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## Scottish team develops 'nutritional' pizzas

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**By Eleanor Bradford**

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**A Scottish nutritionist has teamed up with an entrepreneur to produce what they claim are the first nutritionally balanced pizzas.**

The pizzas are said to contain 30% of an adult's guideline daily amount of vitamins and minerals.

They are also said to have a third of the recommended amount of calories, protein and carbohydrate.

The pizzas were created by Mike Lean, of Glasgow University, and businessman Donnie Maclean.

Prof Lean, of the university's human nutrition department said the idea was born out of frustration.

He said: "If you go along to a supermarket or a restaurant and buy a meal, then somebody should have thought about it nutritionally.

"We've recently studied ready meals produced by the top five supermarkets in Scotland - common foods eaten in huge numbers - and they're hopelessly unbalanced.

"They contain as much salt as you should have in a whole day or more. They contain as much saturated fat as you should have in a whole day or more. The nutrients we need every day are absent from these meals. Nobody has thought about it. So I got together with Donnie to try to do this."

### **'Complete meal'**

Mr Maclean helped Prof Lean come up with unusual ways of incorporating more nutrients into a pizza.

He said: "I researched the market and found that seaweed was an interesting new ingredient being used in artisan bread.

"So we used that as a way of reducing the salt level. The sodium content of seaweed is about 3.5% compared to 40% in salt. There's iodine in there, vitamin B12, all sorts of things. And the flavour is excellent as well."

Red pepper is also mixed in with the tomato base to give the pizza extra vitamin C. As well as these nutrients, each pizza contains magnesium, potassium, folates and vitamin A.

"The way the guidelines are set out, you have 20% of your nutrients and calories from your breakfast, 30% from your lunch, 30% from your dinner, and an extra 20% for snacks," said Mr Maclean, the founder of Eat Balanced.

"We focused on pizza being a lunch or a dinner option. Each pizza gives a complete meal, with all the nutrients in it, for 30% of your day."

A survey by Mintel suggested seven in 10 British adults eat pizza, with forecasters predicting the market will be worth £1bn by 2016.

### Catering suppliers

"For a good number of years I have been trying to help people find easy ways to get a balanced diet," said Prof Lean, who is also a consultant physician at Glasgow Royal Infirmary.

"The easiest way to do that is to eat nutritionally balanced meals. Three of those a day and you've done it, but at the moment commercially prepared meals are not nutritionally balanced. "

One major British supermarket chain has already indicated it will stock the healthy pizzas, and Mr Maclean is in talks with other supermarkets and catering suppliers.

The pizzas will only be available frozen as tests revealed the nutrients were better preserved that way, and Prof Lean and Donald Maclean said they had to work hard to keep prices down.

"Our pizzas are more expensive than most of the frozen pizzas but on a par with the chilled pizzas," said Mr Maclean.

"So it shouldn't be a hard pill to swallow, or a hard pizza to eat."

The pair now have other junk food classics in their sights.

They are already testing a recipe for a nutritionally balanced curry and, after that, they're planning to tackle fish and chips.

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