

# BRAIN FRIENDLY RECIPES

Dementia Action Week 2022

## JERK CHICKEN CASSOULET



## Ingredients

### Chicken/Marinade

- 1 medium red onion
- 6 sprigs parsley
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 3/4 bunch of spring onions
- Sea salt
- 1 tsp dried dill
- 5 tsp dried thyme or fresh thyme leaves
- 1 tsp chipotle flakes
- 1/4 tsp mace or nutmeg
- 1/2 glass red wine
- 5 tbsp dark soy
- 3 tbsp clear honey
- 4 mild chillies (use scotch bonnets if you want an authentic kick)
- 2 stalks of celery
- 2 chicken breasts
- Cold pressed rapeseed oil
- Whole garlic bulb

### Cassoulet

- 2 bell peppers
- Tin of mixed beans
- Half tin of kala chana (or chickpeas)
- Half tin of sweetcorn
- 1/2 large avocado

This recipe is inspired by the Mediterranean, DASH and MIND diets, which have been shown to reduce the risk of cognitive decline and dementia later in life from anywhere between 20% and 50%. You can find out more about these diets [here](#)\*

If you have a go at cooking this meal please let us know how you get on, tell us if you've switched up any ingredients, added your own flourishes or if you have any of your own brain friendly recipe ideas - Tweet us @dementiaunited using the hashtag #DAWHealthyMind, or email us [gmhscp.dementiaunited@nhs.net](mailto:gmhscp.dementiaunited@nhs.net)>

\*<https://brain.health/articles/mediterranean-dash-and-mind-diets-a-beginners-guide/>

## BRAIN FOOD

There is no one food which can promise a healthy brain, but most scientists agree that a Mediterranean diet is the best for keeping your brain healthy.

That's a diet where there are plenty of fruit, vegetables, oily fish, whole grains, nuts, olive oil and a moderate amount of red wine/dark chocolate, tea and coffee. Whilst they also suggest that we cut down on red meat, white rice, bread, sugars, full fat dairy and salt.

Interestingly, the research also shows that good bacteria in our guts can help keep our brains sharp, so fermented foods (for example pickled vegetables and pro-biotic yogurt); and foods which encourage the growth of good bacteria such as banana, ginger, broccoli and dark chocolate may help keep our brains working at their best.

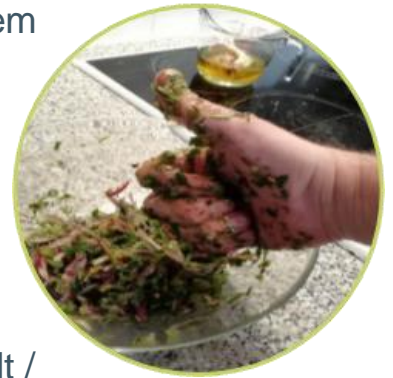
To provide a bit of tasty inspiration, we've teamed up with Tom from MudBugs restaurant [mudbugs.co.uk](http://mudbugs.co.uk) to create four brain-friendly recipes based on the Mediterranean diet to tickle your tastebuds.



# JERK CHICKEN CASSOULET

## Method

1. Using a very small pan (ideally that just fits a bulb of garlic) or an oven proof ramekin, **confit the whole bulb of garlic unpeeled**. To confit, place the whole garlic bulb in pan or ramekin, cover it about  $\frac{3}{4}$ , or to the stalk, in cold pressed rapeseed oil and cook it. You want to heat it slowly not deep fry it, so heat on a low heat or in an oven at about 130. If the oil starts to bubble drop the heat. Get this going whilst you prepare the marinade and chicken.
2. **Marinade:** slice your onion and spring onion finely. Put them in a mixing bowl with a little sea salt. Add the lemon, dill, thyme, chopped parsley, chipotle and mace. Squash it together with your fingers and hands until the onion is bruised – doing this should release some liquid. Add the wine, soy, honey, sliced chilli and finely sliced celery. **Mix it together with a spoon and have a taste** – it should be rather good already. There should be a nice balance of salt / sweet and wine tastes. Try and balance the flavour if it's gone too far in one direction. **Leave it for now and get the chicken ready to go in** (if you're using a solo chopping board skip ahead to the cassoulet prep and come back here to avoid a mid-recipe de-chickening of your board)
3. Slice the chicken with the knife almost flat against the board so you get 3-4 thin slivers of chicken per breast.
4. Back to the garlic: hopefully by now it's all squishy. Take it out of the oil and give it a poke – the cloves should be soft. **Cut the root off and squeeze out the garlic cloves**. You might have some crispy bits on the outside of each clove – give them a chop if so and put the lot in with the marinade. Mix it up and split it into 2 halves. Marinate the chicken in a bowl with the first half. Cover and refrigerate for 24 hours (or just skip straight to cooking it if you haven't the time). Oh, and **keep the garlic infused oil!**
5. **Chicken:** Spoon a little of the garlic oil from the confit into a searing hot frying pan, place the pieces of chicken in and leave until they have some colour, then flip, turn down the heat and add the rest of the marinade, veg, juice and all. Cook until the chicken is cooked through. You will hopefully develop a lovely sauce – if it starts to go dry you can add a bit of wine, honey and soy (try and keep to the ratio from the marinade) add a little more garlic oil too. The oil will help a kind of emulsion to form – this will be delicious, the sugar from the honey will start to caramelize and mix with all that herby – spicy goodness.



6. **Cassoulet:** Get another searing hot frying pan completely dry (it's better if it's not a non-stick pan) and add the 2 chopped bell peppers. They will start to char just a little and maybe stick after a minute or so, turn the heat down and **add a little of that garlic oil**. Cook for another 3-4 mins until they have begun to soften. Add the sweetcorn, beans, and kala chana (although any mix of legumes will do, feel free to chuck in some peas, edamame, black beans, kidney beans, etc.). Keep cooking to the point that the beans are hot (no need to boil them out for ages) – **3 minutes is probably fine**. Take off the heat and mix in some diced avocado.



7. **Plate:** Put the chicken on top of the cassoulet and then spoon over all the sauce from the chicken pan. I also drizzled a little soy and garlic oil on top for good measure.

