

FEEDING A FOOTBALLER

Each month the Arsenal head chef **Christian Sandhagen** tells us what dishes he prepares to help keep the players at the top of their game, and nutritionist **James Collins** reveals the benefits of the menu.



RECIPE OF THE MONTH

We were a bit spoilt for choice when choosing Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain's favourite Arsenal recipe.

Head chef Christian Sandhagen tells us: "Alex is a regular visitor to the kitchen, and comes in nearly every day for breakfast as well as lunch.

"His favourite option for breakfast is scrambled egg with ham, brown toast and avocado (pictured right). Try it yourself, it's a nice healthy first meal of the day.

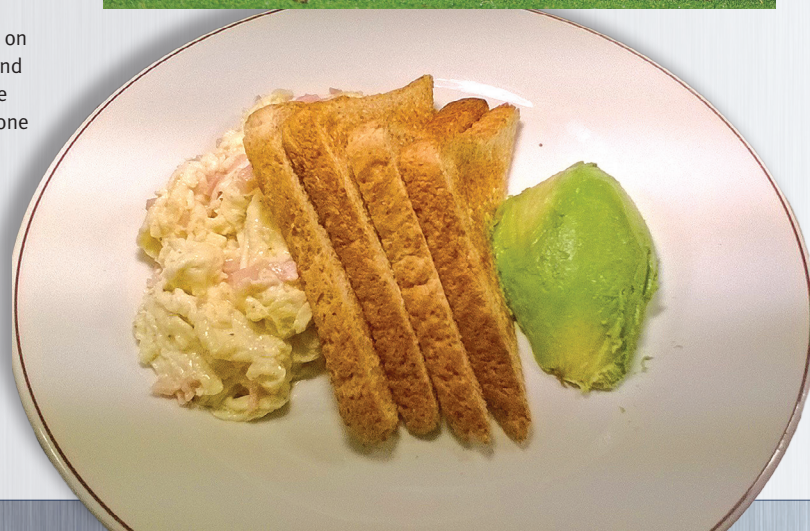
"At lunch Alex often chooses the seafood ravioli when it's on offer, but he's also a really big fan of a chicken, pepperoni and mozzarella dish I make which is like a pizza with a twist. The chicken breast acts as the pizza base, and it's a really easy one for you to try at home.

"I wonder if Alex told Justin Bieber about it when he brought him here to the training ground?!"

The recipe is on the facing page, and Christian adds that he has also been making a lot of salad for the players and staff lately.

"Maybe they are making up for the Christmas extravaganza!" he smiles.

"It's certainly been a really busy few weeks here for everyone at the training ground, as it always is at this time of year. We've only had one or two days off over Christmas and New Year, and the games keep coming in January too."



OX'S CHICKEN, PEPPERONI & MOZZARELLA 'PIZZA'

INGREDIENTS

- 4 chicken breasts, butterflied
- 1 small tin of chopped tomatoes
- 1 tsp tomato puree
- 1/2 onion, finely diced
- 1 clove of garlic, chopped
- 1 sprig of thyme
- 6 leaves of basil
- olive oil (for frying)



(FOR THE TOPPING)

- 24 slices pepperoni
- 8 slices mozzarella
- 1 tsp dried oregano

METHOD

- First prepare the tomato sauce.
- Gently fry the onion, garlic and thyme in half a tablespoon of extra virgin olive oil.
- Once they are softened, add the tomatoes, tomato puree and basil, and simmer for 20 minutes.
- Blend and season to taste, then set aside.
- Bake the sliced pepperoni in a medium hot oven (about 180 degrees Celsius) for 10 minutes to remove the excess fat.
- Grill the butterflied chicken breasts on both sides until golden brown, then remove from the pan and place on a baking tray.
- Top each of them with the tomato sauce, six slices of pepperoni, two slices of mozzarella and some oregano.
- Bake for 15 minutes.
- This is enough to serve four, and goes well with pasta and pesto.



Aeroplane food has nothing on Christian's



NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Arsenal's resident nutritionist James Collins tells us...



Alex has chosen a quick, recovery recipe that can be prepared at home. The meal is high in protein and essential fats which are both important to support the growth and repair of his muscles, and body in general.

If the training has been harder, Alex will also add a serving of carbohydrates (e.g. rice, pasta, couscous) to refuel the muscles, so his energy stores are ready for the next session.

As we enter February at the club, the players are also focusing on eating a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, and nuts and seeds with each meal, to boost their immunity during the winter months.



Alex with a very large pizza plate