

# Practical Ways to Enjoy the Delights of Soya

## Introduction

More and more people want to know how to incorporate soya foods into their diets as a result of the growing awareness of soya's potential health benefits. The good news is that as a result of the large variety of great tasting foods now available, it has never been easier to include more soya into the diet. Yet despite the wide availability, some people find this difficult to achieve as they are uncertain how to source, prepare and cook soya foods. With this in mind, this fact sheet gives the necessary information to help identify soya foods, as well as providing practical suggestions to help create delicious tasting meals. Following these top tips will enable people to enjoy the delicious benefits soya has to offer.

## Why Soya?

Soya is a nutrient packed bean that is low in saturated fat; a good source of polyunsaturated fat, fibre and high quality protein; and contains a number of important vitamins and minerals. As such it fits in well with healthy eating guidelines. This is especially important at a time when many of us are failing to meet dietary goals recommended for positive health. Furthermore, above and beyond these nutritional benefits, soya is being investigated for its potential health benefits in the areas of heart and bone health, as well as menopausal symptoms.

## Increasing Soya Consumption – a Step by Step Plan

### Step 1

*Identifying soya foods as part of a healthy balanced diet.*

To achieve a healthy balanced diet, recommendations are often based around food groups. In order to enjoy good health it's important to eat a variety of foods from each food group, in the right proportions. Soya foods are available in all of the major food groups.

*FOR EXAMPLE:-*

Food Group	Examples of Soya Foods
Milk and Dairy	Soya dairy free alternatives e.g. soya milk and yogurt alternatives, soya desserts, soya cheese
Fruit and vegetables	Soya beans (dried and tinned), edamame beans
Starchy foods and cereals	Soya breakfast cereals, soya bread, soya flour
Meat, fish, eggs and beans	Tofu, tempeh, soya beans (dried and tinned), meat alternatives e.g. soya burgers, soya mince, soya sausages, etc
Foods containing fat & sugar	Soya desserts, soya custard, soya cream, soya nuts, soya margarine, soya oil

### Step 2

*Making the switch to soya.*

Due to the huge selection of soya foods, traditional foods can simply be swapped with one of the many soya foods now available.

*FOR EXAMPLE:-*

Instead of...	Choose...
Milk	Soya milk alternative
Yoghurts	Soya yoghurt alternatives
Cheese	Soya cheese
Dairy desserts & ice-cream	Soya based chilled and frozen desserts
Cream	Soya cream
Frozen peas	Frozen edamame beans
Tinned baked beans	Tinned soya beans in tomato sauce
Minced meat	Soya mince
Meat products such as sausages and burgers	Veggie burgers and sausages made with soya
Vegetable oil	Soya oil
Potato crisps	Soya nuts



### **Step 3**

*Creating delicious, yet nutritious soya meals.*

This wide variety of soya foods makes it easy to include them into each meal occasion.

FOR EXAMPLE:-

#### **Breakfast – getting off to a good start**

- Wholegrain breakfast cereal with chilled soya milk alternative
- Blended soya milk and seasonal berries make a tasty smoothie
- Fresh fruit and muesli topped with a soya yoghurt alternative
- A veggie sausage sandwich
- Scrambled eggs (made with soya milk ) on toast

#### **Light lunches**

- Soya bread sandwich - pack it with a healthy filling such as grilled chicken and salad or tinned salmon and cucumber
- Tinned soya beans in tomato sauce on toast
- Soya burger and salad in a wholemeal roll
- Silken tofu as a topping for jacket potatoes
- Hearty vegetable soup bulked up with soya beans
- Steamed edamame beans added to salads
- Soya based bacon strips make a healthier BLT sandwich

#### **Satisfying main meals**

- Soya mince can be used as a replacement for meat in dishes such as lasagne, curries, chilli, moussaka, spaghetti Bolognese and shepherd's pie
- Edamame beans can be included in a meal as a vegetable accompaniment, or they can be incorporated into risottos and stir fries
- Soya beans can be used to bulk up a casserole or stew
- Tofu is delicious in stir fries
- White sauce can be made using soya milk alternative; silken tofu can be used as a replacement for mayonnaise
- Soya cream is a healthier alternative to dairy cream

#### **Sweet Treats**

- Soya yoghurts and desserts make a perfect finish to a meal
- Soya custard or cream are ideal toppings for stewed fruit and fruit crumble
- Soya ice-cream is just right for those hot summer days

#### **Fillers between meals**

- Carry around soya nuts for emergency snack attacks
- Choose soya milk to make a latte or cappuccino coffee
- Individual flavoured soya milk alternatives make ideal snacks to have when out and about
- Soya yoghurt alternative topped with dried fruit is perfect for those peckish moments
- Make a dip using natural soya yoghurt, serve with vegetable crudities



## Top Tips to Remember when Preparing, Cooking and Storing Soya Foods

### Dried beans

- As a guide cooked beans roughly weigh twice as much as dried, so 50g of dried beans will weigh 100g when cooked
- Dried beans take a bit of preparing so it might be more convenient to make up a large quantity and then store them in the fridge for a few days. Cooking tips:
  - Soak the dried beans for 12 hours in plenty of cold water
  - Drain them, put them in a pan and cover with plenty of cold water
  - Bring to the boil and boil for 1 hour
  - Reduce the heat and simmer gently for about 2-3 hours until they are tender. Keep an eye on the water during this time and top up with boiling water if necessary

### Dairy Alternatives

- Unopened fresh, chilled soya milk and yoghurt alternatives have a shelf life of about one month. Long life products have a longer shelf life. Once opened, the product should be eaten within three to five days. However, different products have different shelf lives and it's always worth checking the pack for best before dates and storage instructions.
- If soya milk is poured directly onto hot tea and coffee it may have a tendency to curdle. Heat the soya milk first before adding it to the drinks to prevent this from happening. Alternatively look out for certain brands that have been especially designed to prevent this from happening.
- Use as you would dairy products in cooking e.g. replace dairy milk for soya milk alternative if making a white sauce for lasagne

### Tofu

- Tofu is also known as bean curd and is produced from the whole soya bean. It is made from soya beans which are soaked, pureed and boiled. The resulting soya milk is then strained and a coagulant is added which causes curds to form. It is usually sold in small blocks as firm or silken tofu.
- When using in stir fries, first pour off the water it is stored in and press with a clean towel until dry. Cut into cubes or strips and marinade in your favourite sauce for an hour. Remove from the marinade and stir fry in a wok for 2-3 minutes until brown. Add finely chopped vegetables such as carrots, spring onions, peppers, Chinese leaves and the rest of the marinade and stir fry for another 4-5 minutes.

### Soya Flour

- When using soya flour for baking, remember soya flour doesn't have gluten present in it (the protein that helps bread rise). For this reason, when making bread, substitute only one third of wheat flour with soya flour

### In Conclusion...

Soya foods are ideal foods to include into the diet to help achieve dietary guidelines advocated for positive health. Soya's benefits go above and beyond its excellent nutritional profile and as such people are looking for ways to include more soya foods into their diet. With the large selection of delicious tasting foods now available, soya can be easily included into each meal occasion, helping people to receive the full benefits soya has to offer.