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ARE LIFESTYLE AND EATING HABITS BEING AFFECTED AS A RESULT OF THE CREDIT CRUNCH?

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Ainsley Harriott, the larger than life presenter of *Ready Steady Cook*, has been working with FAB this year on a number of projects, to highlight what families can do to ensure they not only have nutritious family meals, but are able to do this without breaking the bank. More about these specific projects will follow later.

Ainsley believes that cooking should be fun, but also easy for less experienced cooks to be able to undertake at home. With the credit crunch still firmly in the headlines, we were keen to get Ainsley's views on the effects this was having on our general food, lifestyle and eating habits.

Ainsley believes that everyone has changed their lifestyle no matter what their circumstances might be. People are now looking for value for money which has been quickly taken up with the big supermarkets bringing out their value ranges of products. More people are using cash to pay for their purchases amid growing consumer concerns about how much money they are spending, the British Retail Consortium (BRC) has claimed. New figures from the organisation show that cash is now used for 60% of all transactions, an increase of 54%. We are also all valuing our families more in these straightened times and making an effort to do things together. Families are making time to eat together at least once a day to catch up on the day's events rather than everyone eating in different rooms. A survey by Cahoot, Abbey's online branch has found that Brits are choosing to spend more time at home with loved ones instead of going out and spending money - saving on average £408



each per year. Nearly one in five respondents said they are reducing cooking costs by eating as a family, whilst 39% are spending more time at home. Staying in really has become the new going out as we seek to cut costs by conducting more shared activities inside the home.

Ainsley believes eating out is still taking place although predominately for special occasions, but families are being more price conscious, and restaurants have been quick to react by offering

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special deals such as two for the price of one meals. Ainsley thinks that in some ways the credit crunch has been a real wake up call for many. Families have realised that they can cook for much less, rather than relying on ready meals and are taking advantage of special offers on staples such as bread, eggs, cheese and milk. Sales of bread have continued to rise in these straightened times as consumers are realising how versatile a loaf of bread can be.

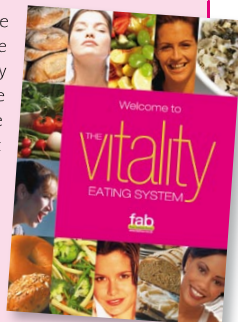
Home baking has also seen a surge as a result of the credit crunch and Ainsley thinks that this trend is certainly here to stay.

Ainsley also added that he has changed his own lifestyle in terms of eating out. Pre credit crunch he would eat out two or three times a week with the family, but now he would definitely think twice about popping to a local restaurant preferring to cook something at home. Cooking for our families and baking at home is certainly on the increase. Ainsley believes that if children are educated about cooking early on they will have a skill that will take them well into adulthood. In some ways the credit crunch has had a positive effect on families, as it has focused attitudes to looking at food differently and exploring different ways that families can be more creative in the kitchen. Children also love to bake so as well as saving money, it is also a fun activity that parents can enjoy with their children.

VITALITY EATING SYSTEM

Levels of obesity in the UK have been rising at an alarming rate for many years now. Currently almost 1 in 4 adults in England are obese, and if we carry on as we are by 2050, it is estimated that 9 in 10 adults will be overweight or obese. The Vitality Eating System (VES) was first produced in 2002 in response to this worrying trend. The aim was to provide sensible and balanced information about dieting and weight management combined with practical advice in the form of menu plans and recipe ideas. The menu plans within the VES are updated twice a year, to reflect seasonal changes and to provide new ideas. In 2008 the entire booklet was evaluated by The British Dietetic Association (BDA) and the plan was revised to incorporate changes suggested by the BDA. The VES is available for download from www.fabflour.co.uk and also in printed form on request.

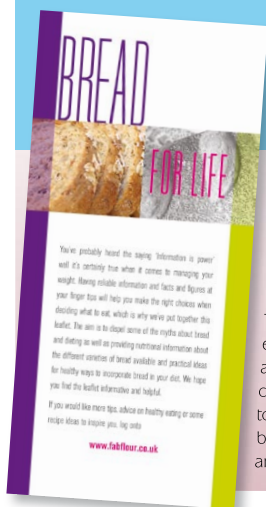
Feedback on the VES has been extremely positive, particularly from practice nurses and other Health Care Professionals (HCP) who say they find it a useful resource. Other comments from HCP include 'very good diet booklet', 'the staff have been following the diet and they feel great' and 'very popular with health visitors' which is praise indeed. The fact that HCP are so happy to use the VES reflects the fact that it provides balanced and realistic advice.



Partnership with Rosemary Conley

In 2008 we started working with Rosemary Conley Diet and fitness clubs to communicate to their members the positive aspects of eating bread. This campaign proved extremely successful and as a consequence we are continuing to work with them to roll out our messaging on bread. In June we produced an advertorial communicating

the benefits of eating bread as part of a healthy balanced diet. This appeared in the Rosemary Conley Diet and Fitness magazine together with three pages of supporting editorial written by Dr Susan Jebb. Myths surrounding bread were explored in the copy as well as pointing out that a typical slice of bread contains only 70 calories but by adding a generous layer of butter can more than double the calories. A supporting leaflet has also been produced which communicates the nutritional benefits of bread. Did you know that there are over 200 varieties of bread available and most are low in fat? Leaflets are available on our website www.fabflour.co.uk or by contacting us on 020 7493 2521.



What Do You Include In Your Lunchbox?

Celebrity Chef Ainsley Harriott has been working with us to produce a number of recipes using bread that are perfect for cash strapped families to create easily, and all for under £5.00. Twelve new recipes have been created and include root vegetable and nut crumble, chicken and broccoli gratin and summer pudding. All recipes are available on our website www.fabflour.co.uk and can be downloaded easily. Commenting on the recipes Ainsley says: "Bread is absolutely one of my favourite foods; we all know how delicious a freshly baked roll can be, served warm, just before a fabulous posh dinner. But bread is often overlooked as a cooking ingredient. That's a shame because it's so versatile, great

value for money and helps food go further – perfect for credit crunch meal times".

In addition to these, Ainsley has also created a number of tasty lunchbox menus that are nutritious and easy to make. With the cost of buying lunch always on the increase, recent research shows that if you take in your own lunch to your place of work three to four times a week will result in a saving of over £700 per year. Enough to treat you and your family to a well earned summer break. Lunchbox recipes on offer include a tasty spiced chicken with apricot sandwich and Cajun chicken pitta. Ainsley adds "It's easy to forget just what good value a packed lunch can be. We're really spoiled for choice with the variety of breads available on our supermarket shelves. It's not about spending hours in the kitchen before you leave for work and it's not about spending fortunes on fancy ingredients. With just a little bit of effort, you can come up with some really delicious and inspiring lunchtime recipes that taste fantastic and don't hammer the wallet."



Brioche pain perdu with summer berry yogurt

Licence to Cook

As we go to press it has just been confirmed that we will be working with the British Nutrition Foundation (BNF) to take the **Licence to Cook** programme to the next level. To date, **Licence to Cook** has been taken up by over 2,540 secondary schools in England and has over 220,000 students registered online. The site also recently won an e-learning award from The Digital Industry Awards 2009. A new aspect of the programme is **Teach Food Technology**, continuing professional development for teachers.

We will be supporting training days for the **Teach Food Technology**, as well as supporting a competition for teachers. The first ten training sessions will be held between November 2009 and March 2010, with a further 30 to follow in the next financial year. These sessions will focus on bread making in schools.



Competition details are still to be finalised, but will be aimed at teachers and worked up in partnership with the BNF, and will be open to secondary school teachers throughout the UK. The aim will be to deliver something of interest

that could be adopted by other teachers, thereby helping to spread best practice in schools. Entry to the competition will be made by logging onto www.fabflour.co.uk or www.grainchain.com. Watch this space for more details.

The Grain Chain

“Some children just had no idea where bread was from... once they had started looking at the website this helped raise curiosity and understanding,” said one teacher about the **Grain Chain** website during recent research exploring the strengths and weaknesses of www.grainchain.com, our educational website for students aged 5 to 16.

The research involved conducting user groups with primary- and secondary-school teachers. They felt that the site supported their teaching about where food comes from, and the link between farming and food products. The site also supported wider healthy-eating initiatives. The teachers commented that the site was simple to use (“It was dead easy to navigate”), colourful (“Nice and bright and cheery”) and full of information, and they made some interesting suggestions about how we could make the site even more useful to teachers. We are drawing up plans for development in the near future.

In the meantime, the **Grain Chain** website continues to grow and flourish. Since November last year we have added three topical podcasts to the section for students aged 11-16:

- **Food price changes** (Nov 08), examining why there have been major changes in food prices recently
- **Diets and weight loss** (Feb 09), looking at why dieting can be dangerous and how to eat a healthy diet
- **Food and values** (Apr 09), exploring whether consumers are more focused on financial or ethical values in the economic downturn.

There are new videos showing the fascinating process of bread-making on an industrial scale, filmed at the Warburton's bakery in Enfield. These have been adapted for students aged 5-7, 7-11 and 11-14, and each is accompanied by a new interactive activity to test students' understanding and comprehension of the videos.

Teachers can now find even more resources in the recipe database with the addition of new recipes from

the **Licence to Cook** programme, many of which include videos of the recipes being made. There are extra resources to support these recipes in the teacher section, such as versions of the recipes with step-by-step photographs and notes for teachers. **Licence to Cook** is a programme about cooking and nutrition for all students in secondary schools

in England, led by a consortium group comprising the British Nutrition Foundation, the Design and Technology Association and the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust.

Since the Easter holidays we have been adding fortnightly updates to the new **Grain Chain** blog. This allows us to provide up-to-date information to teachers about news, resources and events. We have also created a YouTube channel for the **Grain Chain** videos and podcasts, again to help teachers find our resources: www.youtube.com/grainchain.

We're working hard to spread the word about the **Grain Chain** at the moment; as part of our promotional work, we have created a 60-second advert featuring the voice of Ainsley Harriott. It is currently running on Teachers TV, where it is being shown until October. To complement this, we also have a banner advert on the Teachers TV website.

