

Postpartum Nutrition

It will help you to eat foods that are easy to digest, nourishing and warm. Here are a few recipes to try using famous postpartum healing ingredients.

Daily Essentials - For the first 40 days you can eat 3 prunes, 3 dried apricots and 6 almonds daily. You can also eat 1 hard boiled egg every day.

For the first few days simple broth and congee is the easiest to digest.

BROTHS

BEEF BONE BROTH

This is an earthy and warming food that requires zero finesse to make. Just handling the ingredients-roughly chopped vegetables, meaty bones that are briefly roasted to boost the flavor, and a dash of vinegar to pull minerals into the liquid-feels primal and earthy. And a mug of broth might just be the perfect food as you shush your little one to sleep; it will keep you going for a couple of hours as its goodness seeps right into your bones.

Makes 2 quarts (2L) or 6-8 servings

4 pounds (1.8 kg) beef bones (short ribs, marrow, neck, joints, whatever you can get)

1 white or yellow onion, halved

2-inch (5-cm) knob of fresh ginger, unpeeled, halved

2 leeks, white parts only, roughly chopped

3 large carrots, unpeeled, sliced into thick rounds

1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar

1/2 teaspoon whole cloves (optional)

1/2 teaspoon star anise (optional)
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C).

Place the bones in a large roasting pan (or, if it's ovenproof, in the stockpot that you'll use to cook them on the stove). To save time, add the onions and ginger with the bones so they begin caramelizing as well. (This will give the broth a rich flavor.) Roast for about 30 minutes, or until the bones are brown and crackly and juice has started to collect on the bottom of the pan. If you used a roasting pan, let the bones cool slightly, then transfer them to a stockpot. Or if you're using the same pot, add 3 quarts (2.8 L) water, or enough to cover the bones with the roasted onion and ginger by about 1 inch (2.5 cm). Add the leeks, carrots, vinegar, and, if using, the cloves and star anise.

Bring to a boil over high heat, skim of any foam that rises to the top, then reduce the heat to low and simmer for 2 to 4 hours, covered, checking every so often to skim off any additional foam. The broth is done when it delivers an appealing earthy flavor. Remove from the heat, strain, and season with salt and pepper to taste, reserving the bones to make more broth later or immediately add more water and boil the bones again. Drink warm or pour into glass mason jars and keep in the fridge for up to 5 days. (Remember this homemade broth can be used as a component in other recipes—soups, stews, congees—over the next several days.) Or, fill glass mason jars, zip-tight plastic bags, or muffin tins (for convenient individual servings) and freeze up to 3 months.

TIP: To make this broth in a slow cooker, set on medium or low heat and cook for approximately 8 hours. Remove any fat that forms on top.

OXTAIL BROTH

OXTAIL BONES ARE A BROTH-LOVER's delight. Robust and fat-rich, oxtail meat falls off the bone into the liquid as it cooks, giving you a delicious gift: slow-cooked beef morsels to snack on. The strips of kombu seaweed infuse satisfying flavor and extra minerals to the liquid. Start cooking oxtail broth in the morning and you can scoop out a few bites of meat midday, letting the broth cook on until evening. There will be more foam on the top of the pot than regular beef broth; simply skim it off.

Makes 2 quarts (2L) or 6-8 servings

4 pounds 1(8. kg) beef oxtail bones (ask your butcher to help you if you're not familiar)

Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 large white or yellow onion, peeled, quartered

2 strips kombu (helps with digestion and flavor; optional)

1 large daikon, peeled and cut into 1-inch (2.5-cm) slices

3 tablespoons soy sauce, tamari, or Bragg Liquid Aminos

Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C).

Rinse the oxtail, pat dry, and season with a few pinches of salt and pepper. Place the oxtail and onions in a roasting pan and roast for 30 minutes, or until both the oxtail and the onions are golden brown.

In a large stockpot, bring 3 quarts (2.8 L) water to a boil over medium-high heat. Add the roasted oxtail, roasted onions, and kombu, if using, leaving the drippings out. Cover the pot, reduce the heat to low, and let simmer for about 2 to 4 hours. Add the daikon and soy sauce to the broth, then reduce the heat to low and simmer for another hour, covered, or until you see a noticeable reduction in the amount of liquid. (You'll see a ring on the side of the pot when the water level has gone down.) You'll know the broth is ready when the meat is falling off the bones. You can either eat the broth with the tasty meat in it and suck on the bones, or you can strain out the solids to make a clearer broth.

Store in the fridge for up to 5 days. You can also freeze the broth in zip-tight freezer bags or glass mason jars for up to 3 months.

CHICKEN BROTH

Chicken soup is nurturing, nourishing and has warming properties, and when combined with also-warming ginger, which boosts circulation and supports your immune system and digestion, chicken soup is an absolute winner for giving your body and soul a cozy glow.

Makes 2 quarts (2L) or 6-8 servings

2-2 1/2 pounds (1-1.2 kg) whole chicken or parts, organic or free range preferred

1 medium white or yellow onion, peeled and halved

2-inch (5-cm) knob of fresh ginger, peeled and halved

2 whole garlic cloves, peeled

2 whole green onion stalks

2 medium carrots, not peeled, sliced into medium rounds

Sea salt and freshly ground pepper

Rinse the chicken under cold running water, then place the chicken carcass or pieces in a large pot with 3 quarts (2.8 L) cold water, enough to cover the chicken by at least 1 inch (2.5 cm). Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, reduce to a low simmer, and simmer for about 30 minutes. Skim off any scum as it rises to the top. Add the onion, ginger, garlic, green onions, and carrots and cook over medium heat, then let the broth cook for another 3 hours on low heat, uncovered. Season to taste with salt and pepper. The meat will slowly separate and fall off the bones. Strain, or if you want to portion out some broth with meat and vegetables to eat as a chunky soup, you can do that now.

Store leftovers in the fridge for up to 5 days, or freeze in zip-tight plastic bags or glass mason jars for up to 3 months.

PORK & DAIKON BROTH

Delicious and digestible. Adding the pork shoulder will infuse the broth with extra flavor while giving you a batch of super-tasty shredded pork to store separately in the fridge. You can stir it back into the broth to make a hearty soup, or use it in a congee recipe, Seaweed Soup, or a Mother's Bowl.

Makes 2 quarts (2 L) or 6-8 servings

4 pounds (1.8 kg) pork bones plus 1 pound (455 g) pork butt, if available, halved
1 large white or yellow onion, peeled and halved
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 strips kombu (helps with digestion and flavor)
2 cups (85 g) fresh shiitake mushrooms, or 1 cup (35 g) dried
1 pound (455 g) bacon (optional)
4 whole green onion stalks, washed
1 cup (115 g) thinly sliced daikon rounds
2 large carrots, peeled and roughly chopped

Preheat the oven to 400°F (205°C).

Place the pork bones, pork but, and onions in a roasting pan, season with a few pinches of salt and pepper and roast for 30 minutes, or until the bones and butt are golden brown and juices begin to form at the bottom of the pan. In a large stockpot, add 3 quarts (2.8 L) cold water and the kombu and let it come to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium, then add the shiitake mushrooms and bacon, if using. Remove the bones, butt, and onion from the oven and transfer to the stockpot with the broth. Add the green onions, daikon, and carrots. Let it all simmer over medium heat for 30 minutes, uncovered, then reduce to low heat for 3 hours. Skim off any foam as it rises to the top. Season to taste with more salt and pepper. Strain, or if you want to portion out some of the broth with meat and vegetables to eat as a chunky soup, you can do that now. Store leftovers in the fridge for up

to 5 days, or freeze in airtight plastic bags or glass mason jars for up to 3 months.

FISH BROTH

LIGHT AND AROMATIC, FISH BROTH is a wonderfully adaptable kitchen classic that is often overlooked in the West. In Asia, it's a base for soups, stews, and ramen bowls because it accommodates all kinds of flavorings quite easily. Experiment with this broth: Add your favorite spices to change its personality-try allspice for a Vietnamese twist - or omit the tomatoes to make a clear, multi purpose broth. If it's your first time buying a whole fish with the head on, don't be intimidated. It's an economical choice (and rewarding, as the head has tons of flavor and nutrients) and the fishmonger will typically wash and prep it for you. Small bones may be left inside; they will soften when cooked and contain extra nutrition-just pick them out before eating or chew well!

Makes 2 quarts 2(L) or 6-8 servings.

1 medium white or yellow onion, peeled and halved
1 clove garlic, peeled and roughly chopped
1-inch (2.5-cm) knob of fresh ginger, unpeeled, halved
4 green onions, roots trimmed
2 medium tomatoes, unpeeled, halved
2 pounds (910 g) whole fish with heads and tails
1 tablespoon unsweetened black vinegar
1 cup fresh (165 g) or frozen (245 g) pineapple (optional for a sweetener)
Sea salt and pepper

Place the onion, garlic, ginger, green onions, and tomatoes in a medium pot. Add 3 quarts (2.8 L) water, or enough to cover everything by at least 1 inch (2.5 cm). Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer, covered, for 30 minutes. Add the fish, vinegar, and pineapple, if using, raise the heat, and bring it to a gentle

boil, skimming of any foam as it rises. Reduce the heat to a simmer and cook gently for 45 minutes, uncovered. When the liquid becomes cloudy, remove from heat and strain the remnants through a cheesecloth or metal strainer, separating the broth into a clean jar or bowl and discarding the solids. Season to taste with salt and pepper. This broth is best enjoyed very fresh, so set aside what you can use in a day and freeze the rest in zip-tight plastic bags or glass mason jars for up to 3 months.

SHIITAKE IMMUNE-BOOST BROTH

This meat-free broth benefits from the immune-boosting power of mushrooms revered as a powerful medicinal food. Rich in B vitamins and minerals.

Makes 2 quarts (2L) or 6-8 servings

1 white or yellow onion, peeled and roughly chopped

2 leeks, green parts discarded, white part roughly chopped into coin shapes

2 tablespoons olive oil or a cooking oil like avocado or coconut oil or grass-fed butter

Sea salt

2 cups (85 g) fresh shiitake mushrooms, or

1 cup (35 g) dried 1/2 cup (20 g) dried reishi mushrooms (optional)

1 cup (60 g) cremini or white button mushrooms

2 strips kombu (helps with digestion and flavor)

2 medium carrots, peeled and roughly chopped 4 medium tomatoes, halved, with seeds is fine

3 whole cloves garlic, peeled

1-inch (2.5-cm) knob of fresh turmeric, unpeeled, halved

2 cups (140 g) roughly chopped green cabbage

1 loosely packed cup (50 g) roughly chopped parsley

2 tablespoons lemon zest

In a medium pot over medium heat, brown the onions and leeks the oil with a pinch of sea salt to help the browning. Quickly rinse the shiitake, reishi (if using), and cremini mushrooms and kombu under running water. Add all the mushrooms, kombu, carrots, tomatoes, garlic, and turmeric to the pot, along with 3 quarts (2.8 L) water, or enough water to cover the veggies by at least 1 inch (2.5 cm). Cook for 1 hour over medium-low heat, covered. During the last 20 minutes, add the cabbage, parsley, and lemon zest. Season the broth to taste with salt. Remove from heat and strain. Store in the fridge for up to 5 days, or freeze in zip-tight plastic bags or glass mason jars for up to 3 months.

(Save the cabbage leaves if needed for lactation support)

How to Freeze Broth

To freeze broth in glass mason jars: Pour the cooled broth into a clean jar, leaving 2 inches (5 cm) headspace at the top. Screw the lids on loosely and place them in the freezer with a little space between each jar (this will help prevent cracked jars). Once the broth is frozen, you can tighten the lids. Freeze for up to 3 months. To defrost, place a jar or two in the fridge the night before. Heat the contents in a pot on the stovetop as needed.

Congee

A bowl of congee is one of the most reassuring meals you can eat. In China and other Asian countries, this rice porridge is what you get served when you're a little under the weather. Soft, warm, and mushy, requiring minimal effort to digest, congee in its basic form is gentle and nurturing, the perfect food for a woman's body after birthing her child.

It also balances her tired-but-wired mental state. The mother's senses are taking in a million new bits of information, while simultaneously recovering from birth and processing change on every

level. Creamy, white congee is wonderfully neutral; it's a relief just to taste it! It fills your belly in a clean, calm way, and making it doesn't require creativity or thought.

It also offers a fantastic blank canvas on which to improvise. Congee blows open whatever idea you had of porridge in the past. It welcomes all kinds of ingredients; take one big pot of congee and play with proteins, vegetables, and condiments, to eat it a different way each day. A little like risotto, congee can be made with broth instead of water—but without risotto's wine or cheese—then customized with whatever savory ingredients you have in the fridge. Or it can be turned into a dreamy rice pudding, swirled with stewed fruits and cream.

The power of congee is that it's such easy eating. It's a food that you (or a loved one) can make in your pj's after a long night rocking baby. Or scoop out a serving as a midnight snack; it is so gentle on the digestion, and so settling with its starches, it can help you slip more easily into brief hours of sleep. And while it's simple enough to make on the stovetop, it can also be set to cook overnight in a slow cooker, ensuring that everyone in your home wakes up to a one-pot-meal that is infinitely pleasing to the palate and the belly.

WHITE RICE CONGEE

Congee is a food of rebirth; its simplicity and clean taste feel so comforting in a weary or recovering body. One cup (210 g) of sticky rice (also called glutinous rice) is the secret to its nurturing texture—though if that grain is hard to find, use 3½ cups (665 g) white jasmine rice instead. Congee loves water, so if you sense it is getting too dried out, add another cup of water to the pot, stir, and continue to cook.

Serves 4-6 (plenty to store and use for days)

1½ cups (285 g) white jasmine rice

½ cup (105 g) white sticky rice

There are a few different methods for making congee (like a choose-your-own-congee-adventure book). Start each option by rinsing the rice several times in water, covering the rice with water, then swirling it around, then draining and repeating several times until the water runs clear when you drain it.

Option 1. Cook the rice in a rice cooker, as per instructions, so you end up with 4 to 4½ cups (780 to 875 g) cooked rice. The cooked rice will then go into a pot with 1 quart (960 ml) water. Over medium heat, bring to a boil then lower heat and cook for 45 minutes, covered, stirring often, checking to make sure the water level is always at least ½ inch (12 mm) above the rice level. Cook until the rice opens and softens. (You can also soak your rice overnight, covered in water, before cooking it.)

Option 2. Another way to cook congee is on the stovetop. In a medium pot, bring the uncooked rice with 1 quart (960 ml) water, or enough water to cover the rice by 1½ inches (4 cm), to a boil over high heat.

When it comes to a boil, reduce heat to a simmer and cook for 45 minutes, until the grains soften and open. You'll want to stir often and keep checking and adding water if it's been absorbed. Adding the sticky rice gives it an extra-full texture. It's ready to eat hot. Store leftovers in the fridge for up to 5 days, or freeze in 3-cup (585-g) portions in 1-quart (960-ml) zip-tight plastic bags for up to 3 months.

Sweet Rice Congee with Black Sesame Seed Paste

For a sweet treat, scoop 2 cups (390 g) of hot White Rice Congee into a bowl. Sprinkle with brown sugar or drizzle in some raw honey along with ground cinnamon, raisins, or, for a more decadent flourish, dried figs. You could also crack an egg or two into the congee while it's still cooking and swirl it in for a custardy effect that also adds protein. With or without the egg, you can also spoon in the homemade Black Sesame Paste (see below). Black sesame supports kidney energy-essential for reproductive health-and the paste is like a sweet, dark tahini.

Black Sesame Seed Paste

This can be used as a dip or spread with anything you like, as well as swirled into your rice congee.

Makes 1 cup (225 g)

1 cup (115 g) black sesame seeds
2 tablespoons honey
7 tablespoons (105 ml) olive oil or melted coconut oil

Blend everything together in a blender or food processor. This will take a little patience as you'll need to occasionally stop and push the seeds (with a wooden spoon or spatula-never with your hands)toward the blade and then return to blending. Keep going until you have a soft paste.

Store in a glass container in the fridge for up to 5 days. If it hardens in the fridge, you can spoon some out and warm it in a pan on the stovetop, adding a little more oil to soften it.

ADZUKI & SWEET POTATO CONGEE

WITH ITS TRIO OF BEANS, root vegetable, and rice, this gentle congee makes good use of your stocked-up pantry. It uses the mildly sweet and fiber-rich adzuki bean, a food that's said to uplift the heart and that is used in many Chinese desserts.

This congee's gingery taste can get enhanced with other spices, if you like—a touch of chili powder and smoked sea salt is one of my favorite twists.

Serves 6

5 cups (975 g) White Rice Congee
1 cup (135 g) peeled and cubed sweet potato or yam
1 cup (170 g) canned organic adzuki beans

5 tablespoons (75 g) brown cane sugar (or raw honey or other sweetener of your choice)
2-inch (5-cm) knob of fresh ginger, peeled, mashed, and minced (you want as much juice in the dish as possible so do this over a small bowl)
Pinch of sea salt (optional)

In a medium pot over low heat, combine the congee with 6 cups (1.4 L) cold water (or enough to cover the congee by ½ inch/ 12 mm). Add the sweet potatoes, beans, sugar, and ginger juice (and any little soft bits you may want), and the salt, if using. Cook, three-quarters of the way covered, for 40 minutes, stirring occasionally. Keep an eye on the water level and add more cold water to prevent sticking if needed.

Store leftovers in the fridge for up to 5 days, or freeze in 1-quart (960-ml) zip-tight plastic bags in 3-cup (675-g) portions for up to 3 months.

BASIL & BEEF STRIPS CONGEE

ONE NIGHT I SERVED A mom-friend a bowl of congee with leftover grilled Thai beef salad from dinner the night before. The combination of tender meat, fragrant basil, and creamy rice was so delicious, it spawned this fusion dish, which benefits from the herb's immune-boosting, anti-inflammatory, and magnesium-rich properties. It will be especially loved by hungry menfolk in your home who may be craving a good steak.

Serves 4-6

For the brown rice congee:

1 cup (190 g) short-grain brown rice
½ cup (100 g) white rice
½ cup (105 g) white sticky rice
3 tablespoons sesame oil
1 clove garlic, peeled and finely chopped
1 cup (110 g) thinly sliced white or yellow onion
Pinch of sea salt

1 fresh chili pepper, seeds removed, minced (optional, if you want some heat)
1 tablespoon granulated cane or coconut sugar
1/2 cup (120 ml) soy sauce, tamari, or Bragg Liquid Aminos
1 pound (455 g) beef (cut of your choice), cut into thin strips, any length you like
1/2 cup (20 g) roughly chopped fresh basil leaves
Squeeze of fresh lime juice

To make the brown rice congee: In a medium pot, combine the short-grain brown rice, white rice, and sticky rice. Rinse it several times in water to get rid of excess starch, covering the rice with water, then swirling it around, then draining and repeating several times until the water runs clear when you drain it. Add 3 cups (720 ml) water to the pot and bring to a gentle boil over medium-low heat.

Reduce the heat to a simmer and cook until the rice opens and softens, keeping the pot half covered. Watch to make sure it does not boil over, stirring occasionally and checking to make sure the water level is always at least 1/2 inch (12 mm) above the rice level. This will take a minimum of 1 hour.

Meanwhile, heat 2 tablespoons of the sesame oil in a medium frying pan over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot, add the garlic, onion, salt, and chili pepper, if using, and cook over medium heat for 5 minutes, stirring frequently (and watching carefully) to make sure the garlic does not burn. Cook until the onions are soft but remove from the heat if they begin to get brown.

Once the oil is flavored with the garlic and chili pepper, you can add the sugar, soy sauce, and then the beef strips for a flash-fry, cooking over medium heat until the beef is to your liking. Add the basil leaves and let it all simmer together over low heat for another 5 to 7 minutes, uncovered. This gives you a lovely sauce to pour over your congee. Finish with the squeeze of lime juice. Turn off the heat and serve warm. Leftovers will keep for several days in the fridge.

OATS & CHIA CONGEE

This version of congee requires no translation: It's oat porridge with a twist. Everyone in the family can dig in-oats deliver excellent nutrition and energy and fortify mom's lactation. Chia adds an extra protein kick. To make it extra easy to digest and to cut a few minutes off the cooking time, soak the oats in water for a few hours, or overnight, with a little squeeze of lemon juice and a pinch of salt.

Serves 6

2 cups (180 g) rolled oats

1½ cup (235 g) steel-cut oats

1-inch (2.5-cm) knob of fresh ginger, peeled and halved

Pinch of sea salt

¼ cup (40 g) chia seeds

½ cup (50 g) quinoa flakes (optional; add another ½ cup/120 ml water if using)

For the toppings:

1 cup (240 ml) milk (or cream, coconut milk, or nut milk of your choice)

2 tablespoons coconut oil or butter

¼ cup (60 ml) maple syrup, or to taste

Fresh or frozen fruit or berries, for serving (optional)

Chopped almonds or other nuts, for serving (optional)

In a medium pot, bring 4½ cups (1 L) water to a boil over medium-high heat. Add the rolled and steel-cut oats, the ginger, and salt. Reduce the heat to medium and let cook-three-quarters of the way covered-for 10 minutes, then reduce the heat to low and simmer for another 15 minutes; add more water if needed, keeping an eye on the pot so it doesn't boil over. Add the chia seeds and quinoa flakes, if using, during the last 15 minutes of cooking, stirring occasionally so the seeds and flakes separate and incorporate into the mixture. Once the

grains are soft and creamy, and most of the liquid is absorbed, remove from heat. When you are ready to eat, serve warm with the milk, coconut oil or butter, maple syrup to taste, plus fresh fruit and almonds, if you like.

Portion-freezing option: After the congee is cooked (and the chia seeds and quinoa have been added), let it cool on the stovetop. Spray muffin tins with cooking spray. Portion the congee into ½ cup (115 g) servings in the cups of the muffin tin. Flash-freeze for 4 to 5 hours, or until firm. Twist or tap out each serving and place them in large zip-tight plastic bags. When you are ready to eat, add one or two to a saucepan with some milk or water and reheat over low heat for 3 to 4 minutes, uncovered.

SOUPS

By day 3 you can start to eat some heartier soups and stews

CREAMY KABOCHA & RED LENTIL SOUP

Orange is a color of celebration, ritual, and happiness—a shade that instantly lifts the spirits. This pureed soup is so easy to make from ingredients stocked in your pantry, and it's a great one to ask a visitor to whip up for you. The slightly sweet taste and grounding properties of kabocha squash are especially comforting on days when you might feel teary or blue.

Serves 8

3 tablespoons sesame oil or coconut oil
½ of a white or yellow onion, peeled and roughly chopped
½ of a shallot, roughly chopped
1 medium kabocha squash, peeled and cut into small cubes (6 cups/690 g), or substitute acorn or butternut squash
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 tablespoon curry powder

2 quarts (2 L) vegetable broth (Shiitake Immune-Boost Broth or store-bought)

2 cups (380 g) red lentils

2 teaspoons soy sauce, tamari, or Bragg Liquid Aminos, or to taste

2 tablespoons nutritional yeast (optional)

Warm the oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the onion and shallot and lightly brown them, stirring with a wooden spoon, about 5 minutes. Add the squash, cumin, and curry powder and lightly sauté with the onions, about 5 minutes more. Reduce heat to medium-low, add the broth, and bring to a boil. Cover the pot, reduce heat to low, and cook for 40 minutes. Add the lentils and continue to cook for another 10 to 15 minutes, until the lentils and squash are tender. Let the soup cool slightly, then transfer it to a blender in batches and puree until creamy, if you like, or stop when some of the squash is still chunky. (Or use a hand blender to blend the soup in the pot.) Season with the soy sauce and nutritional yeast, if using, to taste. Drink throughout the day. Store leftovers in the fridge for up to 5 days, or freeze in zip-tight plastic bags or glass mason jars for up to 3 months.

FISH, PAPAYA & PEANUT SOUP

This is a lactation boosting soup. So many new moms report with wonder that this fragrant, simple soup seemed to turn up their milk flow; tradition says it's the mix of papaya juice, fish proteins, and peanuts that stimulates the milk ducts to release their bounty.

Serves 6-8

Sea salt

1-inch (2.5-cm) knob of fresh ginger, peeled and cut into 6 thin slices

2 whole (head included) small fish or 1 medium fish (about 2 pounds/910 g total), such as black bass, tilapia, trout, or red snapper

½ of a medium papaya, peeled, seeded, and cut into medium cubes

2 tablespoons unsalted peanuts (keep the outer red skin on if you can)

2 whole green onion stalks, white ends trimmed off

3 medium tomatoes, halved, with seeds left in

4 Chinese red dates (optional)

In a medium pot over high heat, bring 2 quarts (2 L) water to a boil, then add a pinch of sea salt and the ginger. Rinse the fish under cold water and add to the boiling water. Add the papaya, peanuts, green onions, tomatoes, and red dates, if using, reduce the heat, and simmer for 1 hour, covered. Taste and add more salt, if needed. Strain the soup if you just want to drink the broth, or eat all the bits of fish, if you like, watching out for the bones. Drink throughout the day. Store leftovers in the fridge for up to 2 days, or freeze in zip-tight bags or glass mason jars for up to 3 months.

MISO & BURDOCK SOUP

Combine burdock root, mushrooms, seaweed, and salty miso paste in a pot, and you get a fortifying balance of land and sea. Fresh burdock root is famed for its purifying and immune-boosting effects and can be found at health food stores and Asian markets.

Serves 6

1-inch (2.5-cm) knob of fresh ginger, peeled and sliced into matchsticks

1 cup (60 g) matchsticks of fresh unpeeled burdock (if fresh is not available, you can use ½ cup (about 80 g) dried burdock)

1 cup (115 g) cubes of unpeeled daikon

1 medium carrot, peeled and cut into cubes

2 whole green onions, white ends cut off and discarded

1 cup (70 g) sliced white or (60 g) cremini mushrooms

1 strip of kombu

2 tablespoons sesame oil

2 teaspoons organic miso of choice

In a medium stockpot, bring 7 cups (1.7 L) water to a rolling boil. Add the ginger, burdock, daikon, carrots, green onions, mushrooms, kombu, and sesame oil, reduce heat to low, and simmer, covered, for 40 minutes. Remove from heat. Spoon out some of the hot broth into

a small bowl, stir in the miso paste, and let it dissolve. When the rest of the broth has cooled a bit and the steam has subsided, after about 5 minutes, stir the miso broth back into the pot. This is a great soup to drink throughout the day as needed. Pour the desired amount of soup into a smaller pot and reheat it on the lowest setting, without letting it come to a boil (that will destroy the enzymes in the miso).

Soup can be stored in the fridge up to 5 days.

QUINOA, LENTILS & GREENS SOUP

SOME TRADITIONAL POSTPARTUM

SOUPS ARE elaborate concoctions requiring many steps and rare ingredients. This soup is the opposite: a super-simple meal made from basic pantry ingredients that's impossible to get wrong. The spices and flavorings can be intensified as you like.

Serves 8

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup (85 g) peeled and roughly chopped white or yellow onion
3 tablespoons olive oil or coconut oil
Sea salt
2 quarts (2 L) homemade broth
2 tablespoons ground cumin
4 medium carrots, peeled, quartered, and cut into small cubes
2 cups (400 g) green lentils
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups (255 g) quinoa
3 cups (195 g) roughly chopped curly kale (stems included)
1 tablespoon soy sauce, tamari, or Bragg Liquid Aminos
3 tablespoons nutritional yeast (optional)

In a medium pot over medium heat, sauté the onions in the oil with a pinch of salt until they brown on the edges and are tender. Add the broth, cumin, carrots, and lentils, bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce the heat to medium-low and cook, stirring occasionally, 30 to 40 minutes, or until the carrots and lentils have begun to soften. Add the quinoa and kale, reduce the heat to a simmer, and cook for another 15 minutes, covered, until the quinoa is cooked and the kale

is tender. Remove from heat, season with the soy sauce and the nutritional yeast, if using, and stir in a pinch of salt, or season to taste. Serve warm. Store leftovers in a glass storage container in the fridge for 3 to 4 days. This soup also freezes well for up to 3 months, portioned into zip-tight plastic bags or glass mason jars

SEASONAL GREENS SOUP

By simmering and liquefying lots of leaves at once, you can consume a gardenful of greens in one brightly colored and very easily digestible bowl. Quinoa boosts the soup by adding texture, protein, and a pop of contrasting color. Seasonal Greens Soup has an essential role in the new mom's repertoire.

Serves 6-8

3 leeks, white parts only, cut crosswise into thin slices
½ cup (55 g) onion peeled and roughly chopped
3 medium parsnips, peeled and roughly chopped
3 tablespoons olive oil or coconut oil
2 quarts (2 L) vegetable broth (Shiitake Immune-Boost Broth, or store-bought)
½ teaspoon sea salt
1 cup (170 g) quinoa
3 loosely packed cups (90 g) fresh organic spinach, loosely packed
cup (30 g) chopped chard
2 tablespoons soy sauce, tamari, or Bragg Liquid Aminos, or to taste
2 tablespoons nutritional yeast (optional)

In a large pot over medium-high heat, sauté the leeks, onions, and parsnips in the oil until lightly browned. Add the broth, reduce the heat to medium, cover, and let it simmer for about 30 minutes, or until the parsnips are soft. Meanwhile, in a small pot, bring 2 cups (480 ml) water and the salt to a gentle boil. Add the quinoa, reduce the heat, and simmer, covered, for 15 minutes, or until the quinoa is fluffy and tender. When the soup has finished cooking, remove it from the heat to cool down a bit.

Working in batches, transfer the warm soup to a blender, along with the fresh spinach and chard, and blend until everything is incorporated into a vibrant green puree (or use a hand blender). Return the puree to the pot, stir in the quinoa, and season with the soy sauce and the nutritional yeast, if using. Warm up the soup over low heat before serving. Store leftovers in the fridge for up to 3 months.

SEAWEED SOUP

In Korea, it's traditional to feed a mother seaweed soup, up to three times a day after she gives birth, because seaweed helps to promote lactation, support the hormones, and calm the nervous system. It makes sense that eating sea vegetables would help in an emotionally charged time. On an energetic level, seaweed reminds us that everything is tidal and constantly changing. It invites us to surrender to the waves and let feelings wash over us. Use any kind of seaweed you like and sip the soup straight up, or doctor it up with beef, rice, and eggs to make a more substantial bowl.

Serves 6-8

½ of a white or yellow onion, peeled and finely chopped
2 tablespoons sesame oil
4 ounces (115 g) beef sirloin, cubed (omit for a vegetarian version), or add 1 cup dried anchovies
1 clove garlic, finely chopped
1 teaspoon sea salt
2 quarts (2 L) water or broth of your choice
2 cups (30 g) dried seaweed (dulse, wakame, hijiki, arame, or kelp), rinsed to remove any residual bits of rocks or shells
6 shiitake mushrooms, dried or fresh
1 tablespoon soy sauce, tamari, or Bragg Liquid Aminos, or to taste

For a heartier stew, add one or all of the following:

½ cup (about 120 g) leftover cooked grains

(such as millet or rice)
2 large pasture-raised eggs

In a medium pot over medium heat, sauté the onions in the oil until lightly browned. Add the beef sirloin, garlic, and salt. Stir and cook the meat until it turns a light brown. Add the water or broth, seaweed, and mushrooms, along with the stew meat and/ or leftover rice, if you want a heartier stew. Reduce the heat to low and let everything simmer, covered, for 40 minutes. If you're adding the eggs, beat them in a small bowl and, about 5 minutes before the soup is done, pour them into the soup, swirling them with a fork or whisking in a clockwise direction as they cook. Eat warm. Store leftovers in the fridge for up to 3 days, or freeze in zip-tight plastic bags or glass mason jars for up to 3 months.

C-RECOVERY VEGETABLE STEW

The beauty of this vegetable stew is the creative freedom it offers. You can add whatever fresh produce you have to this basic recipe because it will lovingly embrace almost any combination of vegetables. You can eat it many times in a row without tiring of it, and throw in proteins like cooked chicken or sausage if your body desires them. And it's a great meal to ask visiting friends or your partner to help with. Anyone can chop carrots or wash and slice leeks under your gentle guidance, as you sway side to side with baby. It is great for moms who've given birth by cesarean section, because it is so gentle on the digestion and contains some nurturing and lubricating saturated fats. If you are scheduled for a C-section, make this soup ahead of time and freeze it.

Serves 6-8

3 tablespoons ghee or grass-fed butter
1 white or yellow onion, roughly chopped

2 leeks, white parts only, thinly sliced
Sea salt

4 medium carrots, peeled and cut into cubes
3 medium russet potatoes, peeled and cut into cubes
4 medium tomatoes, cut into cubes, keeping as much juice as possible to add to stew
2 cups (140 g) loosely packed mushrooms, quartered
1 tablespoon ground cumin 2 cinnamon sticks
1 cup (120 g) raw cashews
1 tablespoon coriander seeds
1 teaspoon ground turmeric
1 thin slice of ginger (about the length of your pinkie finger)
1 dried bay leaf
6 cups (1.4 L) vegetable broth or water
1½ cups (300 g) millet
1 cup (240 ml) canned coconut milk
1 large handful of green beans
Juice of half a lemon

Heat the ghee or butter in a medium pot over medium-high heat. When it's hot, add the onions and leeks with a pinch of salt, stirring frequently, until the vegetables are golden brown and are tender, about 10 minutes. Add the carrots, potatoes, tomatoes and their juices, mushrooms, cumin, cinnamon sticks, cashews, coriander seeds, turmeric, ginger, and bay leaf to the pot, along with the broth. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat and cook for 15 minutes, uncovered. Add the millet, reduce heat to low, and simmer for 30 minutes, covered. Stir in the coconut milk and green beans and cook for another 10 minutes over low heat, covered. Remove from heat and season with the lemon juice and salt, to taste. Serve hot or store in the fridge for up to 5 days, or freeze in zip-tight plastic bags or glass mason jars for up to 3 months.

Mother Bowls - By day 5 you can add a mother bowl

When life as you knew it before has changed irrevocably and everything is suddenly new - your body, your family, and this sweet little person in your arms - you won't care about eating the same thing on repeat if it's healthy, tasty, and fresh. Just a few minor variations will keep it interesting. That is the thinking behind the Mother's Bowls. They let you rotate through a few components - protein, greens, whole grains, or root vegetables - and mix and match them as you see fit. It's a postpartum survival strategy.

What follows is a system for ensuring that you and your immediate family eat well on very busy days. Make one or two things from each food group in advance, then store in glass containers in the fridge for three days at a time. When you're hungry, scoop out a combo of three or more things using grains or root vegetables as a solid base on which to place your proteins and lighter vegetables. Then, warm it up a little (or let it get up to room temperature, at least), adorn with toppings, and add drizzles of raw oils as you see fit. Let your eyes guide your hand. The fun part of throwing a bowl together is that it can be a little art piece.

Group 1: GRAINS (if you don't eat grains, use root vegetables instead)

Rice (brown, black, red, purple, wild, sticky, white, jasmine, basmati)

Quinoa

Millet

Amaranth

Barley

Buckwheat

Polenta (cooked from scratch, or you can buy logs of precooked polenta)

Oats (steel-cut, rolled, quick)

Wheat berries or bulgur

Couscous or Israeli couscous (larger pearls)

Pasta (fresh, frozen, dried... whatever is convenient; think noodles, spaghetti, gnocchi, ramen; if you aren't eating gluten, you can find buckwheat, corn, spelt, quinoa, bean, even sweet potato pasta)

Group 2: PROTEINS

Eggs (scrambled, poached, hard-boiled, over-easy, fried)

Chicken (poached, roasted, cut up, pan-fried)

Pork (shredded, pulled, bacon)

Beef (ground, stew pieces, strips of cooked steak/flank, oxtail)

Bison (ground is most often how you see it)

Lamb (ground or strips of cooked flank)

Fish (cooked, pickled, smoked); shellfish like scallops, crabs, shrimp, mussels; things in a tin or can that are easy to add to anything like sardines, mackerel, herring; breaded and pan-fried tiny fish like smelt or larger fillets like halibut or salmon or bass)

Legumes (green lentils, adzuki beans, cannellini beans, pinto beans, garbanzo beans)

Meatballs (from any ground meat)

Group 3: VEGETABLES

Roasted (carrots, parsnips, fingerling potatoes, yams, sweet potatoes, winter squash, onions, beets)

Pan-fried (Swiss chard, kale, bok choy, spinach, caramelized onions, leeks, shallots, red and green cabbage)

Steamed (carrots, celery, string beans, asparagus, broccoli, cauliflower)

Grated (carrots, parsnips, celery root)

Mashed (yams, sweet potatoes, winter squash, celery root, parsnips)

Group 4: TOPPINGS

Avocado

Soy sauce, tamari, Bragg Liquid Aminos, or coconut aminos (they are delicious and soy free!)

Nutritional yeast

Sesame seeds

Flaxseeds

Hemp seeds

Sunflower seeds

Nuts (almonds, cashews, hazelnuts, pistachios, peanuts, macadamia, pine nuts, walnuts; raw or dry roasted-try to avoid oil roasted and heavily salted)

Oils (flax, avocado, coconut, walnut, sesame)

Melted butter (grass-fed)

Olives (green, black).

Herbs and spices (chili powder, a dash of cayenne, minced basil leaves, sea salt, fresh ground pepper, paprika, minced dill, et cetera)

Here are some delicious combinations:

#1 ASIAN BOWL

In a medium frying pan, over medium-low heat, combine the following and heat until warm:

Leftover congee (whatever type you have)

Fresh greens (arugula, chard, kale, spinach)

Pan-fried or oven-baked bacon or sausage pieces

Chili powder (optional)

Season with the chili powder if you want some extra heat and if that matches the leftover congee you're using. Transfer to a bowl and eat warm.

#2 HEARTY AUTUMN BOWL

In a single-serving bowl, combine the following:

Roasted winter squash or sweet potatoes

Kale or any dark leafy green vegetable of a hearty nature sautéed in butter

Pan-fried bacon strips

Top with a drizzle of maple syrup and a handful of toasted pumpkin seeds. Eat warm.

#3 SCANDINAVIAN BOWL

In a serving bowl layer the following ingredients:

Cooked wild rice

A few canned or jarred herring, mackerel, or sardines

A halved or chopped-up hard-boiled egg

A spoonful or two of mayo

Boiled new potatoes (optional)

Pickles and paprika (optional)

This Nordic-inspired meal can be eaten cold or the rice can be warmed with the oily fish in a frying pan, then transferred to the bowl.

#4 ITALIAN BOWL

In a medium bowl, add the following for a warming, comforting pasta bowl:

Cooked noodles of your choice, either with gluten or gluten-free (rice, bean, corn, or buckwheat noodles are all great options); warmed pasta sauce (add mushrooms and onions and arugula or chard for a heartier sauce).

Meatballs (easy to make; just combine the ground meat of your choice with an egg or two and any other herbs or spices you like, such as basil or cumin, and season with salt and pepper, then cook).

5# FRENCH BOWL

In a bowl layer these together:

Leftover (or freshly cooked) risotto

Pieces of whole roasted fish (or pan-fried fish fillet)

Onion pieces sautéed in some butter until deep golden and very flavorful

lemon juice

Slices of a yummy French cheese (melted over the warmed risotto and fish) and sourdough baguette pieces

#6 MEXICAN BOWL

In a bowl layer these:

Leftover or freshly cooked beans (any kind you want)

Shredded lettuce

Grated cheese (optional)

Leftover ground meat (any kind-beef, lamb, chicken, bison) or cook some up quickly in a pan until browned

Salsa

Avocado slices

For an extra layer and added crunch, feel free to add organic corn chips, and eat with your hands like nachos.

#7 INDIAN (CURRY) BOWL

In a bowl layer the following:

Basmati rice or leftover cooked lentils

Curry powder or curry sauce (available in the international section of grocery stores)

Stir-fried or steamed vegetables and sliced ginger (carrots, peppers, broccoli, mushrooms, peas)

Toasted peanuts or cashews

Another Favorite

GINGER FRIED RICE

If a Chinese elder were to visit you immediately after birth, this is likely the offering they'd bring. Light and warming, its star ingredient is ginger, to boost blood circulation and balance excess "wind" in the body after birth. Weeks after baby comes, when everyone's found their groove, it will still be a go-to meal for mom that she can easily make herself.

Serves 2

2 cups (410 g) cooked white rice (leftover rice will work best here) or you can make it fresh

3 tablespoons sesame oil, plus more as needed

3 pieces of 2-inch (5 cm) bacon slices (optional)

2 cloves garlic, finely chopped

1 slice of fresh ginger, peeled and thinly sliced

2 large pasture-raised eggs, beaten with a pinch of sea salt

2 tablespoons thinly sliced green onion

Sea salt and freshly ground pepper

If making rice from scratch specifically for this dish: In a medium pot, wash and rinse 1 cup (185 g) white rice (any kind, short or long grain or jasmine, et cetera), several times until the cloudy water runs clear. Add 1 cup (240 ml) water with a pinch of sea salt and bring to a rapid boil over high heat. Add the rinsed rice, reduce heat, and cook, covered, until the rice is fluffy and the water is absorbed. A rice cooker will simplify the process significantly. Using 2 cups of this rice, or leftover rice, proceed to fried rice directions: Heat the oil in a frying pan over medium-low heat, add bacon (if using), garlic, and fresh ginger, and cook until tender and fragrant. Add the cooked rice to the pan and spread it out evenly, making a thick layer, and cook, uncovered, over medium heat for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Pour the beaten eggs into the rice and continue to stir frequently, until the eggs are cooked, about 5 minutes. Add the green onions and cook for another 2 minutes, uncovered, until the rice is golden in color and the eggs and onions are cooked. Season with salt and freshly ground pepper to taste. Serve warm. Its' easy to toss in a medley of vegetables like carrots, onions, peas, corn, broccoli, and mushrooms.

SMOOTHIES

CHOCOLATE HAZELNUT Milk

Serves 4

4 cups (540 g) shelled hazelnuts

3 tablespoons hemp seeds

3 tablespoons flaxseed meal

3 tablespoons cacao powder or organic cocoa powder or carob

Pinch of sea salt 5 tablespoons (75 ml) honey

Place everything in a blender, then add 7 cups (1.7 L) water. Blend until the milk is frothy, 2 to 3 minutes.

Whatever straining method you're using (a nut milk bag, fine-mesh strainer, or cheesecloth), hold it over a large bowl and slowly pour the contents of the blender into it, letting all the milk drain into the bowl. You may need to do this in more than one batch depending on how much pulp you can hold in the strainer or bag.

JOYFUL GREEN SMOOTHIE

Adjust the type of greens depending on your digestion, as kale can cause gas if you're not used to it. Parsley adds a fresh, grassy flavor, but for those unaccustomed to green smoothies, it might be too strong a taste to start with.

Serves 2-3

1-2 handfuls of kale leaves or spinach leaves

2 cups (480 ml) coconut water

1 tablespoon almond or sunflower seed butter or peanut butter

1/2 of a fresh or frozen banana

1/4 cup (9 g) parsley leaves

1 tablespoon black sesame seeds

1 tablespoon maca powder (optional)
1 tablespoon spirulina powder (optional)
1/2 teaspoon bee pollen (optional)

Strip the kale leaves from the stems (not necessary if using baby kale), and discard the stems. Blend all the ingredients in a blender until well combined. Drink immediately.

TIP: The optional tonic powders will add the crowning touch: malty maca helps stabilize hormones and provide energy while bee pollen infuses you with folic acid and B vitamins-it's an energy tonic in traditional Chinese medicine. Start with tiny doses and see how your body likes it.

PB & J SMOOTHIE

Introducing the comfort food smoothie:

A grown-up peanut butter and jelly sandwich-without the bread, and in a glass. Packed with protein to keep you satiated, it is grounding and filling with a balance of sweet and nutty tastes. Using frozen banana might feel good if you have a summertime baby snuggled on hot skin. Just notice if the colder smoothie that results makes you feel chilled and adjust accordingly.

Serves 3

5 tablespoons (75 g) peanut butter
1 fresh or frozen banana, peeled
1 cup (150 g) fresh or frozen berries or 1/4 cup (60 g) all-natural fruit jam (no artificial sweeteners, just fruit)
1 tablespoon flaxseed meal (optional)
2 cups (480 ml) light coconut milk or nut milk of your choice
1 tablespoon honey

Blend everything in a blender until smooth. For an extra-pretty presentation, take a knife and smear some of the fruit on the inside of

the serving glasses in an upward spiral. Pour the smoothie into the glasses for a striped look that any kids in the house will love.

SWEET TREATS - After the first week, you can add a nutritious sweet if that is something you like.

PEANUT BUTTER & HONEY RICE CRISPY TREATS

(Almond or sunflower seed butter are fine substitutions.) Goji berries, raisins, or crunchy-sweet fig pieces work great as add-ins.

Makes an 8-inch square pan

1 cup (240 g) peanut butter

½ cup (1 stick/115 g) salted grass-fed butter

½ cup (120 ml) honey

2 cups (30 g) organic puffed rice

Pinch of sea salt

Optional add-ins: chocolate chips, peanuts, shredded coconut, dried fruit of your choice

In a small saucepan, melt the peanut butter, butter, and honey over medium heat, stirring until well combined.

Put the puffed rice in a mixing bowl with the pinch of sea salt, add the peanut butter mixture, and stir until the cereal is evenly coated. Stir in any optional ingredients you'd like. Transfer the mixture to an 8-inch (20-cm) square pan and press down gently to cover the bottom. Chill in the fridge for at least 20 minutes, or up to several hours. When they are hard to the touch, cut into squares and enjoy. They will soften at room temperature, so best to keep them chilled until you are ready to eat.

BLUEBERRY & OAT PANCAKES

The nutrients from steel-cut oats are absorbed into the blood more slowly than regular oats, which delivers energy in a sustained manner.

They are also an exciting treat for those following a wheat-free diet, who may have been longing for a plate of pancakes but never knew to try making them with oats!

Serves 6-8

1 cup (160 g) steel-cut oats
1 pinch of sea salt
4 tablespoons salted grass-fed butter or coconut oil, plus more for serving
¼ cup (60 ml) milk of your choice
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1 tablespoon olive or avocado oil
½ cup (120 ml) yogurt or kefir
2 large pasture-raised eggs
¾ cup (95 g) gluten-free flour, plus more if needed (chickpeas or almond flour optional)
½ teaspoon baking powder
1 cup (155 g) frozen or fresh blueberries
1 banana, peeled, quartered, then sliced
1 tablespoon chia seeds, finely chopped walnuts, or hemp seeds (optional for added crunch)
Maple syrup, honey, or cooked fruits for serving (optional)

In a small pot, combine the steel-cut oats with 2 cups (480 ml) water and the salt. Bring to a gentle boil over medium-high heat, then reduce heat to low, give it a gentle stir, and cook, three-quarters covered, for 20 minutes or until tender. Remove from heat and add 2 tablespoons of the butter. Set aside.

In a large bowl, whisk the milk, vanilla, and olive oil with the yogurt, and then add the eggs and whisk until incorporated. Stir in the flour and baking powder, and then add the blueberries, bananas, and chia seeds, if using. Add the oat mixture to the batter and stir to combine. The consistency should be thicker rather than runny. If you need to add more flour, you can do that now. Melt the remaining 2 tablespoons butter in a nonstick pan over medium heat. When the pan is nice and hot, scoop or spoon the batter into the pan, making

either one large pancake per batch, or two or three small pancakes at a time if the pan will hold them. Cook over medium heat for 3 to 4 minutes on each side, flipping to the second side when the batter bubbles on top. Transfer the pancakes to a plate when golden on both sides. (The cooking times tend to speed up the more the pan heats up, so keep a careful watch.) Add more butter to the pan for each batch. Serve the pancakes warm with butter, and if you like, maple syrup or honey. Or keep them in the fridge for a snack whenever you like. You can heat them up in a toaster oven very quickly; they're delicious topped with almond or peanut butter, too. They also freeze well if you can't eat them all up in a few days.

Resources:

The First Forty Days, by Heng Ou