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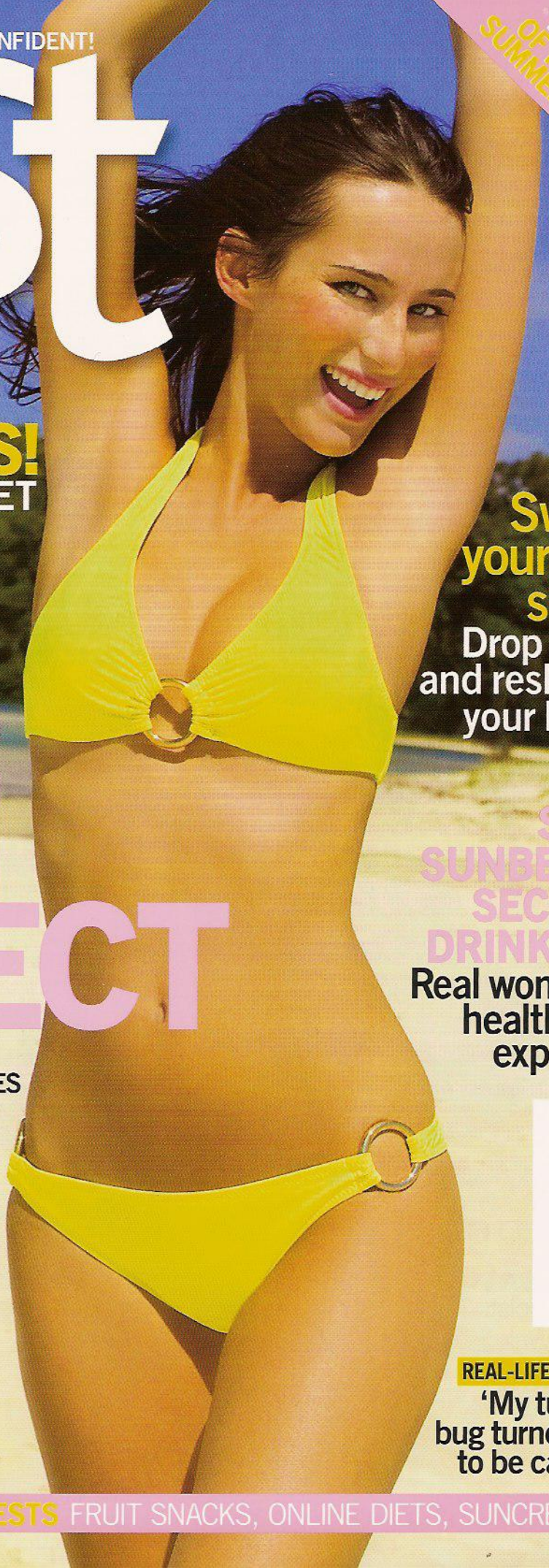
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# HEALTH-PROOF YOUR BBQ

Barbecues don't have to mean a diet blow-out. With a few simple (and delicious) swaps, you can slash fat and calorie content without compromising on flavour. Get grilling...

WORDS CHRISTINE MORGAN PHOTOGRAPH DEREK LOMAS

## SWAP chicken wings FOR teriyaki chicken skewers

'Traditional barbecue chicken wings are loaded with fatty skin and not much healthy meat,' says dietitian Gloria Tsang, founder of online nutrition network HealthCastle.com. 'Try grilling skewers of skinless chicken breast with teriyaki sauce instead. Teriyaki sauce is low in fat and has a sweet depth to its flavour – and, because it's thicker than soy sauce, it can be used as a marinade. Go easy on the marinade, though, as it contains sugar. But you'd typically marinate about six chicken breasts with one small jar, which substantially decreases the amount of sauce you'll consume, and, compared with the fat and calories in barbecue chicken wings, the savings are huge.'

**Barbecued chicken wings 466 calories per 3 to 4 wings**  
**1 teriyaki chicken skewer 220 calories**

## SWAP beef steak FOR tofu steak

'Take a break from barbecued meat and fish – it's been linked to cancer,' says Los Angeles-based registered dietitian Lanah Brennan: 'When heated to high temperatures, the proteins in meat and fish are converted to cancer-causing heterocyclic amines. Tofu steaks make great, low-calorie replacements – and tofu has no cholesterol and less fat,' says Brennan. Press the excess water from a 120g slice of extra-firm tofu using paper towels, marinate in a low-fat dressing and then grill on the barbie.

**Beef steak 227 calories per 120g**  
**Marinated tofu steak 144 calories per 120g**

## SWAP pork sausages FOR pork-and-fig kebabs

Eating just one sausage a day could increase your risk of bowel cancer by a fifth. Research by the World Cancer Fund found that higher fat levels and preservatives in processed meat such as sausages could lead to the disease. Also eating carbs, protein and fat triggers a process called oxidative stress, which has been linked with an increased risk of Alzheimer's and cardiovascular disease. But eating antioxidant-rich foods, such as fruit, as part of your meal reduces oxidative stress, claim researchers from the US Department Of Agriculture. About 70% of the calories in an average pork sausage come from fat, so swap your usual bangers for some delicious pork-and-fig kebabs. Simply place three chunks of lean pork steak meat on a skewer, alternating with three fig halves. Drizzle with a drop of honey, then season and grill for eight minutes on each side or until cooked through.

**Two thick pork sausages 232 calories**  
**1 pork-and-fig kebab 148 calories**

## SWAP lamb kebabs FOR minty mushrooms kebabs

Mushrooms are the new superfood, according to nutritionist Sarah Schenker. 'They're one of the few sources of L-ergothioneine, a potent antioxidant, and they contain a wide range of important vitamins and minerals, including B vitamins, iron, potassium and selenium,' she says. To make minty mushroom kebabs, mix 150g Greek yogurt, 2tbsp chopped fresh mint, a finely chopped clove of garlic, 1tbsp paprika and 1tbsp lemon juice, and add 450g closed cup mushrooms. Leave for four hours, then thread onto eight skewers before cooking. For more mushroom recipes, visit [www.mushroom-uk.com](http://www.mushroom-uk.com).

**Lamb kebab 190 calories**  
**Minty mushroom kebab 30 calories →**



**SWAP** French dressing  
**FOR** orange-honey  
vinaigrette

'The primary ingredient in orange-honey vinaigrette is orange juice, which makes it a great, healthy substitute for your usual oil and vinegar dressing,' says Jackie Nigro of Fruit And Veggie Guru ([www.fruitandveggie.com](http://www.fruitandveggie.com)). Combine 60ml orange juice with 1tbsp olive oil, 2tsp red-wine vinegar, 1tsp honey, ½tsp salt and a pinch of black pepper, then drizzle away.

**French dressing 69 calories per tbsp**  
**Orange-honey vinaigrette 37 calories per tbsp**

**SWAP** white burger rolls  
**FOR** granary rolls

Latest research from the University Of Sydney, Australia, suggests that foods with a high glycaemic index (GI), such as white bread, increase your risk of getting type-2 diabetes, heart disease, gall stones and even cancer, thanks to the way they affect your blood glucose and insulin levels. So serve your burgers in a granary bun instead, as bread containing wholegrains has a far lower GI not to mention a lower calorie count.

**Large white bread roll 180 calories**  
**Granary roll 158 calories**

**SWAP** nachos  
**FOR** baked crisps  
with salsa

'Instead of serving nacho crisps with high-calorie cheese and guacamole, switch to baked crisps served with salsa and reap the healthy reward of tomato-based antioxidants,' says Tsang. Baked crisps can contain 70% less fat than regular crisps, while eating tomatoes has been linked to having lower cholesterol levels, according to the *British Journal Of Nutrition*.

**Nachos 278 calories per serving Baked crisps (25g) with salsa (100g) 153 calories**

**SWAP** BBQ sauce  
**FOR** cranberry sauce

You won't save calories with this swap, but researchers from Worcester Polytechnic Institute claim that cranberries may protect you against E coli food poisoning, often caused by undercooked meat. Try glazing chicken breasts and kebabs with a little cranberry sauce (from supermarkets).

**Barbecue sauce 38 calories per 30g serving**  
**Cranberry sauce 46 calories per 30g serving**

**SWAP** bananas with chocolate  
**FOR** strawberries with balsamic vinegar

'Strawberries possess unique plant sterols called ellagitannins and anthocyanins, which have anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer properties,' says Dr Georgianna Donadio, founder of the US-based National Institute Of Whole Health. Mix 200g halved English strawberries with 2tsp soft brown sugar, 1tbsp balsamic vinegar and 1 star anise, and place in an aluminium foil bag (£4.99 from [www.qbag.com](http://www.qbag.com)). Cook on the barbie for three minutes then sprinkle with chopped mint.

**Large banana with 4 squares dark chocolate 312 calories 1 cup strawberries, balsamic vinegar and sugar 93 calories**

**SWAP** baked potatoes  
**FOR** grilled wedges

When starchy foods are baked, roasted, fried or toasted, they create the chemical acrylamide, which scientists believe is linked to cancer. But research published in the *Journal Of The Science Of Food And Agriculture* has found a way of reducing acrylamide in cooked potatoes by 30% – soak the potatoes in water for half an hour before cooking. Then cut into wedges and grill for 15 minutes. The calorie content is the same, but they're healthier.

**Baked potato (medium size) 198 calories**  
**Grilled wedges (from a medium-sized potato) 198 calories**

**SWAP** oil-based marinades  
**FOR** fresh herbs

Add herbs to the burning charcoals while you're grilling meat or fish. 'Herbs used this way add a lot of flavour without adding calories,' says Maria Liberati ([www.marialiberati.com](http://www.marialiberati.com)), author of *The Basic Art Of Italian Cooking* (Art Of Living, £9.62). 'Use fresh rosemary and sage leaves for grilling meats, while lemon and orange peels add an interesting touch to grilled fish.'

**Olive oil marinade for 1 piece fish/meat 240 calories Fresh herbs 0 calories**

**SWAP** garlic butter  
**FOR** roasted garlic

Ditch the garlic butter this summer and serve fresh bread with roasted garlic cloves instead. You'll save plenty of calories and fat in the process, and you'll give your heart a healthy boost. 'Roast a few garlic cloves on the barbecue until they're soft, then squeeze them and spread on to bread,' says Sophie McKay, nutritional therapist for Weight Watchers Online ([www.weightwatchers.co.uk](http://www.weightwatchers.co.uk)).

**Garlic butter 38 calories per tsp**  
**Roast garlic spread 5 calories per tsp** ☑

