

S3E45 Transcript

OMS-friendly Holiday Cooking on a Budget

Geoff Allix (1s):

Welcome to Living Well with MS, the podcast for Overcoming MS and people with multiple sclerosis interested in making healthy lifestyle choices. I'm your host, Geoff Allix. Thank you for joining us for this new episode. I hope it makes you feel more informed and inspired about living a full life with MS. Don't forget to check out our show notes for more information and useful links. You can find these on our website at www.overcomingms.org/podcast. If you enjoy the show, please spread the word about us on your social media channels. That's the kind of viral effect we can all smile about. Finally, don't forget to subscribe to the show on your favorite podcast platform so you never miss an episode.

Geoff Allix (44s):

Now without further ado, on with the show. The holidays are upon us, which for many of us means time spent with family eating a smorgasbord of delicious foods. This highly anticipated seasonal ritual sometimes leads to unintended consequences, expanded waistlines, and hefty price tags for all the holiday meals you've had to stock up ingredients for. That's why we are pleased to welcome Karen Lee, the healthy cooking doyenne of The Sensitive Foodie Kitchen to help us navigate holiday eating in a healthy way that won't bust the bank. Welcome to Living Well with MS, Karen. It's great to have you here. Before we dig into the main course, so to speak, could you tell us a bit about yourself, your experience with MS, and how you got into the healthy food game?

Karen Lee (1m 29s):

Yes, certainly. Hi, Geoff and hi everyone. Thank you for having me here. What can I tell you about myself? Well, my background professionally is I used to be an intensive care nurse, but I'm also a mutual and naturopathic nutritionist. And I've always really enjoyed food, loved all sorts of food, but not all food had loved me. So, I had discovered that I had food intolerances, which basically was all my favorite foods. So, I was intolerant to dairy and yeast, well cake and bread and cheese and all those lovely things.

Karen Lee (2m 9s):

I wanted to feel better though so I started to explore using different ingredients to have all the favorite foods that I had. I'd actually already transferred to eating a whole food plant-based diet, which I discovered whilst I was living in India, which is another story altogether. Right back in the UK, back at work, I suddenly lost sight in my eye, which was an interesting experience, and then subsequently got diagnosed with MS. That was in 2016 so I was already doing the food part of the OMS plan.

Karen Lee (2m 53s):

Fortunately, one of my colleagues had already told me about the program because her husband followed it. Of course, as we know, they are OMS. It covers not just the food. The food is my favorite bit but it's all how we manage our lives as well, which I wasn't managing particularly well. I started following OMS straight away and carried on developing and looking into eating amazingly tasty food that also happens to be good for your health and that's what I do now, continue making food that I can enjoy.

Geoff Allix (3m 33s):

What is the Sensitive Foodie Kitchen?

Karen Lee (3m 36s):

Well, I started off as a Sensitive Foodie so when I first started making changes, I started blogging about it. This was back in 2012 when there wasn't that much around. When I came back from India, I decided I wanted to start teaching other people how to do this. I started off doing cooking demos and classes in my kitchen, hence why it turned into The Sensitive Foodie Kitchen. Whilst some people think it's a catering company, it's actually just a normal kitchen where you make whole food, plant-based food. Then from there, it's just developed into running courses, doing cooking classes, and everything's online now.

Geoff Allix (4m 25s):

Okay. We're talking about the holiday season. What are the main challenges you see coming across trying to follow the OMS diet while wanting to indulge in delicious holiday foods?

Karen Lee (4m 39s):

Well, I personally see this as three different challenges when it comes to this. One is energy levels because a lot of it just depends upon how you're feeling. One of them is the feeling of missing out because there's a lot of tradition to do with holiday celebrations. You have your favorite dishes, and they tend to be full of fats, sugars, and all sorts of things. You want to be able to enjoy it as well, but it's not fair if you feel like you're missing out. The other one is actually other people because it can be really difficult, the attitude towards what they think you can do, what you should be eating, or they get over-anxious about making sure that you are eating what you need to be eating.

Karen Lee (5m 25s):

Those can be quite difficult, and they can get on top of you. I think a lot of it is really just knowing what it is that you want to do and having a plan. I always say that to people, but I'm actually one of the worst planners. Even if the plan is in your head about the sorts of things that you want to eat and thinking ahead about, "Okay, well, I haven't got much energy every day so maybe I can make a few things or get someone else to make a few things." It's just really thinking about what this event is, whether it's over a few days or just one big meal.

Karen Lee (6m 8s):

Like I say, just really thinking about what it is that you want to eat and how you're going to achieve that.

Geoff Allix (6m 30s):

I think that I'm thinking now, because a lot of things can be frozen, so we're recording this the end of October, sorry, November, end of November. And, and I'm thinking I, I make a vegan Wellington and I think, okay, I'll make two vegan Wellingtons. I'll freeze them because they freeze really well and easily. And then that will be my sort of main dish. And then, because I've got like a week off, so there'll be like a couple of meals, like where I can have that. And then there's a few other things and I know that they're quite easily freezable and so I can do them over a number of weeks and put them in the freezer.

Geoff Allix (7m 9s):

And then that's much, much easier on the day. Then you talked about energy because, and you mentioned on your courses and website about managing energy. So, what's, what do you mean by that? What's the concept of managing energy and how does that apply practically to this sort of thing?

Karen Lee (7m 30s):

I think as with a lot of people with MS really struggling with fatigue and just only having so many things that they can do in a day. Again, I tend to judge people by how I am, but I want to still be able to do everything. Some of the time, it's just a matter of stepping back and saying, "Okay, I want to do all these things, but actually, I also want to enjoy myself." Enjoying yourself needs as much energy as doing all these things as well. A lot of it is just being really realistic and saying, "All right, at the minute I know if I spend this time making this and having it ready," then as you say, all you've got to do is reheat it, have it done, and then "I'm going to have time to celebrate and socialize" because that's exhausting as well.

Karen Lee (8m 25s):

Talking to people, having children around that we're really excited by it can be quite tiring and you have a big meal at lunchtime may be, and then everyone can have a legitimate snooze in the afternoon. It's not always possible to be able to rest when you might need to rest. You lose that enjoyment and then you start feeling like you're missing out as well. My children are a bit older, they're in their early twenties and they've got their own things that they want to do when it comes to our Christmas celebration. Obviously, this can apply to any celebration. One of the things that we do now more is that we have our main meal on Christmas Eve.

Karen Lee (9m 10s):

We do all the food and everything, and then on Christmas day, we have all the leftovers and the reheated, so we've got time to open the presents, to have a couple of drinks, and have a much more relaxing day rather than rushing around and preparing this food and that food. It's just really working out what works for you so that your energy is at a level where you can just enjoy yourself and have a lovely family time, whatever that celebration is.

Geoff Allix (10m 1s):

Yes. There's a spoon concept or spoon theory that comes up a lot. You get so many spoons a day and everything has a cost in spoons.

Karen Lee (10m 10s):

It does.

Geoff Allix (10m 12s):

I find that I think with MS, you reset overnight. You have a night's sleep and you've got back your amount of spoons. I think it was originally someone just trying to explain the concept and they had some spoons around. They just said, "Well, imagine you had this many spoons," but actually cooking dinner. That's going to cost you some of those by doing that. By the time you get to the evening, and you want to actually meet up with some friends, you've got no spoons left, then you're going to be shattered. That's so true. I think that if I'm doing something later that I want to do that is enjoyable, then maybe I'm not doing as much exercise during the day because if I really work out hard exercising, I know I'm not going to have much energy left then or timing when I do exercise is another thing.

Geoff Allix (10m 55s):

I don't exercise first thing in the morning anymore, which I used to do because I know that maybe something will come up later and I'll just be shattered. Now, I think, okay, well, I'll make sure I've got everything I need to do during the day and then I can exercise. If I've got nothing left, I've just got slumped on the sofa and I'm fine.

Karen Lee (11m 15s):

Absolutely. The concept is great. Also sometimes, if you give yourself permission to take that rest in the day or to do something in the day, you can replenish your spoons as well. It could be that if you're busy, you've done a few things, you actually then either go and have a power nap or do a meditation. I find just switching my brain off for 15 minutes or so because it's a very busy place in there, that can rejuvenate me. Sometimes, it's actually going out for a walk. I've found that in lockdown, because I'm working from home all the time, sometimes I just need to get away from the computer.

Karen Lee (11m 60s):

I can feel exhausted but if the sun is shining, if I go out for a 15 or 20-minute gentle walk, it's great. It's rejuvenating. I think energy is something that is quite personal as well in how you revamp that. That goes the same with all these celebrations. It's just, again, coming back to the planning and really just thinking about what it is that's going to work for you and not being afraid to ask for help. I think that's really important, particularly if you are the one who is expected to be the main chef for all of this, which is fine.

Karen Lee (12m 47s):

You may want to do some rule of it, but equally, there's no shame, harm, or actually it's really good to get other people involved in it as well. If you want to, just dish out jobs to people. It might not be that you want everybody in your kitchen all at the same time because that can also be tiring, but send somebody off with the brussels sprouts to peel, for example, or send somebody out and give someone else the potatoes. We send them off into a different room, but don't be afraid to ask for help.

Geoff Allix (13m 27s):

You're a big fan of plant-based alternatives to traditional festive food. Can you tell us some of your main course favorites and where you can find recipes for those sorts of things?

Karen Lee (13m 42s):

Yes. Personally, I don't go for the processed fake meats. I like to eat whole foods so one of the standard options is a nut roast, which sounds a bit boring, but you can always talk it up a little bit by putting some extra ingredients in the middle, whether it's a cranberry source, some garlic mushrooms, greens or whatever it is. You can make it a bit fancy pants but also, I like to use traditional seasonal flavors. I might do a chestnut and sweet potato with some winter spices in that, and then wrap it up in some filo pastry to make as well.

Karen Lee (14m 32s):

It looks posh but it's not that difficult to make and you get that nice mixture of textures and flavors in there as well. Those you can make, and you can find the recipes for these on my website. Also, there's a lentil mushroom loaf as well because obviously, some people can't eat nuts or choose not to eat nuts. If they want to avoid too much fat, there's a lentil and mushroom one. With mushrooms, it seems to be much easier to find a nice selection of them now. You can find shitake mushrooms, mixed woodland mushrooms, or even just rehydrate some dried ones so that you get these lovely, different flavors and textures.

Karen Lee (15m 18s):

The other one that we do sometimes is a vegan haggis.

Geoff Allix (15m 26s):

That's the least MS-friendly foodstuff, certainly.

Karen Lee (15m 37s):

Yes, I know. It is but it's not. We discovered this when we were up in Edinburgh a few years ago. There's a vegetarian vegan restaurant out there called Henderson's, which I think is quite well-established. They had this haggis, but it's made from lentils, oats, and things, so it's a really nice rich flavor. You could just have it as it is, but also again, you can then wrap it up in some filo pastry to make a nice little haggis parcel or I'd make pastry where either you can add in a little bit of olive oil, a nut butter, or tahini, something like that.

Karen Lee (16m 20s):

You are replacing the fat, the lard, or whatever it is in pastry with a whole alternative or a slightly healthier one if you're using olive oil. This is a problem if you want to buy things in the shops. The seasonal celebration foods are really full of saturated fat, pastry in particular. Now, I used to love puff pastry, but even though you can find it without dairy, it's loaded with loads and loads of different refined oils. You just look at the level of saturated fat and just that one tiny bit of puff pastry has an excess of highly saturated fat.

Geoff Allix (17m 11s):

What you said about filo pastry, because filo pastry in my mind is impossible to make yourself. It's so thin but most filo pastry, when you look at it in a shop, it has very few ingredients. It's really just flour and water and not much else at all. I think if people are avoiding gluten, that might be harder, but certainly, if you're okay with gluten, you can actually just use sheets of filo pastry and then just put olive oil between them.

Karen Lee (17m 39s):

Well, you don't even necessarily need to use olive oil either. You can use soy milk so that if you don't want to even bake with olive oil at all in the oven, which I know with regards to the temperatures, it's okay but some people like to completely avoid it, you can just use soy milk. It browns. It might not be quite as crispy, but it still works.

Geoff Allix (18m 8s):

That can make a really good pastry like a pie, like Wellington. You were saying you like doing pastry. That was a real game-changer for me that you could make that filo pastry wrap. There's one in the OMS cookbook, I did one for a Cornish pasty. You can make a short cross pastry. It's possible to do it. It's not quite as good but it's pretty good. So, you can get different types of pastries, which are pretty close.

Karen Lee (18m 43s):

Yes, which is why if I'm making something like that, I tend to use nut butters so you can get some really amazing 100% nut butter made from walnut or from hazelnuts and all-you-can-use tahini. They provide a slightly richer flavor to it and tend to hold it together a little bit more. It's certainly something that I've taught people in my cooking classes, like I do these cooking classes, so we've made pastry, different versions of pastry, quite a lot.

Karen Lee (19m 23s):

It works with gluten-free flour that way as well so people who are gluten-free don't have to miss out completely. It's quite difficult to manipulate sometimes. It might not win any photogenic prizes, but it works, and it tastes good. Those are the two key things as far as I'm concerned.

Geoff Allix (19m 52s):

How about side dishes and sources for meals?

Karen Lee (19m 56s):

With vegetables, I always think actually, especially if you're cooking, you're the only one eating the way that you eat, and everybody else's is having something else. I'm quite fortunate in my house. Everybody just eats whatever I give them, so I don't have to worry about that. With roast potatoes, you can cook them completely oil-free as long as you cook the potatoes beforehand so that they go, not mushy, but they're properly cooked so they fluff up and then they brown beautifully in the oven. Again, with the vegetables, as long as you can just steam them, cook them, roast them. Most veggies can be roasted without any oil whatsoever as long as you keep turning them in.

Karen Lee (20m 39s):

They need a little bit of water on them beforehand so that heat just helps to caramelize them. You can put some nonstick baking paper on the tray and then that just helps things to cook a little bit. Again, if you want to use a little bit of oil, then do so. I just tend to spray it with some olive oil. I don't tend to use a metal baking tray. I'll use more of a ceramic dish and just massage it so that there's a little bit covering it. One of the favorites here is leeks in white sauce, which has a bit of a challenge making them.

Karen Lee (21m 28s):

What I found is you can mix some flour and a little bit of olive oil together to make a roux but then put the dairy-free milk in the pan. You're not actually cooking the fat from the oil directly on the heat. You're immediately whisking it in, and it works so that you're avoiding that direct heat because that's important obviously as you don't want the fats directly on the heat in the pan. That does work. You have to do a lot of whisking so you need some energy for that or give that to somebody else.

Karen Lee (22m 13s):

You can make a white sauce that way, but I also tend to use a cashew cream with things quite a bit so just soak a few cashew nuts and then blend with some water. It can seem a little bit runny to start off with but once you put it in the pan and start heating, it thickens really quickly. That's another alternative way of doing that so you can still have your leeks in white sauce. That's very traditional. I don't know if any other family likes it as much as mine does, but it's a way of doing it.

Geoff Allix (22m 51s):

I think it's just traditions, isn't it? We have a red cabbage meal. The more complicated it is, the happier everyone is. It's got different fruits and things in it. I think those traditions are important as well. That's what kids really remember about Christmas.

Karen Lee (23m 16s):

Also, red cabbage is just brilliant at this time of year because you can add all those lovely flavors and spices into it as well, but it's also going to give you benefits as well. That's the thing about what I try to get across to people with any of my recipes. It's the fact that the enjoyment and the taste it's all really important, but it also all comes with benefits as well. Everything that you're eating, it tastes good, but also is going to be doing you good. It's all about making sure it's not doing any harm at the same time, but it's giving you extra benefits.

Karen Lee (23m 59s):

Red cabbage, all that amazing purple vital nutrients in that, your body loves them so that's brilliant.

Geoff Allix (24m 7s):

A lot of these things are unusual recipes. That's kind of the idea if we are eating something that's a bit special, a bit different so a lot of the things you wouldn't normally have in your pantry, the ingredients for these. Are there any tips that you have to make healthy and delicious food without spending a fortune on all these extra ingredients?

Karen Lee (24m 31s):

Yes, the thing is most of my ingredients I use is pretty normal food or normal ingredients. There are a lot of recipes out there that will use something rare and important. Certain things like tahini, for example, not everybody has, but if you like hummus, it can be quite difficult to buy hummus. It's actually much cheaper to make your own so having a jar of tahini in the fridge is quite an important ingredient to have. If you've got that, then you can use that for your pastry, for example.

Karen Lee (25m 12s):

If you've got some nut butter that you like, both those things are more expensive, but they don't have to be tucked at the back of the cupboard. They can be used for everyday things, but also, I would say that if there's something that is slightly more expensive, you can often source it at the cheapest supermarkets now, which is really great. Look at those places or go to a refill shop, for example. There are places where they are more affordable than going to Waitrose, for example, and buying a tiny packet of walnuts for three pounds or something like that, you can get that much cheaper.

Karen Lee (25m 52s):

It's just a matter of looking for places or going to places which stock these items.

Geoff Allix (26m 7s):

I find that in our local supermarket, even in the same supermarket, you can buy a tiny packet of almonds, or you can buy a massive bag of almonds basically. There's one, which is an ingredient side and there's one on the snack aisle. They're the same thing but they're charging five times the price by volume for that. Sometimes finding those things, and a lot of them, if there's a south Asian area or those specialists' areas so our one has lots of different areas for Polish people or south Asia.

Geoff Allix (26m 60s):

There are different regional areas, I think, specifically for people from those areas to find their ingredients, but they'll have massive bags of chickpeas. You mentioned doing hummus so it's tahini. We always have tahini because we make hummus all the time. Just big bags of dried chickpeas, which are really cheap and so much cheaper than buying them in cans because there's a different audience there that even though it's the same supermarket, it's slightly more.

Karen Lee (27m 28s):

Absolutely. That was the other one I was going to say, actually, is you've got a local Asian store now. Although I live in quite a small town, we've got quite a large Asian community just because of the offices that we've got here. It's great because we've got a couple of stores that have imported lots of traditional Asian ingredients, which are so much cheaper. You can go to the supermarkets. I use chickpea flour a lot in things because it's a great egg alternative and it thickens. In the supermarket, they sell it as chickpea flour, and it costs a fortune. You go to the store, and you buy a pack of Bethan, it comes by different names, and it's at least half the price.

Karen Lee (28m 17s):

It takes a little bit of investigation, I think, to start off with, when you do cook this way and knowing what you can find in your local area. If you find where things are and there are other people like in your OMS Circle, for example, if these people live there, then tell them. They can know where they're from as well. On the veggie side as well, just

quickly and again, the cheapest supermarkets often have vegetables which are really tasty and unusual that the other places might not stock so like Brussels Sprout tops, for example, which are really amazing green leaves, which are really tasty.

Karen Lee (29m 5s):

Usually, it gets thrown away or fed to the animals. You can find cheaper vegetables at local markets, things like that. There are places where you can get good bargains without spending too much money. Also, know what you're going to do with it when it's left over because you don't want to throw a load of food away for so many different reasons. Do know what you're going to do with it if you've got extra food or extra ingredients.

Geoff Allix (29m 38s):

We talked a lot about the main courses. What about desserts? How can you make an OMS-friendly dessert, again, without being too expensive and making it compliant?

Karen Lee (29m 51s):

Well, again on my website, because you go and buy mincemeat and traditional mincemeat has vegetable soup, which is really fatty. When you make it yourself, yes, you have to go and buy the ingredients, but getting some mixed dried fruit is much cheaper than a jar of mincemeat. That's much easier. A lot of it is just making things without the saturated fats. Again, I've got a recipe for the traditional Christmas cake, which is mainly soaked, dried fruits, your flour of choice, and some spices. None of that costs a lot. There's a Yule log recipe as well.

Karen Lee (30m 32s):

Some people won't know what a Yule log is, but it's a very traditional British chocolate log. It looks like a bit of a tree, but it is a chocolate swiss roll and it's lovely. You think, "Well, how can I do that OMS-friendly?" It is possible. If you use egg whites, it's like an egg white with a sponge, but if you don't, then you can use Aquafaba, which is the brine say from chickpeas, as long as it's unsalted, and make the sponge. Then I do a sweet potato chocolate frosting so make sure that you've got the lowest fat cacao powder that you can find, steam some sweet potatoes, blend it together with a little bit of maple syrup, and it's incredibly chocolatey.

Karen Lee (31m 31s):

Again, your taste buds have changed with MS anyway. You can create your own Yule log which, which not only you can eat but everybody else can eat as well if you want to share it, obviously. There are options. It seems like a lot of hard work, but apart from the Yule log, everything can be frozen, so you go back to what we were saying at the beginning. A couple of years ago, I did a video for OMS to show how to make OMS-friendly mince pies with the tahini pastry and they freeze.

Karen Lee (32m 12s):

They freeze really well. In fact, I've found some in my freezer the other day. I'd forgotten about them from last year. You can make batches and then just put them in a container, put them in the freezer, and then just take them out when you want them. It's easy really and not too expensive.

Geoff Allix (32m 38s):

Another big favorite in my household is Bailey's. I'm sure there's a generic name for Bailey's.

Karen Lee (32m 48s):

Irish liquor, I think. Creamy. Sorry, I have to call it.

Geoff Allix (32m 52s):

They do have their own vegan version now, but it's quite hard to get hold of, this thing called Bailey's Almond, which I found a few years ago in America. They got in trouble because it's not actually vegan. It's got honey in it, I think, which is not technically vegan because bees make it. I think they've changed it now. I think it is fully vegan, but it's not easy to get hold of it. They're not available in my supermarket. Apparently, you have some clever ways to make an OMS-friendly version. I make my own as well, so I'll see.

Geoff Allix (33m 33s):
I want to compare.

Karen Lee (33m 37s):
The thing is I love Bailey's, I have to say. Every year when it came to our Christmas celebrations, I would sulk because they were tucking into their Bailey's. That's when I decided. The thing with Bailey's is that they have a secret recipe really, so you don't really know what's in it. Mine was just really simple. It's just a mixture of, I use oat cream. You can use other dairy-free creams, but I think oat cream works quite well. It's just a little bit of cacao powder, some maple syrup, and then obviously some Irish whiskey in there because that's the bit that you want really.

Karen Lee (34m 26s):
It's actually really simple. Does it taste like Bailey's? Well, it tastes more like Bailey's than the almond one because the almond, to me, is such an overpowering flavor. I didn't like it.

Geoff Allix (34m 42s):
Yes. I think they've tried to make it a bit different maybe from normal Bailey's because they use vanilla essence as well.

Karen Lee (34m 48s):
Yes, vanilla. That's right.

Geoff Allix (34m 50s):
I've done a batch this year. Oat milk you can get in the UK certainly. There's a leading brand of oat milk, which I think is called Oatly. I'm guessing you buy the same ones, cartons of Oatly?

Karen Lee (35m 6s):
Yes, that's true because I'm not sure if it's still the case, but their organic cream used to have a palm oil in it I think it was, but the black carton, the normal one didn't.

Geoff Allix (35m 20s):
Yes, that's a weird one. Isn't it that you think you're doing organic and actually not necessarily?

Karen Lee (35m 27s):
Always check the label.

Geoff Allix (35m 29s):
Spend a lot of time checking labels now. I go with oat cream, not a hundred percent, just use some oat milk as well and whiskey obviously. I go with one shot of espresso coffee, some cacao powder, some maple syrup. I do put some vanilla essence. I didn't have any when I made some. My daughter's got massive <inaudible> all these things. She puts back empty bottles. Sorry, this is off topic, but an infuriating habit of children to put back empty bottles in the cupboard so you don't know that they are empty, and you don't replace them.

Geoff Allix (36m 15s):
I thought, "Well, Bailey's Almond. I'll try it with almond extract, which I had some of, and that didn't work, just as a tip, because it floats, and it just completely separates and sits on top and nothing I could do to get it to mix in properly. Yes, the next batch will be back to the original. My wife says it's not as nice as Bailey's, but I'm not going to drink Bailey's so I'm either going with nothing or this. I really like it. Actually, the best fun is in the experiment of making it, so you just try it. It maybe a little bit more cacao powder or should it be a bit sweeter.

Karen Lee (36m 57s):

Yes, you have to fiddle around to your tastes because yes, personally, I don't like coffee. I've tried but I just don't like the flavors, so I don't put espresso in it, but I know some people do. It's getting it to how it works for you and if other people don't like it, then great.

Geoff Allix (37m 21s):

Yes, exactly. Actually, you can put your own personal Bailey's just for you, which is brilliant.

Karen Lee (37m 27s):

Yes, absolutely. If they don't like it and then they're not plant-based or vegan, then they can have the other Bailey's and leave it to you.

Geoff Allix (37m 41s):

You've given us some amazing advice in this episode for making healthy holiday foods that won't drain your budget too much. I understand that you teach many of these techniques in your courses. Could you tell us a bit more about how people could get involved in the courses if they want to learn a bit more?

Karen Lee (38m 5s):

Yes, sure. Just need to come and have a look at my website, which is www.TheSensitiveFoodieKitchen.com. In there, you'll find lots of recipes, anyway, up on the blog. A lot of people in the UK are coming up to the holiday season, I've actually got a separate section, which I've labeled Christmas recipes, but you could use them for any winter celebration so that you can go straight to them. The courses have got their own special page. You can have a look and see what there is. At the minute, I'm actually doing a few live cooking classes, leading up to Christmas, on a Saturday.

Karen Lee (38m 49s):

It's something I started doing in lockdown and not everybody on there who comes to cooking class is a fellow OMSer. There are other people that use this way of eating to manage all sorts of health problems or just because they like it. A lot of people are OMSers who come along. We have great fun and it's a bit chaotic but it's fine. It's all done on Zoom. Then in the new year, I'm starting the Saturday afternoon cooking classes as well so it's twice a month. You can see it all on there. Then on the courses, at the minute, I've got one course and there are cooking videos in that. It's quite good for people who are new to whole food, plant-based eating.

Karen Lee (39m 30s):

It covers all sorts of information about food and health basically, but you get lots of recipes and stuff. There's a new introductory cooking course coming up. I filmed it but I haven't edited it. Basically, just on the website and there are just lots of resources on there.

Geoff Allix (39m 58s):

As a final point, could you tell us what's your absolute favorite holiday meal is, from start to main course to dessert?

Karen Lee (40m 9s):

Yes. For starters, for this time of year, I like to have something quite crisp and fresh so something like orange and fennel salad, that type of thing with some pomegranate seeds and maybe toasted nuts on there so something really crisp. The main, I actually really like the sweet potato and chestnut swirls because they've got cranberry and everything in it as well with a load of roast veggies. Often, the veggies are featured much more than anything else on my plate.

Karen Lee (40m 52s):

Then dessert, for Christmas, I love Christmas pudding. It just goes back to my childhood really, setting it on fire and having it with a bit of a dairy-free cream on the side. It's all very traditional, but it's enjoyable, and some wine.

Geoff Allix (41m 15s):

Absolutely. On that note, thank you, Karen, for sharing your culinary expertise with the OMS community. Make sure you check out the show notes of this episode for tons of links to delicious recipes, including one for an OMS-friendly Yule Log that is not available online, but exclusively available in our show notes. Make sure you visit Karen's website, The Sensitive Foodie Kitchen. There is some amazing content there and you can find that link and many others in the show notes so please have a look. Our next episode will be the last until 2022, so join us for Coffee Break #26 and meet OMSer Pat Feller from San Diego, California.

Geoff Allix (41m 57s):
I hope you can tune in.

Geoff Allix (42m 48s):
Thank you for listening to this episode of Living Well with MS. Please check out this episode's show notes at www.overcomingms.org/podcast. You'll find all sorts of useful links and bonus information there. Do you have questions about this episode or ideas about future ones? Email us at podcast@overcomingms.org. We'd love to hear from you. You can also subscribe to the show on your favorite podcast platform, so you never miss an episode. Living Well with MS is kindly supported by a grant from the Happy Charitable Trust. If you'd like to support the Overcoming MS charity and help keep our podcast advertising-free, you can donate online at www.overcomingms.org/donate. Thank you for your support. Living Well with MS is produced by Overcoming MS, the world's leading multiple sclerosis healthy lifestyle charity. We are here to help inform, support, and empower everyone affected by MS. To find out more and subscribe to our e-newsletter, please visit our website at www.overcomingms.org. Thanks again for tuning in and see you next time.