOON TEA CAN BECOME A HEALTHY FEAST

WORDS GABRIELLE NATHAN

You're hungry from lunch, it's hours until supper, so afternoon tea is the meal most likely to break your healthy-eating resolve, especially with the typical spread of cream-laden scones and iced cakes. This one tiny meal (really, a snack), can pack a whopping 1,000 calories. But, if you eat a little of the right stuff, tea can be an extremely good idea. 'Eating a substantial snack between lunch and dinner can help prevent blood-sugar dips, which result in low energy and lack of concentration,' says clinical nutritionist Kim Pearson. 'It can satisfy you, until dinner.' Here are some healthier ways to tuck in.

- **Start with a sandwich.** 'Swap white bread for low-GI rye or pumpernickel, which will fill you up more,' advises Pearson. As well as cucumber, try protein-rich, hunger-busting fillings, such as egg, tuna, mackerel or smoked salmon. Or, give traditional cucumber sandwiches a protein boost by adding low-fat cream cheese.
- **Streamline scones by swapping the cream for whipped crème fraîche,** and switching your jam to a no-added-sugar spread. Or, make gluten-free scones; this recipe, by Alice Sherwood, author of *Allergy-Free Cookbook* (Dorling Kindersley, £14.99), makes 10. Mix 225g Doves Farm gluten-free self-raising flour, half a teaspoon of baking powder, a quarter of a teaspoon of salt, half a teaspoon of xanthan gum (available from supermarkets) and 30g caster sugar. Rub 45g butter into the mixture, to form fine breadcrumbs, then fold in one beaten egg and 50ml milk. Roll out dough to 2cm thick, cut into 5cm scones, brush with milk and bake at 220°C/425°F/Gas mark 7 for 10 minutes.
- **Avoid sugar-laden icing.** In the newly launched Afternoon De-Light tea at the Metropolitan Hotel, London, chefs have replaced icing with slightly sweetened cream cheese, and added fresh fruit toppings.
- **Bring on the beetroot (or carrot, or sweet potato).** Jessica Seinfeld, wife of the comedian Jerry, has a bestselling book in the US, which fools kids into eating vegetables, by adding them puréed to cakes and muffins. But her recipes suit grown-up tastes, too. See *Deceptively Delicious* (HarperCollins, £14.99), or get her recipe for Chocolate Cake (with Beets) at recipezaar.com.
- **Make healthier brownies by using dark chocolate** and replacing the flour and a third of the butter and sugar with ground almonds, for a dense, moist texture. 'Ground almonds are naturally sweet, meaning you use less sugar to get the same taste,' explains Zoe Berkeley, owner of bakery Bake-A-Boo. Or, try baking with coconut flour, the latest high-fibre superfood. For recipes, see tiana-coconut.com. ■