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Do you use the same ingredients in every salad you make? Shop for the same chicken and vegetables each week? It's easy to fall into a predictable routine with your meals. But switching up the foods you eat is not only more fun, it's also better for your health. "Think of it like exercise," says naturopath Brenna Rich. "When you work the same muscles in the same way when you walk or jog or go to the gym, your body gets used to it and the overall benefit decreases over time." In the same way, if your diet doesn't vary enough in composition and kilojoules, this will slow down your metabolism and mean that you gain weight more easily and find it harder to shed. What's more, eating lots of different foods also ensures that you get all the vitamins you need, which may not happen if you eat the same things week in, week out.

A fun way to break out of a food rut would be to sign up for cooking classes in a cuisine you fancy, or wander round ethnic supermarkets, delis, or farmers' markets – if you take the time to chat to the proprietors or stall-holders, they are almost always keen to share ideas on how to cook and prepare different ingredients.

What's your favourite way to shake up your food and eating habits? Share with me, and you could win a year's subscription. And thanks to Rani Stone for sharing her tip for connecting with new people in last week's e-news: "My mum always used to say, 'To make friends, you need to be a friend'. It's true: the basis of any friendship must be caring, attention, and trust. When it's someone new, remind yourself to listen to what that person is saying, instead of focusing on your own self-consciousness – that helps you overcome shyness." She wins a year's subscription. And congratulations to the winners of our tenth *Natural Beauty Awards for 2017* – check 'em out below!

Enjoy this week's stories -

Pamela Allardice

Editor

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Latest



So beautiful!

It was tough choosing the winners for our tenth annual natural Beauty Awards because there were so many deserving brands, so we've added highly commended products as well. Meet our faves for 2017! [Read more](#)



Recipe: Gillian Bell's chocolate fruit cake

Try this delicious Christmas cake from artisan baker Gillian Bell, using organic, all-natural ingredients. [Read more](#)



Recipe: Date and cocoa energy balls

These delicate energy balls are rather like chocolate truffles, although much better for you - they're full of nutrients and good fats. Enjoy before a gym session or as an afternoon snack. [Read more](#)



Recipe: Christmas brownies

Yes, it is possible to enjoy a brownie without the guilt-laden aftermath that usually follows it! [Read more](#)



Recipe: Halva

This healing sweet is especially beneficial for vata; the warming nature of sesame seeds helps retain body heat, moisturise the hair and skin, promote better digestion, and lubricate the intestines. [Read more](#)



Recipe: Pistachio and avocado ice cream

Avocado lends itself perfectly to this twist on the Italian favourite. Its vibrant green colour goes hand in hand with the pistachio's natural hue and provides creaminess and richness without dairy or eggs. [Read more](#)



Recipe: Carrot, mango, rocket and sunflower salad with orange dressing

This dish is one of my favourite vata salads to take along to a party. I've included cooling, stimulating and blood-purifying carrots and oranges, and rice malt syrup to satisfy sweet cravings. [Read more](#)



Recipe: Mango, ginger and lime sorbet

Paleo nutritional medicine practitioner Claire Yates believes that eating healthy food should not mean giving up treats! [Read more](#)



Recipe: Shining bright lemongrass beef

This mouthwatering recipe was inspired by the flavours of Vietnam. It reminds me of the joy, radiance, and resilience that is possible when I let go of fear and embrace the future with wide-open arms. [Read more](#)



Product of the week: Udo's oil

Udo's Choice® is a premium quality brand of nutritional wholefood blends, including Udo's 3-6-9 Oil Blend®, formulated by Udo Erasmus - an international authority on essential fatty acids and human health. [Read more](#)

