



BRIDPORT FOOD MATTERS

Cheap, cheerful & achievable
Recipes to feed Body & Mind

INTRODUCTION TO THE RECIPE BOOKLET

Welcome to the Bridport Food Matters recipe booklet.

In this booklet you will find a whole host of tasty recipes that will help you to get more healthy plant-based foods into your daily diet, whilst working to a budget.

Each recipe has examples of changes you can make to help you use the particular ingredients you have to hand or the flavours you prefer. I have also suggested ways to combine the different recipes into complete meals.

The booklet comes in a loose-leaved format so that you can add more of our recipe and info sheets in the future.

I hope you love these recipes as much as I do. It would be great to hear *your* ideas and insights via the Bridport Food Matters website.

Happy cooking!

Rachel Millson

ABOUT BRIDPORT FOOD MATTERS

Bridport and the surrounding area has a vibrant food economy, with brilliant producers, retailers, caterers and hospitality businesses, and there is a lot we can do to increase food security locally and reduce the impacts of climate change.

Bridport Food Matters is a joint initiative between two local groups concerned with food security: the **Bridport Local Food Group** and **Seeding our Future**. By working together we aim to provide a central hub of information for everything food in the community. There are many ways in which you can get involved visit www.bridportfoodmatters.net and find out how.

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Illustrations © Imi Neylan I @itsasignuk

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Published by Bridport Local Food Group

Kindly funded by Dorset Council's Community Impact Fund - April 2021



In this list of useful kitchen equipment I have itemised the kit that will make life easier and allow you to prepare a wide variety of meals. The tools you need depend on what it is you like to cook, and what facilities you have. What you can get hold of will depend on what you can afford or, indeed, what someone else has spare.

Ideally one would buy or acquire a piece of equipment only once in a lifetime; one that could be passed down through the family! As it is, much of what we are able to buy will end up breaking, but will still last long into the future, though to the detriment, rather than benefit of, future generations.

I try to apply three basic principles when acquiring kitchen equipment (whilst bearing in mind that I am a fallible human being, with limited resources, just trying to do her best!):

Built-to-last wherever possible:

Is the item designed to last, to be maintained and fixed?

Recyclable materials wherever possible:

If the item breaks beyond repair can it's constituent materials be easily recycled (anything plastic is a *nightmare*).

Secondhand wherever possible:

When you buy new, you are not simply acquiring an item that already exists, you are also triggering the manufacturer to make another one. Buying secondhand avoids this and can often mean you end up buying much better quality items. After all, it lasted long enough to find its way into the charity shop!

Ideally we would only have items manufactured that are designed to last, made of non-polluting materials that can easily be repaired or recycled. They would be more expensive because of the quality materials used, the non-polluting manufacturing

processes involved and the living wages paid to the workers making them. They would be provided free by government initiatives to those in need.

I have based my list on the Kitchen Equipment list in 'Good & Cheap' cookbook by the US based cook Leanne Brown. You can download it free here:

<https://books.leannebrown.com/good-and-cheap.pdf>

(if you can purchase a printed copy she will donate another copy to someone in need.)

GOOD KNIVES

A Chef's/Cook's knife: A large knife for cutting all kinds of meat and veg. The standard size blade is 20cm (8 inches) long but shorter blades may suit smaller hands.

A Veg or Paring knife: Used for more intricate cutting and peeling. Usually has a 9cm (3.5 inch) blade.

A Bread Knife: a serrated knife which can also be used to slice tomatoes or getting into a large squash or pumpkin.

KNIFE SHARPENER

Keeping your knives sharp makes chopping easier. Sharp knives are also safer to use: a blunt knife requires more pressure so you are more likely to slip. You can watch videos online to learn how to use a sharpening steel (which often turn up in charity shops) but I prefer the type you hold & pull the knife through a sharpening slot.

PEELER

I find the 'Y' shaped swivel-bladed peelers easiest to use.

BOX GRATER

With different sides for various grating, slicing and zesting jobs.

VEG SCRUBBER

A nailbrush kept just for veg will do the job.

MEASURING JUG, SPOONS & CUPS

The most important of these is a **measuring jug** with both Imperial (pints & fluid ounces) and Metric (Litres & millilitres) measurements.

A set of **measuring spoons** (Tablespoon & quarter, half and whole teaspoon measures) comes in handy for more precise cooking and baking.

If you find yourself using American recipes however you will find a set of **measuring cups** comes in handy (although you can use the jug if you look up the quantity conversion eg 1 cup = roughly 250ml).

ESSENTIAL POTS & PANS

Large frying pan: I prefer cast iron or heavy-bottomed stainless steel as they both spread the heat evenly. I avoid non-stick wherever possible as no matter how careful I am the surface very quickly starts to flake off and I like to keep my plastic consumption to a minimum! Having said that, there are expensive non-stick pans that claim not to flake.

Cast iron pans are heavier than other pans and do need to be dried thoroughly & oiled to avoid rusting, but this is not a difficult process. If you find a pre-seasoned pan (which a secondhand pan is likely to be) you can avoid the initial oiling & heating process. For more info on cast iron see BBC Good Food 'The Best Cast Iron Skillets Tried & Tested'

Medium-sized saucepan for sauces as well as veg and grains. Again, I prefer to avoid non-stick pans and use stainless steel wherever possible.

Large soup pot for soups, stews & casseroles and boiling pasta. If you can, get one that is oven proof as it is more versatile.

STIRRING UTENSILS

A long-handled **wooden spoon** or two for all your stirring needs.

A **ladle** for serving soups, stews & sauces.

A **whisk** is very useful for whisking up eggs, cream, and pudding ingredients and for keeping sauces lump-free.

POTATO MASHER

For mashing potatoes! (Other root veg and cauliflower are great mashed too). Also use to mash up veg in a soup instead of a blender.

ROASTING & BAKING DISHES

A large, **deep-sided roasting tray** (metal or enamel) is great for roasting meat or a big batch of roast veg.

Smaller **oven-safe dishes** (ceramic, pyrex or enamel) are great for baking and roasting both savoury and sweet dishes such as lasagnes, pies, nut roasts and crumbles.

SIEVE & COLANDER

Although it is really useful to have a colander for draining pasta and vegetables, but have to choose one item over the other, a sieve would be the *most* useful as it can also be used to sift flour and to puree fruit & veg for sauces and baby food. Choose stainless steel if possible as it is long-lasting and recyclable if it does break.

MIXING BOWL

Again, stainless steel is best. Very useful for washing, weighing and combining ingredients but you can always use a large saucepan instead.

SPECIALITY BAKING

Muffin tins can be used for baking other foods in small portions as well as making muffins. If you grease baking tins well and/or line with baking paper you can avoid the need to use (potentially flaky) non-stick pans. Or, alternatively, use a silicone version.

A round **cake tin**, loose-bottomed if possible for cake & cheesecakes. A square cake tin however is great for tray-bakes and could double-up as a small roasting dish.

A **cooling rack** is useful if you do a lot of baking. If you have a grill pan with a rack in it you can use that instead.

A **baking sheet** is useful for bread, scones and pizzas and if it has a rim can also be used for roasting veg and grilling meat and fish.

A **loaf tin** for bread, cakes and nut or meatloafs, but other dishes can be substituted.

IMMERSION (or ‘STICK’) BLENDER

Used to puree soups & smoothies.

Cheaper, more versatile and quicker to clean than traditional blenders.

If you cook in large quantities look out for a full-sized blender or food processor in the local charity shops that take electrical equipment. They are always PAT tested for safety.

FLIPPING & SHUFFLING UTENSILS

Remember to use wooden utensils (or plastic if you can't avoid it) when using non-stick pans to avoid damaging the surface.

Flat spatulas for flipping pancakes, burgers etc.

Flexible **silicone spatulas** are great for scraping bowls. They are also an excellent tool for reducing food waste; extracting every last bit of peanut butter from the jar, for example

Use **tongs** for salads, or moving hot foods without hurting yourself.

CHOPPING BOARD

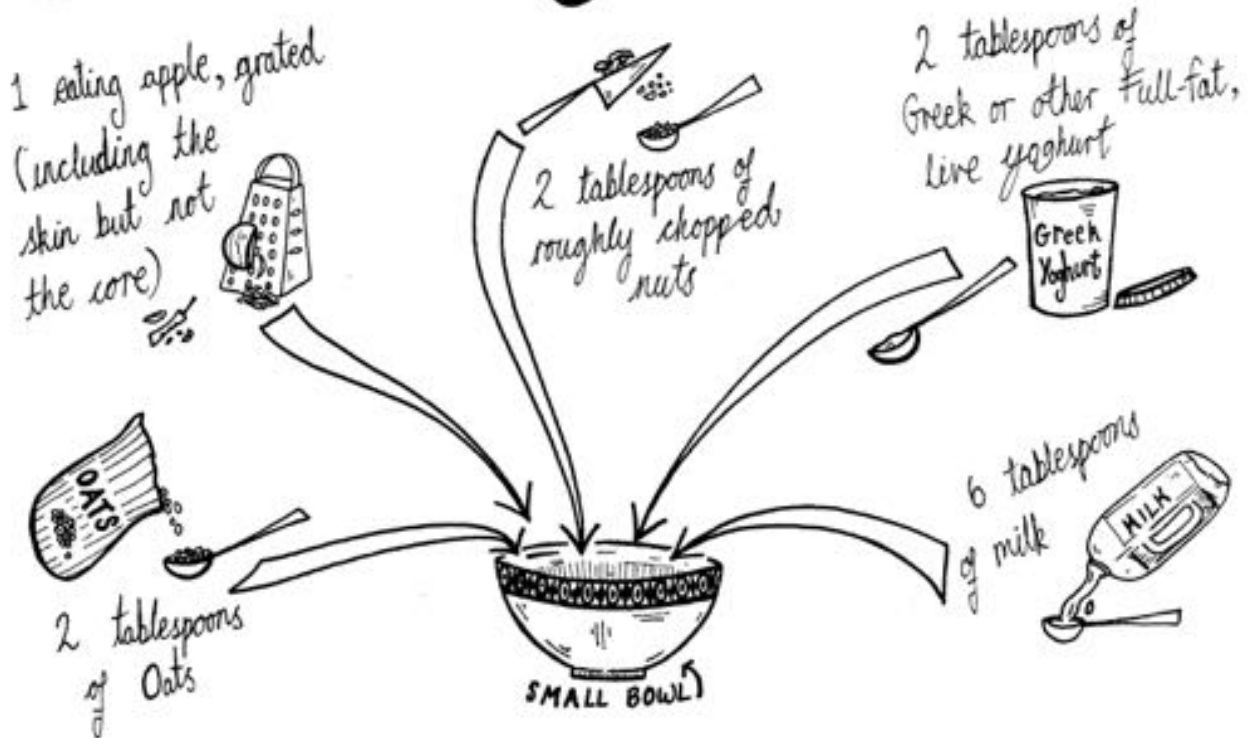
Chopping boards come in a variety of materials: wood, bamboo, plastic, and glass. If you have a choice, wood is best: wooden boards are long-lasting, hygienic (with basic care, see below), recyclable, often recycled (i.e. made from waste wood) and the least likely to blunt your knives. Bamboo comes a close second. Although it is a more sustainable material, it is harder on your knives and can be stuck together with formaldehyde.

To maintain your board: scrub clean with hot soapy water after every use (be especially thorough after preparing meat or fish) and always dry upright in a dish drainer. For wooden boards oil regularly with vegetable oil to keep in tip top condition.

PESTLE AND MORTAR

For grinding spices (whole spices keep much longer than ready-ground) and crushing garlic.

Overnight Oats



Overnight oats are porridge oats, fruit and nuts soaked in milk, fruit juice or yogurt to make a satisfying, time-saving breakfast. The original recipe, Bircher Muesli, was invented by and named after a Swiss doctor as a nutritious breakfast for his patients.

According to the BBC Good Food website soaking oats makes them easier to digest and increases the amount of resistant starch they contain, helping to keep you fuller for longer. This starch, called Beta-Glucan, has also been shown to lower or reduce blood cholesterol and may reduce the risk of heart disease. Using live yogurt ensures you start the day with a good dose of probiotic goodness.

But the reason I eat it is because it tastes so delicious!

INGREDIENTS (serves 1)

2 x Tablespoons Oats

1 x eating apple, grated (include the skin but not the core)

2 x Tablespoons roughly chopped (or flaked) nuts

2 x Tablespoons Greek or other full fat live yogurt

6 x Tablespoons milk

METHOD

Mix all ingredients together, cover and refrigerate overnight.

You can also prepare the oats in the morning but having a longer soaking time creates a softer texture.

When ready to serve enjoy as it is or add extra milk to loosen the mix and/or extra yogurt, fruit, nuts and seeds.

VARIATIONS

Add seeds with, or instead of, the nuts.

Use different fresh fruits as available e.g. grated pear instead of the apple or sliced peach or banana to serve.

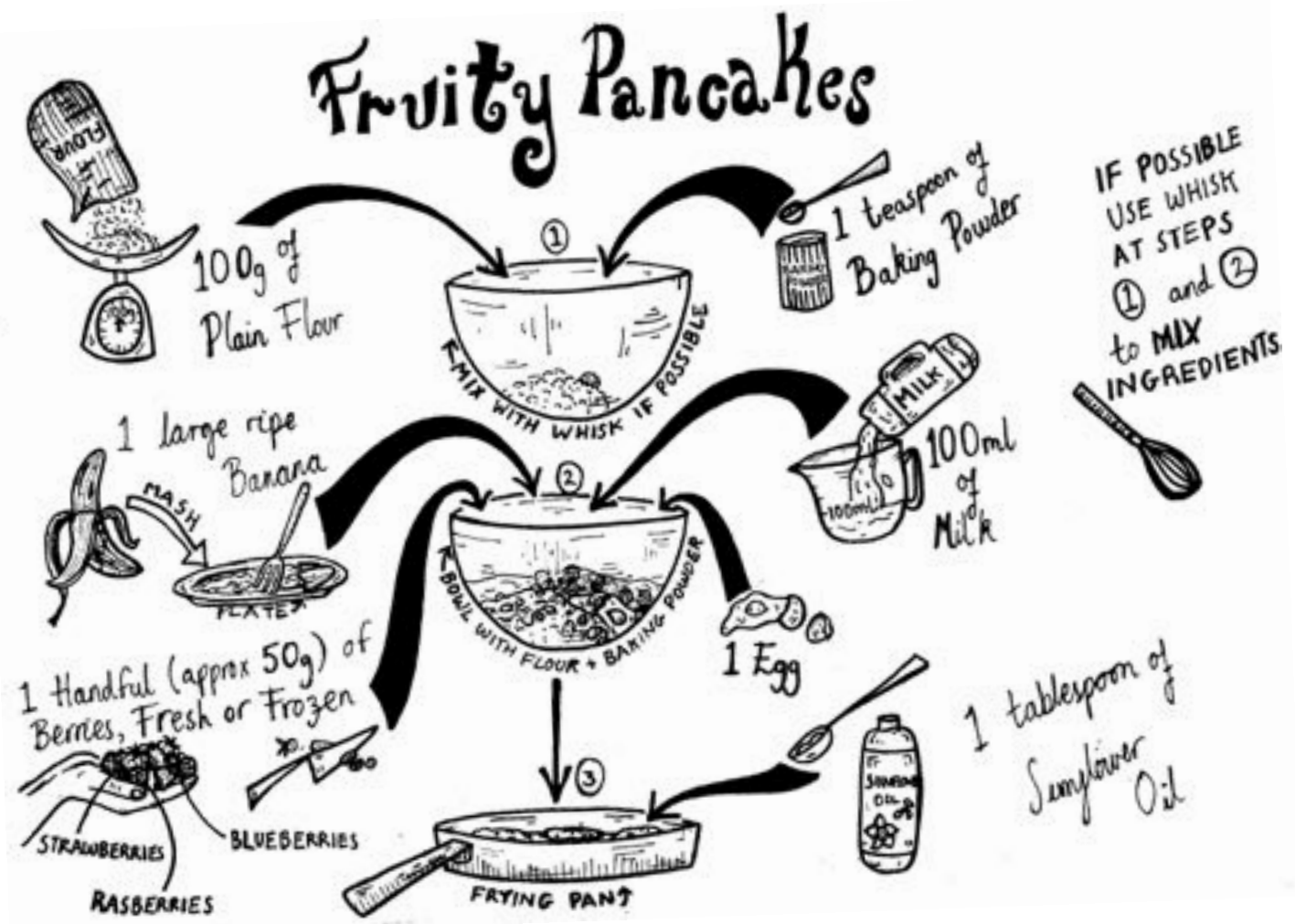
Add frozen berries to defrost in the mix overnight.

If the apples aren't sweet enough stir in 1 x teaspoon of honey or jam. Soaking the oats in apple or orange juice instead of the milk will also sweeten the mix.

Use 1 x Tablespoon dried fruit (chop apricots and dates) instead of the apple.

Experiment with a hint of cinnamon and/or some peanut butter.

Add a touch of cocoa or drinking chocolate powder to make it chocolatey.



This pancake recipe is based on one by Jack Monroe in her cookbook 'A Girl Called Jack: 100 Delicious Budget Recipes'. They are a great way of using up over-ripe bananas which might otherwise go to waste. Look out for them in the reduced section of the grocers or supermarket: the yellow skins will be spotted with brown patches. Because over-ripe bananas are so sweet you don't need to add refined sugar so the pancakes are healthy as well as tasty. Serve them for breakfast, cold in a packed lunch or picnic, or warm with Greek yogurt or cream and extra fruit as a pudding.

INGREDIENTS (Makes 8 small, chunky pancakes)

100g plain flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

1 large ripe banana

100ml Milk

1 egg

1 handful (approx 50g) berries, fresh or frozen eg blueberries, raspberries, strawberries. (You can double the quantity of fruit if you are eating them at home but this can make them too soft to use for a picnic/packed lunch).

Sunflower oil (for cooking)

METHOD

Put the flour and baking powder in a bowl and mix together well (a whisk is great for this).

Put the banana on a plate and mash with a fork until smooth and liquid. Add to the bowl of flour.

Add in the milk, crack in the egg and mix everything together thoroughly with a whisk.

If necessary chop any large berries (such as strawberries) into pieces before adding them all to the pancake mix.

Put 1 tablespoon of sunflower oil into a frying pan and heat over a medium heat.

When the oil is warm add the mixture by the tablespoon to the pan and fry until golden on each side. A standard-sized frying pan will fit 4 pancakes so you will need to cook them in 2 batches (adding another tablespoon of oil for the second batch).

Eat straightaway or cool (on a cooling rack if you have one) to eat later. Enjoy!



THE POWER OF FOOD

Food really is medicine – **what we eat and how we eat can change how we feel.** A good way to look at this is to see that every time we choose to put something in our mouths we are either enhancing or depleting our health and well-being. This leaflet is here to guide you towards a healthy eating plan that will help to improve your mood, make you more resilient to stress and give your body the best nutrients you can to improve your health and well-being. Remember we are all individuals, this is not about having a set of rules to weigh us down or add further stress to our lives but more about finding balance and learning to listen to the needs of our own bodies.

UNDERSTANDING STRESS

Stress is a natural response to the challenges that are all around us on a daily basis, especially in these times of the COVID pandemic. **Self-care is more important now than ever.** When we are stressed, we flood our bodies with the stress hormones adrenaline and cortisol and in the long-term this can lead to hormonal imbalances, weight gain, tiredness, infections, impaired mental health and many other chronic diseases but, **we can help our bodies lessen the effects of stress through the food that we eat.**

GUT FEELINGS

Looking after our gut and our microbiome and keeping our blood sugar balanced is key to lowering stress and having a balanced mood. Most of our **SEROTONIN (the chemical that makes us happy)** and much of our **DOPAMINE (the chemical that helps us to keep motivated)** are produced in our gut. A healthy microbiome (the gut microbes) and digestive system will lift our mood, increase our energy levels, give us good skin, help digest our food and, produce good amounts of the chemicals that keep us happy and motivated. **Changing our microbiome for the better changes our health,** including our mental health and one of the fastest ways to do this is by increasing the variety of fruits and vegetables we eat, **the bigger the variety of fruits and vegetables we eat the bigger the number and the variety of our good gut microbes.**

BALANCING OUR BLOOD SUGAR BALANCES OUR MOOD

Highs and lows in our mood and energy can often be linked to highs and lows in the amount of sugar in our blood. When we eat lots of sugars and carbohydrates especially, pastries, cakes, biscuits, white bread and pasta we send our blood sugar rocketing and then crashing to a low level as our body desperately produces insulin which removes the sugar from the blood and sends it to our muscles, our liver and into fat storage. We then find ourselves reaching for more sugar, carbs or caffeine to give us a lift and find ourselves in a rollercoaster of mood and energy swings. To balance this cycle we need to cut down on the sugar and carbs, eat regular meals and increase the veggies, healthy fats and protein in our diets.

HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES FOR BEST MOOD:

1. HYDRATION

- Being dehydrated can cause headaches, irritability, fatigue, anxiety, constipation and more. We need 6-8 glasses of water per day (1.5 – 2 litres). Add a slice of lemon, orange or cucumber or a sprig of mint for flavour and to help the water reach your cells. Check the colour of your wee to see how hydrated you are, it should be a pale yellow or straw colour.

2. EAT A RAINBOW OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

- The wider the variety and colour of your vegetable and fruit intake the wider the diversity of the good gut microbes and the more vitamins and minerals we take in. Low levels of vitamins and minerals and too many bad gut bugs (which are fed by sugars and processed junk foods) can really affect our mental health and our mood.

3. EAT MORE HEALTHY FATS

- Fats have been given a bad name in the past but it is now known that small to moderate amounts of good quality fats are vital for brain health and may help to balance mood and support learning and memory. The following are great sources of good quality fats: smaller quantities of extra-virgin olive oil, butter and full fat plain (live) yogurt plus moderate amounts of eggs, avocados, oily fish (sardines, mackerel, tuna, salmon, herring, anchovies) and (un-roasted, unsalted) nuts & seeds.

4. SUPPORT YOUR GUT WITH PRE- AND PROBIOTIC FOODS

- Eating probiotic and fermented foods (live yoghurt, unpasteurised cheeses, sauerkraut, kimchi, miso etc) that are full of the healthy bacteria that line our digestive tract may help reduce anxiety and stress. Meanwhile, the prebiotic foods (leeks, onions, garlic, bananas, oats, apples, dandelion greens, chicory etc) are food for these healthy bacteria. A breakfast of banana topped with live yoghurt and stewed apple gives us the good gut bugs (live yoghurt- probiotic) and food for them too (banana, stewed apple – prebiotic)

5. EAT PROTEIN WITH EVERY MEAL

- This will balance your blood sugar and keep you feeling fuller for longer and in the case of Tryptophan rich foods will also help to boost your levels of serotonin. Tryptophan, a protein found in chicken, turkey, eggs, cashews, walnuts, chickpeas, lentils, beans and oats, is considered helpful for mood disorders, depression and anxiety.

6. AVOID HIGHLY PROCESSED FOODS

These 'industrial concoctions' are designed by the manufacturers to be as addictive as possible so we buy and eat more of them. They have a detrimental effect on our mental and physical health. You can avoid them by sticking to foods that are closest to their natural state and by preparing food from scratch.

EASY MEAL IDEAS

When we are feeling low we can struggle to have the energy or motivation to prepare a meal. Start with simple meals based on healthy foods that can be assembled rather than cooked. Stock up on the following for example: nuts & seeds, carrots, cucumbers, peppers, tomatoes, avocados, tinned fish, tinned pulses, fresh herbs, salad leaves, nut butters, hummus, oatcakes. When you feel in the mood for cooking there are lots of healthy recipes to try in the Bridport Food Matters recipe booklet. Many of the recipes can be cooked and frozen in advance to simplify mealtimes.

FURTHER READING

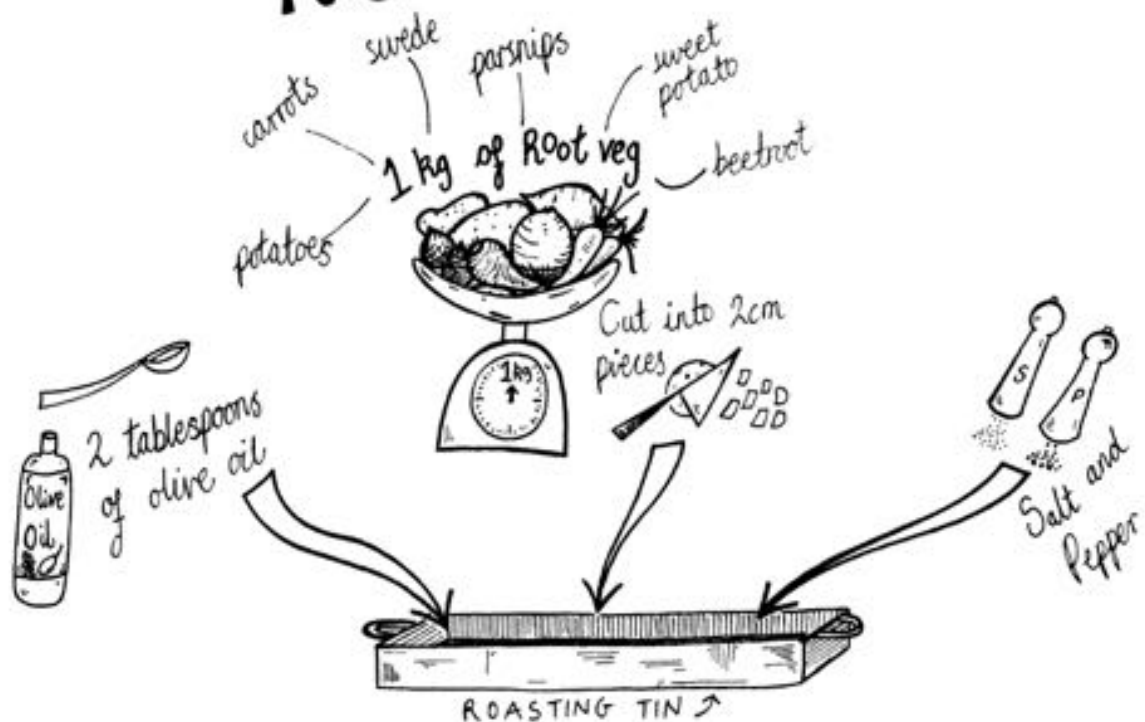
The Food & Mood Handbook - by Amanda Geary

Brain Changer: How diet can save your mental health - by Professor Felice Jacka

Nutrition is a key contributor to good mental health, but it's just one piece of the puzzle. Dietary changes won't be sufficient for everyone. If you're struggling with symptoms of a mental health disorder, talk to a mental health practitioner or your GP.

Produced by Anna Vogel (biophilianutrition.co.uk) and Rachel Millson

Roasted Roots



Roasted veg are so delicious, so versatile and so good for you that it is always worth adding a tray-full when you have a shelf free in the oven. If you don't eat them all, they will keep in the fridge for a few days to add instant veggie deliciousness to omelettes, pasta, sarnies and salads. You can freeze them in handy portions too.

Obviously summer veg like peppers and courgettes are delicious roasted but practically all veg taste amazing cooked this way. For maximum flavour you want the veg to be soft and slightly charred around the edges.

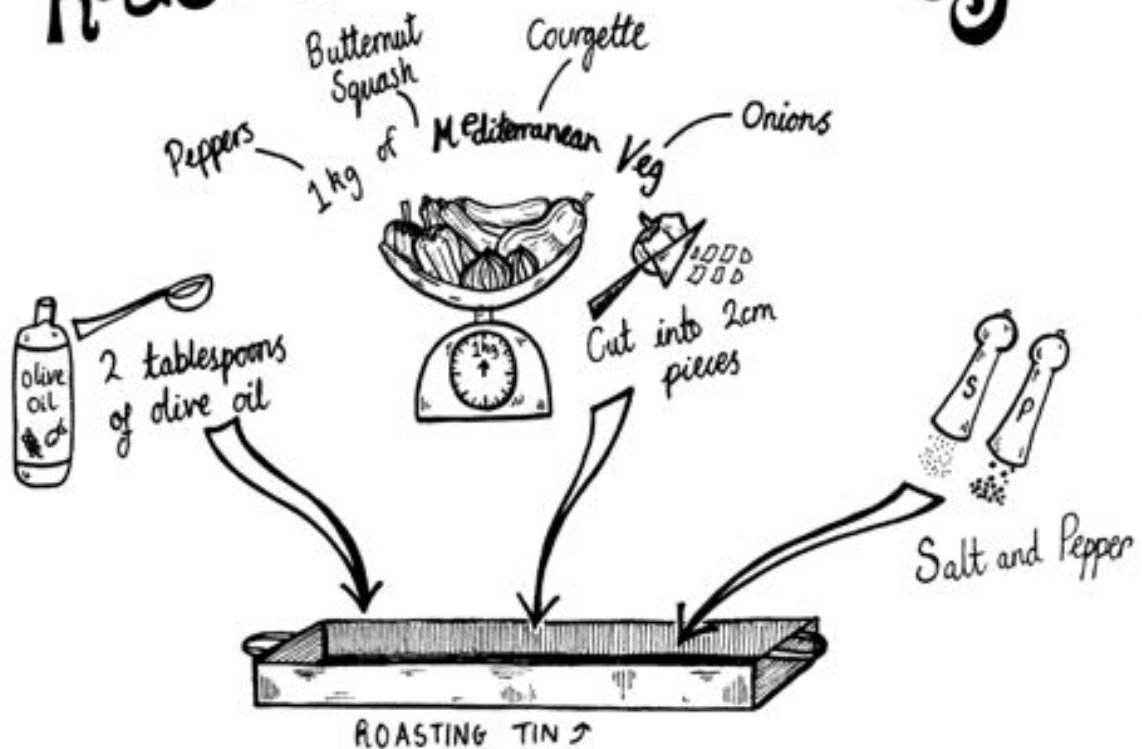
If you haven't had much experience roasting veg it can be helpful to learn how to roast one type of veg at a time (a whole tray of carrots for example). This way you can get used to their cooking times and will then learn how to combine different veg in different sized chunks so they all cook in the same time. Having said that, broadly dividing them into groups of harder root veg and softer mediterranean veg, as I have here, will get you off to a great start too (the method is the same for each and is shown overleaf).

INGREDIENTS

ROASTED ROOTS

1 x kilo root veg cut into 2 cm pieces
Eg carrots, potatoes, parsnips, beetroot, sweet potato, swede
2 x Tablespoons olive (or sunflower) oil
Salt & pepper

Roasted Mediterranean Veg



INGREDIENTS

ROASTED MEDITERRANEAN VEG

1 x kilo mediterranean veg cut into 2cm pieces
Eg courgettes, peppers, aubergines, onions, butternut squash
2 x Tablespoons olive (or sunflower) oil
Salt & pepper

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 200°C Fan 180°C Gas 6.

In a bowl mix together the veg chunks with the oil, salt & pepper (and your choice of flavourings from the 'variations' below).

Pour everything into a large baking tray and put into the oven.

Cook for approximately 30 minutes but check regularly after 20 so they don't burn.

The vegetables want to be tender and slightly browned round the edges. Remove from the oven.

Allow the tray to cool for a few minutes then carefully decant the veg and any oily juices into a bowl.

ROASTED VEG (continued)

VARIATIONS

Add a couple of teaspoons of ground cumin, turmeric, ground coriander, garam masala or curry powder (or a mix) to the root veg mix before cooking

You can also add a can of rinsed and drained chickpeas to this spiced version. Mix them into the tray of veg halfway through cooking.

Cook (even sized) cauliflower florets in the oil with the juice of a lemon, adding a handful of flaked almonds for the last few minutes of cooking time to toast them (careful not to burn them; they toast fast!)

MEAL SUGGESTIONS

Serve:

Mixed roasted roots instead of just potatoes with your roast dinner.

As a side dish to jacket potatoes served with cheese or hummus.

In FLATBREADS (or pitta bread) with cheese or hummus.

In FLATBREADS (or pitta bread) with LENTIL BURGERS or NUT BURGERS.

With pasta and TOMATO SAUCE.

As a salad, drizzled with yogurt flavoured with tahini (or peanut butter), sprinkled with toasted sunflower seeds (or roasted peanuts). Alternatively, a squeeze of lemon and a dash of honey in the yogurt is great too.

As a salad served on a bed of salad leaves with a SALAD DRESSING.

As a salad mixed with a can of lentils (rinsed & drained), cubed feta cheese, SALAD DRESSING and crumbled walnuts.

Mixed into cooked rice or couscous with:

Rinsed & drained kidney (or other) beans, some SALAD DRESSING and chopped coriander or parsley.

Mixed into a frittata or omelette:

Heat 1 Tablespoon oil in a frying pan on a medium heat.

Add enough roasted veg to cover the base of the pan.

Beat approx 6 eggs (enough to cover the veg) & season with salt & pepper and mix in some chopped herbs if you have some.

Add the eggs to the pan and shake to distribute evenly.

Cook without stirring for 5 mins then place under a hot grill for 3-4 mins until set.

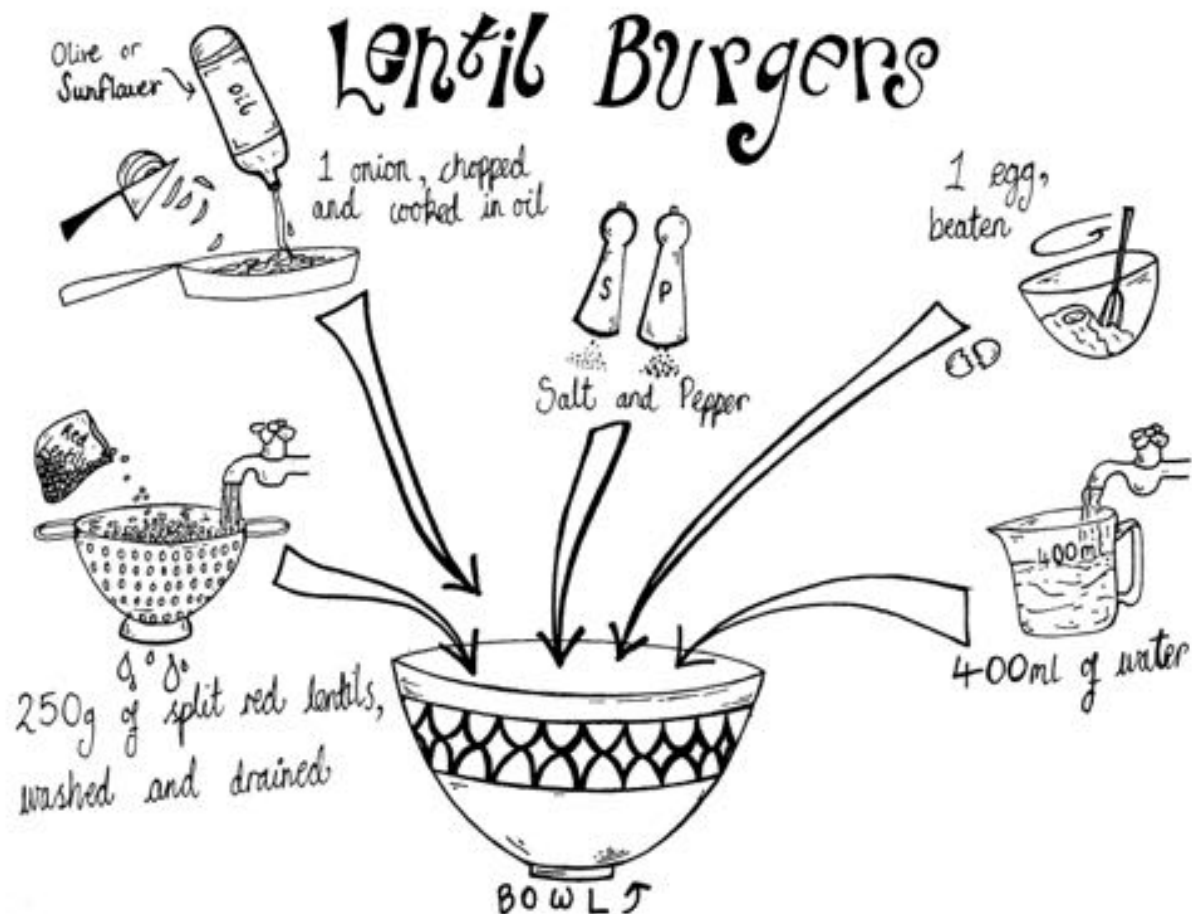
Make into a soup:

Gently fry a finely chopped onion and in 2 Tablespoons oil until soft.

Stir in a tray of roasted veg and 1 litre of stock.

Bring to the boil & simmer for 5 minutes.

Whizz up in a blender until smooth with a bit of dairy cream or coconut milk if you have it.



Pulses (dry peas, beans and lentils) are the seeds from the pods of plants of the Legume family. They are full of protein and fibre so are great for filling you up and keeping you healthy too. Split Red Lentils are especially good because they cook quickly and don't need to be soaked like other pulses do.

In the following recipe the lentils are cooked and then made into small burgers (sometimes called rissoles). I have given two variations, for herby or spicy lentil burgers, but feel free to experiment with different herb and spice flavours.

I sometimes cook up the lentils the day before and complete the recipe the next day to speed up meal times.

Because lentils tend to accumulate debris during production, have a look for any small stones and rinse and drain them (in a sieve) before use.

INGREDIENTS (Makes 16-20 mini burgers, serves approx 4)

2 x Tablespoons oil
 1 x onion
 250g split red lentils
 400ml water
 1 x egg
 Salt (approx 1/2 teaspoon) & pepper
 Approximately 4 x Tablespoons flour for coating (preferably wholemeal)
 Oil for frying

For SPICY BURGERS add:

1 x teaspoon ground cumin
1 x teaspoon ground coriander
1/2 teaspoon chilli powder or flakes

For HERBY BURGERS add:

2 x teaspoons mixed dried herbs

METHOD

Put the lentils and water in a medium pan and simmer, stirring occasionally for 10-15 minutes until the lentils are soft, the water is absorbed and you are left with a solid paste. Let it cool.

While the lentils are cooking, gently fry the onion in the oil until soft. Stir in the spices or herbs

Add the cooked onion mix, egg, salt & pepper to the lentils and mix well. If the mixture is too loose to form burgers you can add a bit of flour to the mix to thicken it up.

Put the flour on a plate and sprinkle some over your hands.

Taking 1 dessertspoon at a time, form the mixture into little rounds and roll in flour.

Put them on another plate flattening them slightly to form mini burger shapes.

When you have shaped all the burgers heat the oil in a frying pan over a medium heat. Fry on both until golden, drain on kitchen paper and serve warm.

MEAL SUGGESTIONS

Serve them:

With TOMATO SAUCE and spaghetti and a salad

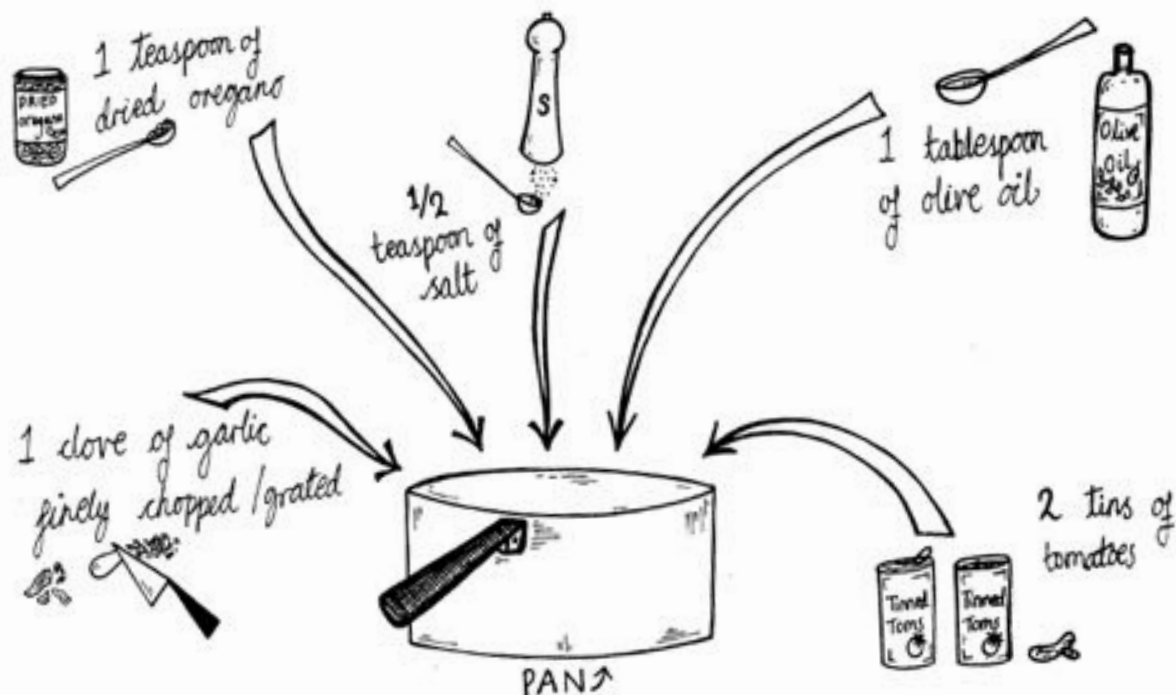
In a FLATBREAD (or warm pitta bread) with COLESLAW

On cooked rice mixed with ROASTED MEDITERRANEAN VEG

With a potato salad (with SALAD DRESSING) and COLESLAW

With mashed potato (or mixed root mash), steamed green veg and some CARAMELISED ONION

Tomato Sauce



This is a very simple but delicious tomato sauce which can be used for pizza and pasta dishes as well as an accompaniment for the nut roast or the nut or lentil burgers. The cooking time will depend on the tomatoes you use; 'value' tomatoes will taste just as good but as their juice tends to be more watery, the sauce will take longer to thicken up.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 x cans tomatoes
- 1 x Tablespoon olive oil
- 1/2 x teaspoon salt
- 1 x teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 x clove garlic, finely chopped/grated

METHOD

Put all the ingredients in a medium sized pan, bring to the boil and simmer until thick.

If you are using whole tinned tomatoes (and are not planning to blend the sauce) crush them a bit with a potato masher in the pan as they start to soften up.

Serve as is, or blend until smooth.

VARIATIONS

Try different fresh or dried herbs or add a spoonful of pesto

Mix in tuna and olives to serve over pasta

Add some curry powder to serve over cooked veg, meat or eggs with rice

Add in grated or finely chopped veg and cook together. Blend for a 'hidden veg' pasta sauce

Add in a drained can of pulses, cook and blend for more hidden veg

MEAL SUGGESTIONS

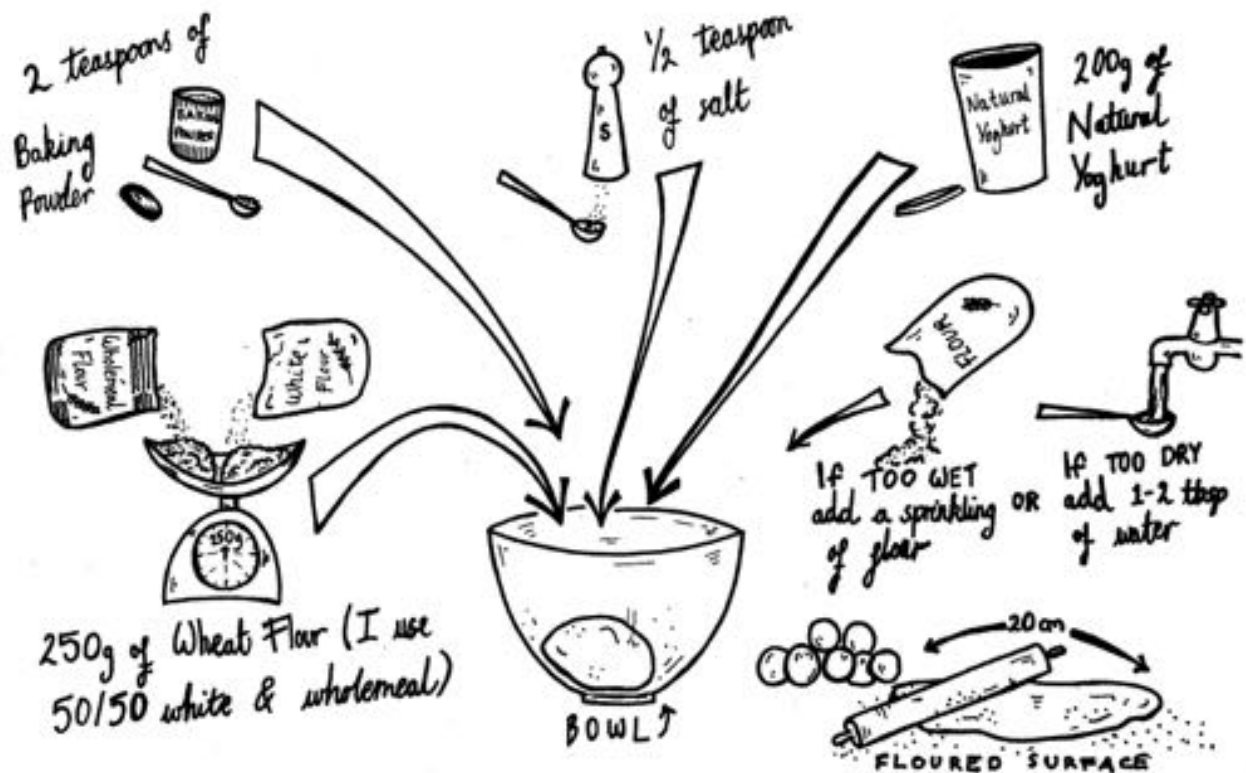
Mix with cooked pasta, cooked veg (eg broccoli or cauliflower or ROASTED MEDITERRANEAN VEG), top with cheese and/or a CRUMB TOPPING and bake in the oven (200°C/Gas 6) until golden on top.

Serve with NUT ROAST and ROAST VEG

Add to some ROAST VEG as a FLATBREAD filling

Serve with the NUT BURGERS or LENTIL BURGERS with potatoes and green veg

Flatbreads



Flatbreads are so simple to make at home and are amazingly tasty. Warm and charred like a wood-fired pizza base, they never fail to lift an otherwise humble meal into something really special. Serve them with curries, soups and stews. Stuff them with sandwich fillings or top them like a pizza. Cut or tear them into pieces and eat with hummus or another dip.

It is best to roll out each flatbread as you cook them. However you can also pre-roll them, stacking them up as you go. Just make sure you sprinkle each one with flour as you stack them so they don't stick to each other.

If you haven't got a rolling pin you can press them to size with your hands. This is easiest with smaller sized flatbreads.

INGREDIENTS (makes 8 x 20cm flatbreads)

250g Wheat flour (I use 50/50 white & wholemeal)
2 x teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
200g natural yogurt

METHOD

Mix together the flour, baking powder and salt.

Stir in the yogurt and mix until it starts coming together as a dough, adding a tablespoon or two of water if too dry (and a sprinkling of flour if too wet).

Knead in the bowl or on a floured working surface for a few minutes to make a smooth dough.

Put in the bowl and cover with a clean tea towel until you are ready to cook.

Roll into 8 balls.

Sprinkle a thin layer of flour on the work surface and roll out each ball into a thin, flat circle approximately 20cm in diameter.

When cooking the flatbreads it is best to have a window open as they can set off a smoke alarm!

Heat a frying pan to medium high.

Once the pan is hot, add the flatbread and cook for a few minutes each side pushing the bread down with a spatula as it puffs up.

The finished bread will be speckled with brown, tasty blotches.

Keep the breads warm and pliable by wrapping them in the tea towel until you are ready to eat them.

VARIATIONS

You can make a more basic dough (prepared and cooked the same way) using the following ingredients:

250g Flour

150ml cold water or milk

1/2 teaspoon salt

For Gluten-free flatbreads you can use gluten-free flour for either recipe (make sure the baking powder is also gluten-free if you are using it). You may find it easier to make smaller flatbreads as the flour will make a more crumbly mix.

If you like you can also add 2 Tablespoons of butter or oil to either variation. Rub it evenly into the flour with your fingers before adding the liquid ingredients.

MEAL SUGGESTIONS

Serve with DAHL instead of rice (try adding 2 x teaspoons cumin or nigella seed to the dough mix)

Stuff with LENTIL BURGERS or NUT BURGERS, COLESLAW and/or some TOMATO SAUCE

Fill with ROASTED VEG and cheese or hummus

Make a frying pan pizza:

Cook the breads lightly on each side without browning.

Add a thin layer of TOMATO SAUCE/tomato puree/sliced tomatoes/pesto.

Add some ROASTED VEG or other cooked veg.

Top with cheese and place under a medium grill until melted.

Make a folded pizza pie:

Cook the flatbread lightly as above.

Add pizza toppings as above on one half of the flatbread in the pan.

Fold the bread to enclose the fillings & press down.

Warm through to melt the cheese and carefully flip to brown both sides.

Lentil Bolognese



This lentil stew can be used as a bolognese sauce over spaghetti or topped with mashed potatoes (or mashed root veg, squash or cauliflower) as a shepherds pie. You can use any combination of lentils or veg you have to hand; it is a great dish to pack with veg, using up what is hanging around in the fridge.

Instead of the dried lentils you can substitute canned or other ready-cooked lentils; use roughly 1 x Kilo (drained weight) which is roughly 4 x cans.

This bolognese also forms the basis of a delicious Veggie Lasagne (see separate sheet). Both recipes were kindly provided by Kitty Ford.

Because dried lentils tend to accumulate debris during production, have a look for any small stones and rinse and drain them (in a sieve) before use.

INGREDIENTS (Serves 4-6)

500g dry lentils (Puy type ideally, but green or black or red will also work.) OR
4 x cans lentils, drained

veg stock cube/powder in 1 Litre water (refer to packet for quantity)

2 x bay leaves

2 x Tablespoons olive oil

2 x onions, diced

3 x cloves garlic, finely chopped

Approx 1 x kilo vegetables, chopped into approx 2 cm pieces
(Kitty uses 1x carrot, 2x sticks celery, 300g mushrooms, 1x aubergine & 1x courgette)

2 x 400g tins chopped tomatoes

2 x teaspoons dried oregano OR Italian seasoning

salt and pepper to taste

METHOD

Dissolve the stock cube according to package instructions. Put the lentils in a medium sized pan, pour in the liquid stock and add a bay leaf. Cook until the lentils are tender, then set aside. If the lentils become too dry during cooking but are not yet tender, add another cup of water.

(If using canned lentils, skip this first step and instead add them to the sauce at the specified point later in the recipe along with the bay leaf)

Next, put the olive oil in a medium cooking pan. Cook the diced onion in the oil for a few minutes, until soft and slightly browned, then add the rest of your diced veg and the chopped garlic.

Add your tins of chopped tomatoes, filling the empty cans with about 1/3 water. Swill to get the last bits of goodness from the sides, then add this to the saucepan. Season to taste with a little salt and black pepper.

Let this cook down a little, then add your cooked (or canned) lentils, along with a bay leaf.

(If using canned, add an extra bay leaf and some veg stock powder/cube)

Now is also the time to add your oregano or Italian seasoning, and season again with a little more salt and black pepper if needed.

Let this all simmer for at least 15 minutes on a low heat, and then do with it what you will! It is fab just with pasta and can be frozen in portions for later use.

(See separate recipe sheet for Veggie Lasagne).

Veggie Lasagne



Kitty's lentil Lasagne uses her delicious Lentil Bolognese recipe for one of the sauces (see separate recipe sheet). You can save time by cooking up double quantities of the bolognese and saving half for the Lasagne. Use the sauce within 3 days or freeze it, defrosting thoroughly before use.

INGREDIENTS (Serves 6-8)

1 x recipe Lentil Bolognese

50g butter

45g plain flour (can be gluten free)

800ml milk

1 x pack of lasagne sheets (can be gluten free)

(check if the sheets need to be pre-cooked & follow the packet instructions if they do. Most types don't require pre-cooking.)

Approx 500g cheese for the top & inside layers
(a mix works; for example cheddar, ricotta, mozzarella)

METHOD

Making the white sauce:

Melt the butter in a pan on the lowest heat then add the flour. Continually mix with a whisk (or wooden spoon) to form a sloppy paste.

Next, start adding your milk very gradually, bit by bit, mixing thoroughly each time. Try to AVOID it lumping. Whisking (or stirring) lots should prevent this.

Once you have added all of the milk whisk (or stir) continually while the sauce comes to a boil and thickens up. It can take up to 10 mins for it to thicken- make sure to stir regularly to prevent lumps.

Take off the heat and add salt and pepper to taste. Then pre-heat the oven to 180°C / Gas 4.

To assemble the lasagne:

Take your preferred oven tray (make sure it is deep enough). Add one layer of the bolognese sauce to the bottom, then layer the lasagne sheets with as much coverage as possible

Place one layer of white sauce AND some cheese over the sheets. Then make a new layer of bolognese sauce, lasagne sheets, white sauce and cheese.

Repeat until all the ingredients are used up but finishing with a layer of white sauce with lots of cheese on top.

Cook in the pre-heated oven for around 45 mins. The cheese should have slightly browned on the top and the pasta should be cooked. A butter knife should easily be pushed through the centre.

Knife Skills

There are many different types of knives and it's important to use the right one. A chef's knife – used for chopping, dicing and slicing – is a great all-purpose knife and so important in the kitchen. Here I'll show you how to safely handle a chef's knife.

How to hold a Chef's Knife



Place your thumb and forefinger around the base of the blade in a pinching position, then wrap the remaining three fingers around the handle of the knife.

The index finger and thumb should be at opposites, on either side of the blade, with the remaining three fingers loosely curled around.

This is the best way to safely hold a knife and have control over it.

General Knife Safety

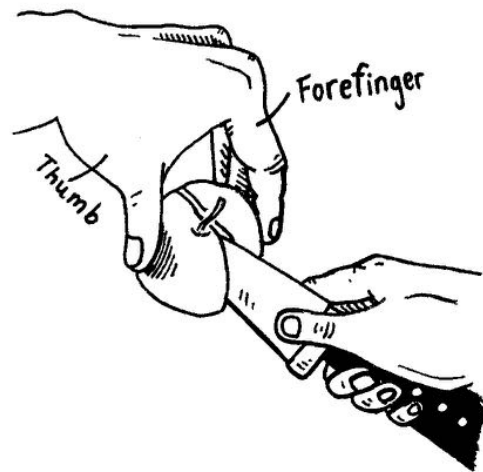
Of course, knives can be dangerous, so follow these safety tips at all times:

- Secure your chopping board by placing a damp cloth, kitchen towel or silicone mat underneath it before use. This will stop it from slipping while you work.
- Keep your knife handle clean to ensure a good grip. If you do get grease on it, stop what you're doing and wash it off immediately.
- Always chop ingredients flat-side down. If the ingredient is round or uneven, halve it first or slice a bit off to create a flat, stable surface to lay on the board while you chop.
- Never go fast when chopping; work slowly and get to know your knife and how it feels. Practice makes perfect!
- Carry a knife with the blade pointed downwards and warn others when you're carrying one. Never walk around the kitchen with the knife blade facing outwards.
- Never place knives in a sink full of soapy water, or under dishes, where they can't be seen. This will avoid someone cutting themselves by accident.
- Always wash knives in hot, soapy water, from the handle to the tip of the blade, with the blade edge facing away from you.
- Store knives safely when not in use, ideally in a knife block or lay them flat in an uncluttered drawer where they can be easily seen.
- Keep locked away when not in use if there are children in the household.

There are two ways to safely prep ingredients with a knife, known as the 'bridge' and 'claw' methods (see over).

Bridge AND Claw Techniques

The Bridge



Use the bridge method to cut ingredients into smaller, more manageable pieces.

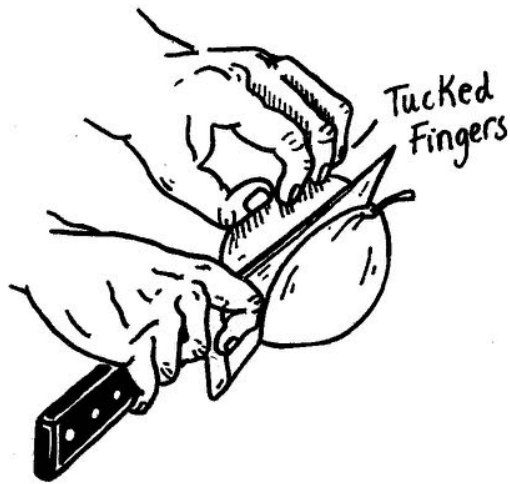
Form a high 'bridge' over the ingredient with the thumb and fingers on opposite sides.

Pick up the knife with the other hand and position the blade under the 'bridge'.

Cut into the ingredient, pressing the knife firmly into the middle and sliding it back towards you out of your 'bridge'.

Once you've halved the ingredient, place it flat-side down and cut into smaller pieces, if required.

Bridge AND Claw Techniques



The Claw

Use the claw technique to slice ingredients into thinner strips.

Place the ingredient on the board, flat-side down.

Make a 'claw' by curling your fingers closely together over the ingredient, tucking them under so you can't see your fingertips.

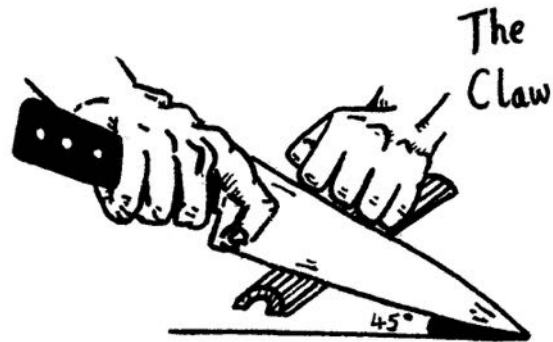
Pick up the knife with your other hand – the flat side of the blade actually rests against the first knuckle of the claw, protecting the fingers.

Keeping the tip of the knife on the board, slice through the item, sliding the knife forwards as you cut and then back.

Repeat, ensuring you have a good grip and keep your fingers together at all times.

Chopping Techniques

Rock Chop



This technique uses a rocking motion to chop, combined with the 'claw' technique to keep your fingers safe.

Hold the knife firmly in one hand and place the tip of the knife on the board at an angle of roughly 45 degrees.

With the other hand, make a 'claw' over the ingredient, tucking your fingertips out of the way.

Using the curve of the knife, push down and forward in a rocking motion – the end of the knife doesn't leave the board.

Move your claw back before making each slice.

Practice makes perfect, don't go too fast!

Chopping Techniques

Cross Chop



Cross chopping is used to cut ingredients into much smaller pieces – for example, fresh herbs.

Hold the knife firmly in one hand, place the tip of the knife on the board at an angle of roughly 20 degrees.

Keep the fingers of your other hand rigid on the top edge of the lower half of the blade.

Keeping the tip of the knife on the board, raise and lower the handle of the knife, like a guillotine so it chops whatever is under it.

Gather back the ingredients into the middle and continue to cross chop until you have the size you want.

Rainbow Salad Wrap



Our bodies absolutely thrive when we eat a diverse mixture of plant foods. 'Eating the rainbow' of lots of differently coloured fruits and veg ensures we are getting a good mix of vitamins and minerals into our daily diets. Chopping or grating everything into bite-sized pieces is the key to making a tasty filling. You can also leave out the bread and serve the filling as a chopped salad instead (with the hummus or cheese dolloped on top). Use the flavours you like and the veg in season to create your own version of the wrap.

INGREDIENTS (Makes 1)

1 x wrap or flatbread

1 x rounded Tablespoon Hummus OR Soft Cheese

1 x teaspoon Olive Oil

1/2 teaspoon Balsamic Vinegar

Approx 100g (1 x cup) of a mix of any of the following:

GRATED RAW VEG

Carrots
Courgette
Celeriac
Beetroot
Radishes
Parsnip

GRATED FRUIT (mixed with a squeeze of lemon juice to stop it going brown)

Apple
Pear

FINELY CHOPPED or SLICED RAW VEG

Broccoli
Cauliflower
Celery
Cucumber (scrape out the seeds first to avoid a soggy wrap)
Fennel bulb
Peppers (red/yellow/green)
Red onion
Spring onions
Tomatoes (scrape out the seeds first to avoid a soggy wrap)

FINELY SHREDDED LEAFY VEG

Cabbage (red or white)
Chinese leaves
Salad leaves
Spinach

BEANS & PEAS

Broad beans, cooked & each bean squeezed out of its skin
Mangetout or sugar snap peas, sliced
Peas, Freshly podded
Any tinned Pulses, rinsed & drained

FRESH HERBS, chopped or torn:

Basil
Coriander
Dill
Mint
Parsley

SPROUTED SEEDS & MICROGREENS

Beansprouts or other sprouted seeds
Mustard & Cress or other microgreens

A SPRINKLING OF NUTS OR SEEDS

Any type, toasted or raw

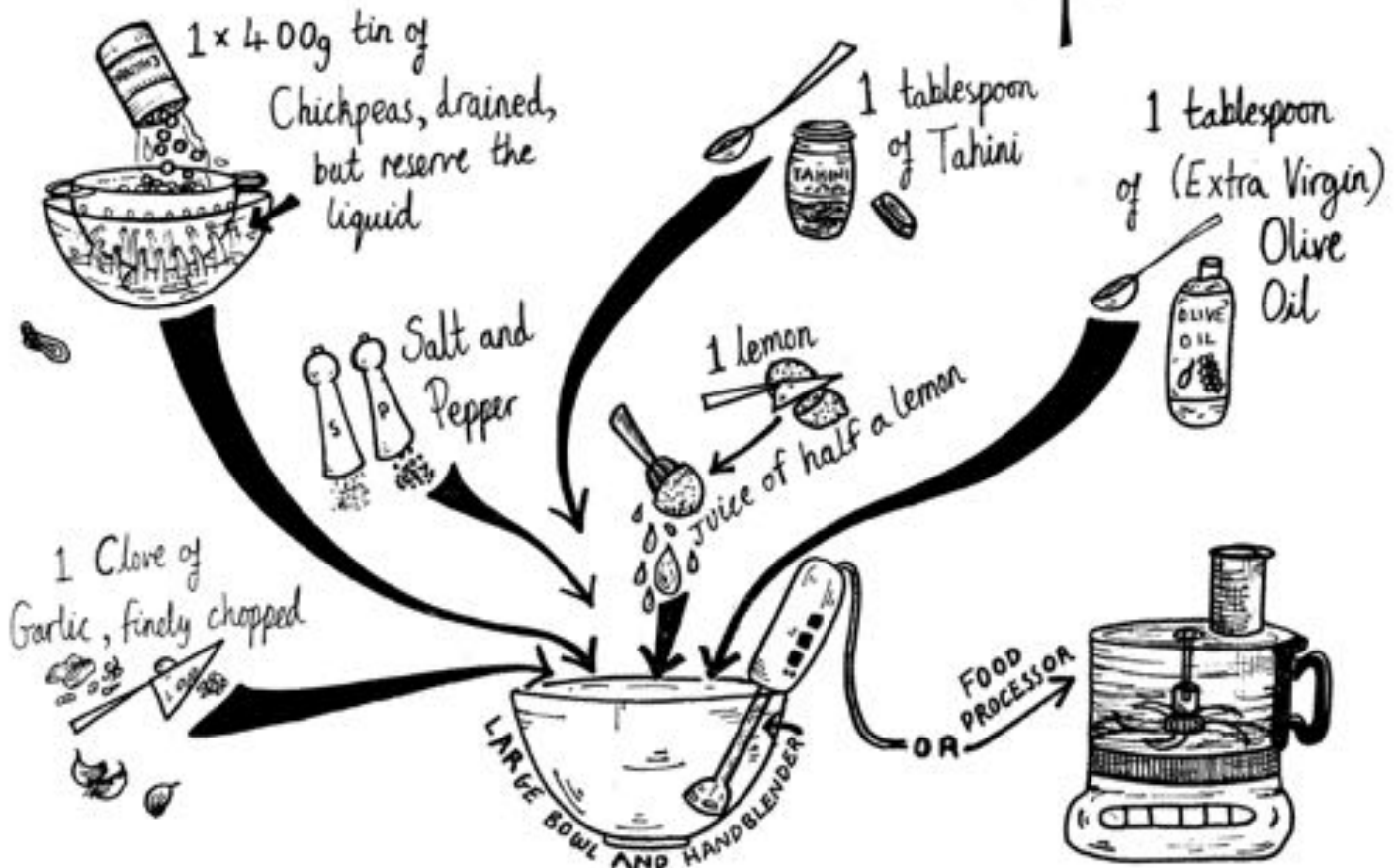
METHOD

Mix your choice of veg (etc) with the oil and vinegar.

Spread the hummus or soft cheese in the centre of the wrap then pile your veg mix on top.

Fold the bottom of the wrap up to cover some of the filling. (Fold the top end down too if you are taking the wrap in a lunchbox or to a picnic). Then fold over the two sides of the wrap, overlapping one over the other to enclose the filling.
Eat open end upwards!

Hummus AND Other Dips



If you have some sort of blender or masher and a few simple ingredients you are never more than a couple of minutes away from a tasty, healthy dip. Making your own hummus means you can keep an eye on the amount of salt and oil that goes into it and also reduce your plastic waste (all the ingredients can be bought in non-plastic packaging unlike ready-made hummus).

This basic hummus recipe is very adaptable: you can add spices, mix in cooked veg, use different pulses or beans and even use peanut butter instead of the tahini. I have given you lots of ideas of how to deviate from traditional hummus over the page. Happy creating!

INGREDIENTS (makes approximately 8 x Tablespoons)

1 x 400g tin chickpeas, drained (but reserve the liquid)

1 x clove of garlic, finely chopped

1 x Tablespoon Tahini

1 x Tablespoon (Extra Virgin) Olive Oil

1 x Lemon

Salt & pepper, to taste

METHOD

Into a mixing bowl or food processor put the drained chick peas, garlic, tahini, olive oil and the juice of half of the lemon.

Process or blend with a stick blender to the consistency you like. If you are using a food processor, process once, then scrape down the sides before processing again to make sure all the ingredients are fully combined.

(If you don't have a food processor or stick blender you can mash it up using a potato masher, fork, or pestle & mortar instead)

Season with salt and pepper to taste and add more lemon juice if desired. Add a bit of the reserved liquid to thin if necessary.

VARIATIONS

Add ground spices to taste (start with 1 teaspoon) eg cumin, coriander, smoked paprika and/or a pinch of chilli powder. Or use a spice mix such as ras el hanout.

Process with fresh Basil / Coriander / Dill / Mint / Parsley. Serve sprinkled with chopped herbs.

Instead of the chickpeas use any other tinned pulses (in water) eg butter beans or cannellini beans.

Use 250g frozen broad beans or edamame beans instead of the chickpeas: cook as instructed then cool in cold water and drain before using.

Use peanut butter (or other nut butters) instead of the tahini.

Instead of lemon juice, try freshly squeezed lime or orange juice.

Add 150g cooked veg (steamed or roasted) to the recipe, eg:

Aubergine,
Beetroot,
Butternut or other squash,
Carrots,
Courgettes,
Onions,
Parsnip,
Peppers.

Thin any variation with some yogurt to make a sauce or dressing. Especially good with roasted veg.

MEAL SUGGESTIONS

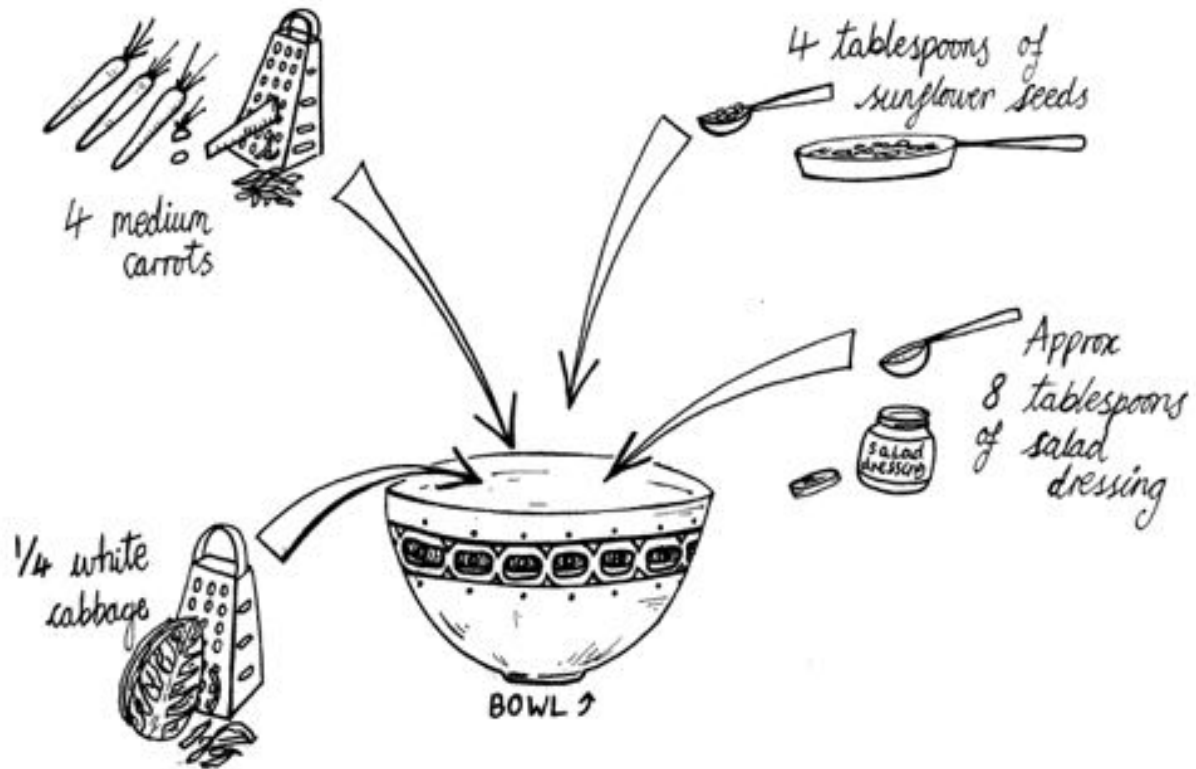
Serve as a dip with sliced veg (carrots, cucumbers, radishes and peppers) and a Pitta or FLATBREAD.

Dollop onto ROASTED VEG served over grains or in a FLATBREAD, topped with some CARAMELISED ONIONS.

Use in a sarnie with COLESLAW or another salad or in the RAINBOW SALAD WRAP.

Add to a mixed salad bowl (green salad, ROASTED VEG, COLESLAW).

Coleslaw



Cabbage, the main ingredient of a traditional coleslaw, is a great source of vitamin C and among the cheapest vegetables you can buy. Homemade coleslaw is much more nutritious than most shop-bought varieties and easy to make. It tastes great with a baked potato and cheese.

My basic recipe below is easily adapted using the ingredients you have to hand. Carrots, beetroot, radish and apple, for example, can all be grated into the mix to vary both the flavour and the nutritional value.

Here is my basic recipe followed by suggested variations.

INGREDIENTS (serves 4)

1/4 white cabbage
4 x medium carrots
4 x Tablespoons sunflower seeds
Approximately 8 x Tablespoons SALAD DRESSING (see separate recipe)

METHOD

Toast the seeds in a dry frying pan over a medium heat, stirring frequently, until golden brown.

Coarsely grate the carrots.

Either finely shred the cabbage with a knife or coarsely grate it. (I prefer it shredded but grating is quicker and easier to get it fine enough).

Mix everything together in a bowl adding the dressing, a few tablespoons at a time, until nicely coated & serve.

VARIATIONS

Try different vegetable combinations (shredded or grated) for the main bulk of the salad:

Red cabbage or softer cabbages such as savoy
Brussels sprouts
Chinese leaves
Beetroot (not ready cooked or pickled!)
Fennel bulb

Add other grated veg in smaller quantities for flavour:

Onion (red, white or spring)
Radishes
Parsnip

Add:

Chopped fresh herbs
Walnuts, poppyseeds or toasted sesame or pumpkin seeds,
Some grated apple or sprinkling of dried fruit, or both.

MEAL SUGGESTIONS

Serve the Coleslaw:

In a FLATBREAD (or pitta bread) with LENTIL BURGERS or NUT BURGERS

In a sandwich with sliced meat, cheese or hummus

With DAHL and rice (add chopped coriander to the coleslaw)

Salad Dressing



Having a jar of salad dressing in the fridge at all times allows you to quickly turn a bowl of simple foods into a satisfying meal or side dish. It is the perfect way to help you get more health-giving plant foods such as chopped, shredded or grated veg, salad leaves, nuts, seeds, and canned pulses into your diet. Cooked grains, pasta and potato also taste great with a salad dressing especially if you mix it in whilst they are still warm from cooking.

I use mostly extra virgin olive oil for my dressings as well as cooking. This is the healthiest oil for your body; using smaller amounts of the good stuff if you can is best for your health.

INGREDIENTS

6 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil (or sunflower oil)
2 tablespoons of vinegar
Salt & pepper
1 teaspoon mustard (or 1/2 teaspoon of mustard powder)

METHOD

Put all the ingredients in a clean jam jar, (tightly!) shut the lid & shake to combine.

If you don't have a spare jar whisk the dressing in a bowl using a fork or whisk.

VARIATIONS

Try replacing some of the oil with some walnut or sesame oil.

Try using different vinegars; use any vinegar available (except malt which is too overpowering).

Use lemon (or orange) juice instead of vinegar

Add one of the following to the mix:

1 x Tablespoon soy sauce

1 x Tablespoon Peanut butter

1 x Tablespoon Tahini

1 x teaspoon honey

1 x teaspoon tomato puree

Fresh chopped herbs

Grated garlic

An extra teaspoon of mustard, especially Dijon or Wholegrain mustard

Or mix in 1 x Tablespoon toasted sesame seeds, some soy sauce & grated ginger root



Onions form the basis of so many common recipes that it is easy to underestimate their qualities. Not only can they add a rich flavour and differing textures to a dish onions are also full of healthy nutrients and prebiotics.

Slowly cooking an onion transforms the crunchy, sharp-tasting vegetable into a soft, sweet one and makes it much more digestible.

Cooking them for a long time also makes a big difference to the taste of your meals but of course uses more fuel. To get all the flavour whilst reducing fuel costs I cook up enough onions for a few meals then store in the fridge for up to 4 days. If you have a freezer, you can also freeze cooked onion: freeze in portion sized lumps on a tray or plastic lid then decant them when solid into a freezer bag or box. When you want to use the onion it will defrost in the pan as you warm it.

In my experiments four onions cooked as below took 40 minutes, whereas one onion took 30 minutes. Cooking enough for four meals therefore took 10 minutes of fuel each.

COOKED ONION BASE

I don't add salt if I am cooking a big batch of onions, but add it when using them in a recipe later. Adding salt whilst the onions are cooking will draw out the juices and prevent them crisping up if you want to caramelise them (it's good to keep your options open).

INGREDIENTS (enough for 4 recipes)

4 x medium onions approx 600g (150g each)
4-6 Tablespoons of oil

(For a single recipe use 1 x Medium onion with 2 x Tablespoons of oil. Watch carefully as smaller quantities tend to 'catch' on the pan, whereas a large batch will release more juices which prevents them from burning).

METHOD

Finely chop the onions (approx 5mm pieces)

Heat the oil over a medium heat and cook, stirring occasionally until very soft and golden but not crispy or brown.

CARAMELISED ONIONS

For caramelised onions, turn the heat up slightly once the onions are lovely & soft.

Cook until dark golden brown.

SOFFRITTO

Soffritto is a mixture of onion, carrot and celery which is used as a base for many stews, soup and sauces in Italy. Other flavourings such as garlic, parsley, rosemary, bay leaves and finely chopped bacon are sometimes added. Just like for the onion base, the veg are chopped into 5mm dice and cooked, stirring occasionally, until softened and golden but not burnt or crisp.

If you would like to try using soffritto as a base in your recipes the usual proportions are twice as much onion as carrot and celery eg 2 x onions, 1 x carrot & 1 x celery stick.

You can use soffritto to replace cooked onion in any of the recipes.

IDEAS FOR COOKED ONIONS

Having ready cooked onion in the fridge or freezer will speed up the following recipes:

DAHL, NUT ROAST, NUT BURGERS, LENTIL BURGERS, VEGETABLE SOUP

Here are a few more ideas for using the onions:

Add them to gravy. Red onions are especially nice for this.

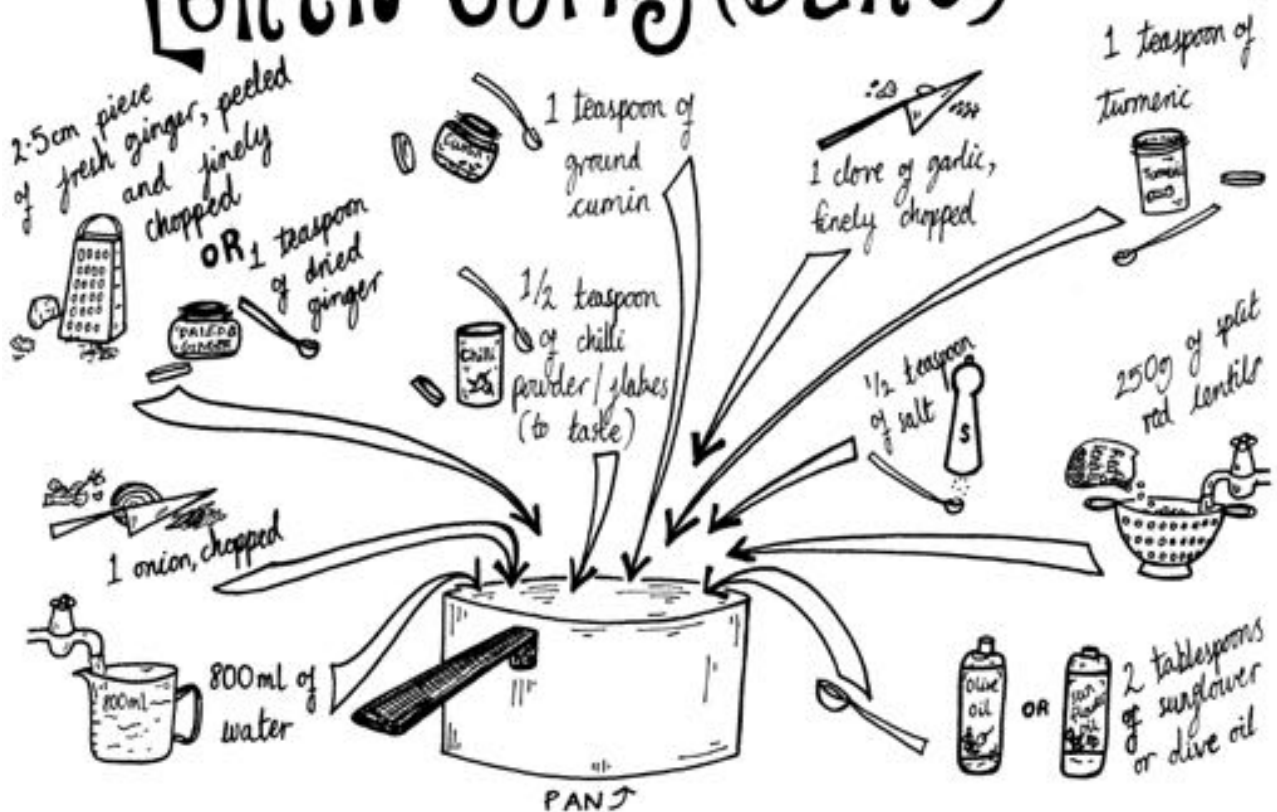
Add a teaspoon of cumin seed and a pinch of turmeric and chilli flakes per onion, caramelize until really crispy and serve on top of your favourite curry.

Serve on top of a pile of mash, green veg and a poached or fried egg, or in a sausage sarnie.

Add stock & herbs to make a soup (600g onion makes 2 servings)

Mix into an omelette with some chopped fresh herbs.

Lentil Curry (Dahl)



If you have ever experimented with a vegetarian or vegan diet you are probably very familiar with a wide range of pulse-based meals including lentil Dahl. If not, be reassured that split lentils are not only delicious, and relatively cheap to buy, they also cook quickly helping to keep fuel costs down.

Because lentils tend to accumulate debris during production, have a look for any small stones and rinse and drain them (in a sieve) before use.

To serve the Dahl with rice, put some rice on to boil once the Dahl is simmering.

INGREDIENTS (Serves 4)

(You can use 1 x Tablespoon of curry powder instead of the turmeric, cumin and ginger and chilli)

- 1 x onion, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 x Tablespoons olive or sunflower oil
- 1 x garlic clove, finely chopped
- 1 x teaspoon turmeric
- 1 x teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon chilli powder/flakes (to taste)
- 2.5cm piece fresh ginger peeled & finely grated (or 1 x teaspoon ground ginger)
- 250g split red lentils
- 800ml water

METHOD

Rinse the lentils in a large pan of water, drain them in a sieve and set aside.

Gently cook the onion in the oil with the salt until soft but not brown.

Add the garlic and spices (or curry powder) to the cooked onion and cook for a few minutes.

Mix in the lentils and water. Bring to the boil, turn down the heat to a simmer.

Put a lid on the pan and simmer for 20-30 minutes until thick & soupy.

(If the Dahl is looking too liquid add few extra lentils and simmer until cooked).

Serve with rice and salad.

VARIATIONS

Add 150g of spinach leaves or finely shredded cabbage for the last 5 minutes or until cooked.

Add 300g of veg at the start of cooking, eg:

Chopped or grated carrot;

Small florets of fresh or frozen cauliflower or broccoli. (If the frozen florets are too large, chop them up a bit in the pan as they cook);

Or add a couple of fresh or tinned tomatoes, chopped.

Serve garnished with:

Fresh coriander and sliced tomato;

Yogurt mixed with grated cucumber and chopped fresh (or dried) mint, salt & pepper;

SPICY FRIED ONIONS

MEAL SUGGESTIONS

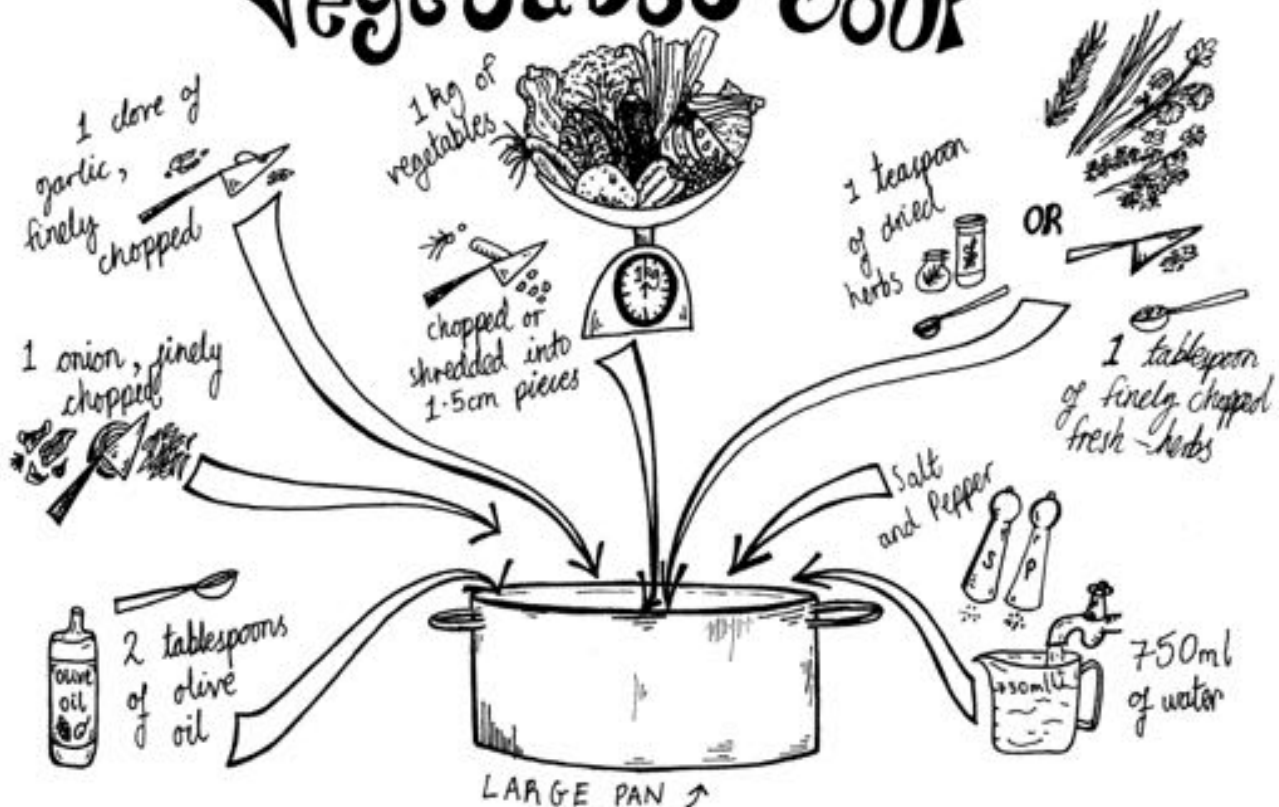
Serve Dahl with:

Rice and COLESLAW or a green salad.

FLATBREADS instead of rice.

As a soup; Add a can of tomatoes and some stock and simmer to heat through.

Vegetable Soup



A big bowl soup is a great way to get loads of vegetable goodness into our diets. Mixed vegetable soup is especially good for us as our bodies thrive when we eat a large variety of plant foods. It is also a great way of using up all the veggie odds and ends one has available.

If you have some ready-cooked onion you can rustle up a big pot of soup very quickly, especially if you have already prepped your veg. When my kids were little (and needing my attention while I was trying to cook) I would often prep meals in stages like this.

If you can afford it, extra-virgin olive oil is so much better for your body and for flavour than other vegetable oils. I don't tend to use stock for my soup as I find all the flavour comes from the ingredients and from sautéing the veg, if you want to use some try to avoid the cubes and powders that contain anything artificial. These ultra-processed ingredients are not recognised as food by our bodies and are consequently not good for us.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 x Tablespoons olive oil (extra-virgin if possible)
- 1 x medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 x clove garlic
- 1 x kilo vegetables, chopped (or shredded) into 1-1.5 cm pieces (peas & pulses left whole)
- 1 x tablespoon finely chopped fresh herbs or 1 x teaspoon dried herbs
- 750ml water
- Salt & pepper

METHOD

Heat the oil in a large pan over a medium heat and gently cook the onion until soft but not brown. (If you are using ready cooked onion put a dollop in the pan with a tablespoon or two of oil instead).

Add all the veg (save any peas or fresh spinach for later, leaving frozen peas out to defrost), stir well and put the lid on.

Cook for 10 minutes to sweat the veg to release their flavour and juices.

Take off the lid, add the garlic and herbs and cook for a minute or two, stirring.

Add the water and salt & pepper. Bring to the boil, cover and simmer for 20-30 minutes until cooked. Add peas or fresh spinach for the last 5 minutes, if using.

VARIATIONS

Vary the herbs: try basil, bayleaves, chives, oregano, parsley, thyme etc

Add a handful of uncooked lentils or a drained can of pulses with the veg. Add extra water as necessary.

Cook a root veg, squash or pumpkin soup with curry spices. When the veg are soft add some coconut milk and lemon juice and warm through.

Add a handful of pasta or rice to a mediterranean veg and herb soup. A dollop of pesto is a nice addition too.

Jamie's Veggie Chilli WITH Rice



This Jamie Oliver recipe is rich in veg, low in salt and super-easy to rustle up. It can be made with your own choice of fresh, frozen or tinned veg and is ideal for using up odd and ends from your fridge, freezer or cupboard. It can be made as spicy or mild as you like.

The recipe uses brown rice which has more fibre than white rice, is nutritionally better for you and keeps you fuller for longer. Research has shown that eating whole grains, rather than refined grains, helps to reduce the risk of serious disease. You can of course substitute white rice if you prefer but the chilli tastes great with brown.

TIPS

This makes four hearty portions, so any leftovers can be stuffed into wraps with grated cheese for lunch the next day, or frozen.

If you don't have rice, the chilli is delicious served on a baked potato.

You could use a tin of baked beans in place of the tinned beans. Simply rinse the sugary sauce off the beans using a sieve before adding to the pan.

You can make the chilli in advance and freeze in batches to defrost when you need it.

With thanks to **Fareshare**, and **Tesco Community Cookery School with Jamie**

INGREDIENTS (Serves 4)

1 brown or red **onion** 1 clove of **garlic**

1 red **pepper** or courgette or 200g frozen or tinned sweetcorn/mixed veg

cooking oil, such as olive, vegetable, sunflower, groundnut

500g **root veg or squash**, such as sweet potato, carrot, butternut squash, pumpkin, or a mixture

1 teaspoon medium **chilli powder** (you can use hot if you prefer it spicy)

1 teaspoon **ground cumin**

salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 x 400g tins of beans (in water), such as kidney, butter, broad, pinto, cannellini or chickpeas

1 x 400g tin of chopped or plum tomatoes

300g brown rice

optional: **2 tablespoons of natural yoghurt**

optional: **a few sprigs of fresh coriander**

METHOD

Peel and roughly chop the onion, and peel and finely chop the garlic.

Deseed and roughly chop the pepper.

Place the large pan over a medium heat and add 2 tablespoons of oil.

Add the onion and pepper and cook gently for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the garlic for the final minute of cooking.

Peel the root vegetables/squash and chop into 2cm dice, then add to the pan.

Add the chilli powder and cumin, season with salt and pepper and cook for 5 minutes, stirring the pan regularly.

Tip in the beans (with their liquid) and the tomatoes, stir well and bring to the boil.

Turn down the heat to medium-low, put the lid on the pan and cook for 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, boil the kettle, and use the water to cook the rice in the medium saucepan according to the pack instructions.

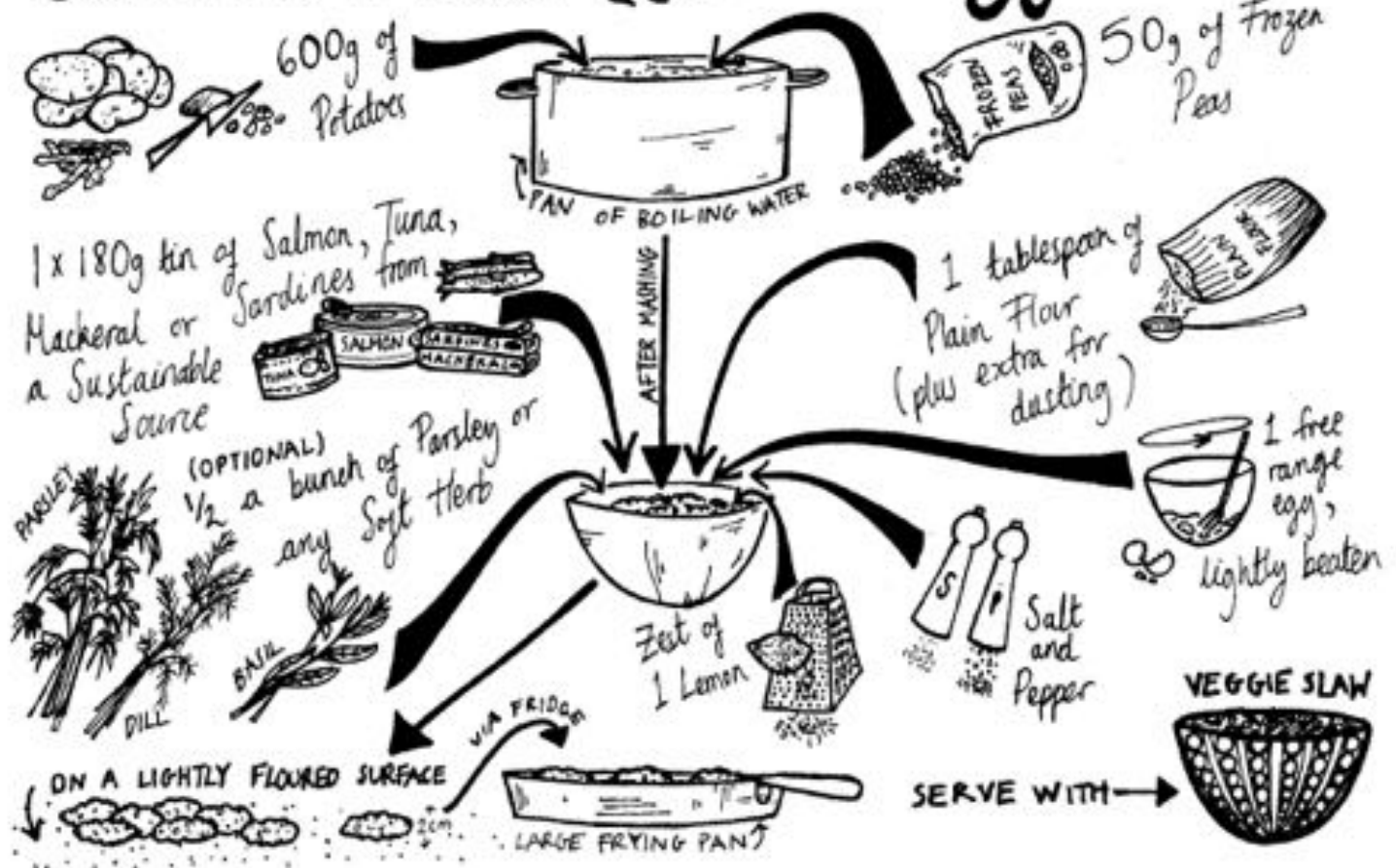
Remove the lid from the chilli and cook for a final 10 minutes, or until all the veg is soft, adding a splash of water if it gets too thick.

Check the rice is cooked, then drain if necessary.

Taste the chilli and season with more salt and pepper, if necessary.

Spoon the rice onto serving plates, top with the chilli, then spoon over the yoghurt, scatter with a few coriander leaves (if using) and serve.

Jamie's Fishcakes WITH Veggie Slaw



If you have leftover mashed potato and a tin of fish, you'll be amazed at how quick and easy it is to turn those into delicious fishcakes. If you don't like fish, or to make this vegan-friendly, leave out the egg and swap the tinned fish for a 400g tin of chickpeas or a 300g tin of broad beans – be sure to drain well before adding to the potatoes and peas.

Vegetables are an essential part of a balanced diet, and the veggie coleslaw is a great way of helping you hit your 5-a-day. One large handful of veg roughly equates to one portion (approx 80g). You can swap in other crunchy fruit or veg to make the slaw depending on what you have: try any type of cabbage or onions, celery, fennel, radish or pear. Try using other herbs such as dill or chives, chopped capers, or even a little bit of chilli if you want to spice things up a bit.

INGREDIENTS (Serves 4)

FISHCAKES:

600g potatoes

1 x 180g tin of quality salmon, tuna, mackerel or sardines, from sustainable sources

optional: 1/2 a bunch of fresh flat-leaf parsley or any soft herb (15g)

50g frozen peas

1 tablespoon plain flour, plus extra for dusting

1 free-range egg

sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 lemon

VEGGIE SLAW:

1 carrot

1 onion or 1/2 a red onion or 2 spring onions

1 apple

200g red or white cabbage or any crunchy veg, such as radishes, celery, fennel
optional: **1/2 a bunch of fresh flat-leaf parsley** or any soft herb, such as mint, coriander
or chives (15g)

olive oil

4 tablespoons natural yoghurt

optional: 1 heaped teaspoon mustard, such as English, wholegrain or Dijon

METHOD

- Peel the potatoes and chop into even chunks.
- Bring a large pan of salted water to the boil over a medium heat, add the potatoes and cook for 10 to 12 minutes, until tender.
- Meanwhile, drain the tinned fish (removing any skin and bone), pick and finely chop the herb leaves (if using), and discard the stalks.
- Add the peas to the potatoes for the final 2 minutes of cooking time.
- Drain in the colander, then return to the pan and leave to steam dry for a couple of minutes.
- Mash the potatoes and peas, then spread the mash around the insides of the pan to cool down quickly.
- Transfer the cooled potato mixture into a bowl with the tinned fish and the plain flour.
- Crack the egg into a small bowl, lightly beat and add to the fish mixture.
- Add the chopped herbs (if using) and a pinch of sea salt and black pepper. Finely grate in the lemon zest and mix well.
- Dust the work surface with a little flour, flour your hands and divide the fishcake mixture into eight pieces. Roll each piece into a ball with your floury hands then flatten into patties (roughly 2cm thick).
- Place onto a flour-dusted tray and chill in the fridge for 30 minutes.
- Meanwhile, trim and peel the carrot and onion and core the apple.
- Grate the carrot and apple into a large bowl using the box grater.
- Chop the onion and shred the cabbage using the rock chop method (see 'Knife Skills' page).
- Pick and finely chop the herb leaves (if using), discarding the stalks, and add to the bowl.
- Whisk together 2 tablespoons of olive oil, the yoghurt, mustard (if using) and the juice of half a lemon (you need roughly 2 tablespoons) in a small bowl. Season with sea salt and black pepper and toss with the grated vegetables.
- Place a large frying pan on a medium heat with 1 tablespoon of oil.
- Add the fishcakes and cook for 3 to 4 minutes on each side, until golden and cooked through. (You may need to do this in batches.)
- Serve the fishcakes with the slaw and a wedge of lemon for squeezing.



Leftover bread can be used to make some very tasty additions to liven up a meal. You can often find reduced-price bread in the shops but because it will be short-dated it is best used up the day of purchase. This is because much of the bread we buy is manufactured to stay moist and so will go mouldy rather than dry out.

However, if you have a freezer you can freeze it in slices, crumbs or cubes for later use. The slices can be toasted straight from the freezer, the cubes turned into croûtons for soups and the crumbs into a topping for pasta dishes (recipes below).

If you don't have a food processor or grinder available breadcrumbs can also be made using a grater.

Breadcrumbs are used in the NUT ROAST and NUT BURGER recipes.

CROÛTONS

Croûtons are small cubes of fried bread that are used as a crispy garnish for soups and salads. Allowing them to cool and then adding them to the dish just before serving prevents them from going soggy.

INGREDIENTS (increase in the same proportions as required)

50g (approx 1 x slice of bread)
1 x Tablespoon oil (preferably olive)

METHOD

Oven method

Preheat the oven to 180°C / Gas 4.

Cut the bread into small squares (approx 2cm).

Mix with the oil, coating all over.

Place on a baking sheet and cook for 10 minutes (use a timer as they are easy to burn!).

Drain on kitchen paper and allow to cool before use.

(You can make the croûtons in advance and store in an airtight container for a day.)

Hob method

Cut the bread & mix with oil as above

Heat a frying pan over a medium heat, stirring frequently until golden and crisp.

Drain, cool & store as above.

VARIATIONS

Add any or a combination of the following to the oil before you mix in the bread:

- 1 x crushed clove of garlic
- 1 x Tablespoon grated parmesan cheese
- 1 x Tablespoon fresh herbs, chopped
- 1 x teaspoon dried herbs

You can also use left-over garlic bread to make into croûtons. Just cut it up and cook as above (no need to add oil).

CRUMB TOPPINGS FOR PASTA (Pangrattato)

This pasta topping is like a crumbed version of croûtons and is used to add bit of crunch and flavour to pasta dishes and bakes such as macaroni cheese.

You can also sprinkle it over risottos or cauliflower cheese to add a contrasting texture to the dish.

INGREDIENTS

- 100g breadcrumbs
- 5 x Tablespoons olive oil
- Herbs or seasonings (see below)

METHOD

(If using for a baked dish simply mix and spread over the dish before putting in the oven i.e. don't cook the crumbs first)

Heat the oil in a frying pan over a medium heat.

Put in the breadcrumbs and cook, stirring until golden brown.

VARIATIONS

ADD ONE OF THE FOLLOWING COMBINATIONS (or create your own):

Grated zest of a lemon, finely chopped garlic and a pinch of chilli or cayenne.

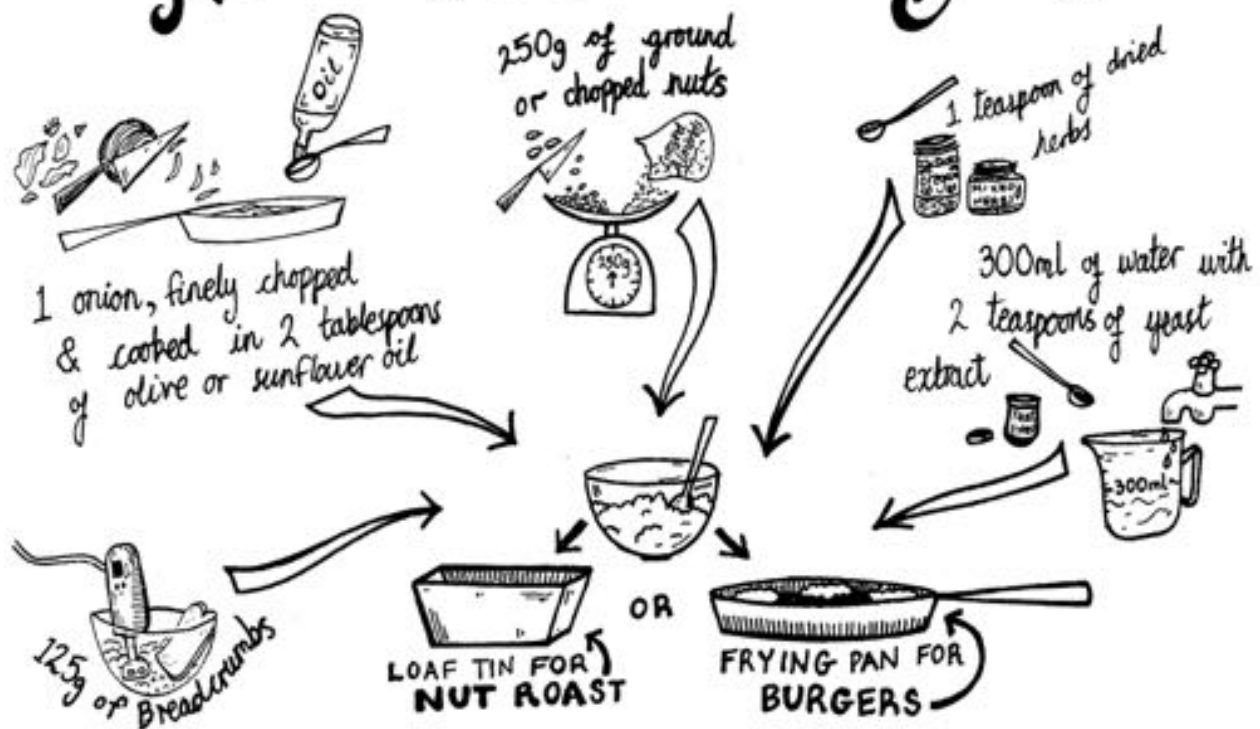
Finely chopped garlic and rosemary.

1 x handful of fresh, chopped herbs or 2 x teaspoon dried herbs (Oregano, Sage or Thyme).

50g finely chopped walnuts, zest & juice of 1x lemon, 1 x clove finely chopped garlic, 50g grated parmesan and some chopped fresh parsley.

1 x Small tin anchovies very finely chopped (use the oil from the tin to replace some of the oil above), chilli flakes and finely chopped garlic to taste.

Nut Roast OR Burgers



Although relatively expensive, nuts are extremely nutritious and sustaining, so well worth the money. If you can afford to buy in bulk it can work out much cheaper. Alternatively look out for offers. Once opened, store them in sealed packets or tubs in the fridge or freezer to extend their shelf life. For this recipe you can use any combination of unsalted nuts (and seeds too); using a mixture will give you the plant food diversity your body loves.

The ingredients for the basic nut roast and burger recipes are the same as follows:

INGREDIENTS (serves 4)

1 x onion, finely chopped
 2 x Tablespoons olive (or sunflower) oil
 250g chopped or ground nuts (and/or seeds)
 125g breadcrumbs
 1 x teaspoon dried herbs
 300ml water mixed with 2 teaspoons yeast extract

Extra oil for greasing/frying
 Flour for coating the burgers

METHOD

Finely chop the onion and cook gently in the oil in a saucepan until soft and golden. Take off the heat and mix in the herbs, nuts, breadcrumbs, salt and pepper.

Add the water bit by bit, stopping (if necessary) before the mix gets too loose to hold together.

Mix thoroughly, adding a bit more stock or water if too dry.

For NUT BURGERS

Shape into 8 x burgers and coat all over with flour.

Leave to rest in the fridge for 20 mins to firm up.

Heat the oil in a frying pan over a medium heat and fry for a few minutes each side until golden brown.

For NUT ROAST

Put the mixture in a small ovenproof dish or loaf tin (greased or lined with baking paper) and level the surface. Cook at 190°C / Gas 5 for approx 30 minutes until brown and crispy on top.

VARIATIONS

Add the juice and finely grated rind of a lemon to the mix.

Cook some finely chopped mushrooms or red pepper with the onion until soft and mix in.

Experiment with different fresh or dried herbs

FOR THE ROAST ONLY:

Put half the mix into the oven proof dish and level. Top this with a layer of sliced tomato and 50g of grated cheddar cheese. Cover with the other half of the nut mix, level and bake as above.

Make a nut roast en croûte by enclosing (any variation of) the mix in shop bought puff pastry. Cook for approximately 45minutes (until golden) at 200°C/Gas 6 (follow instructions on the puff pastry packet).

MEAL SUGGESTIONS

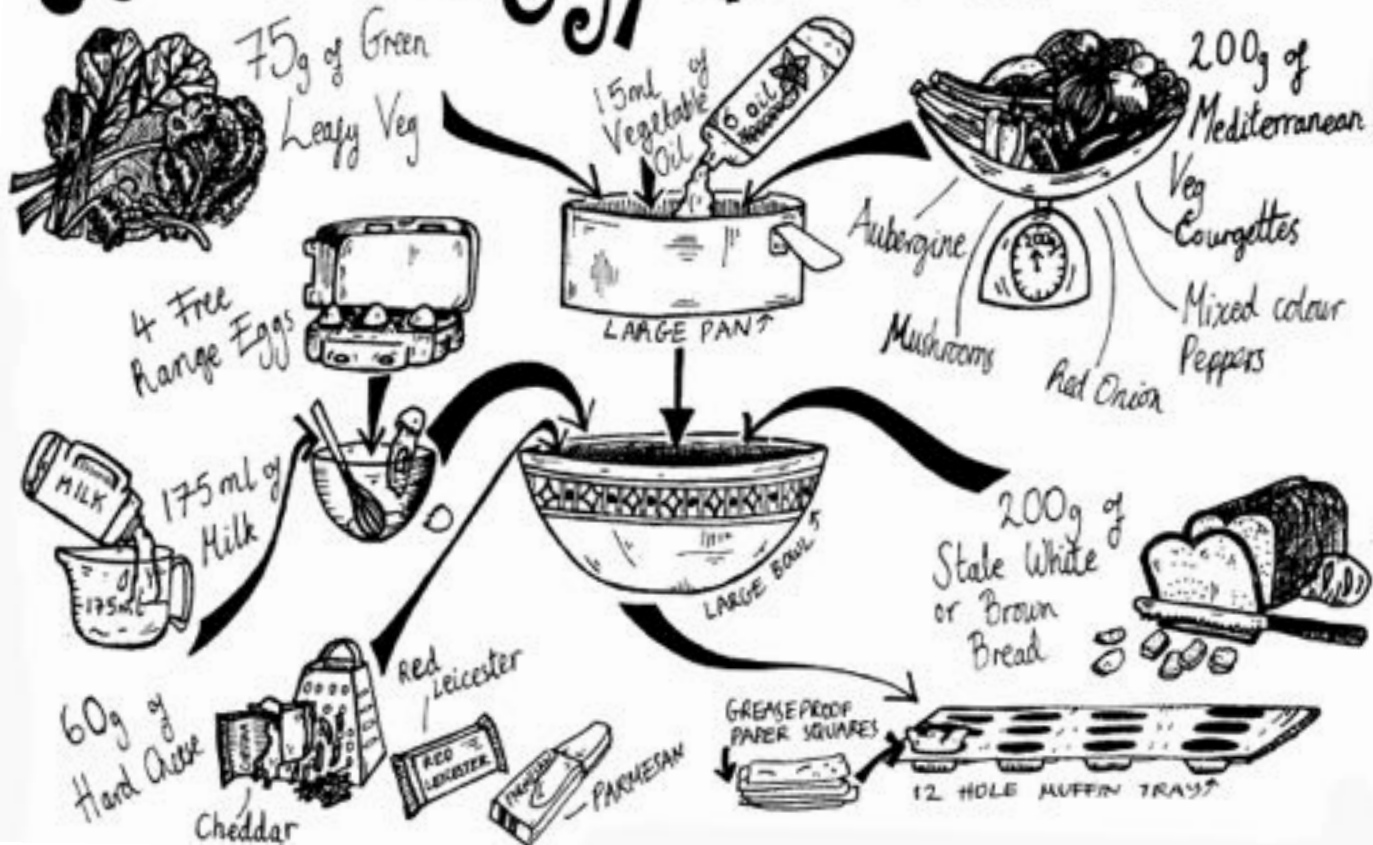
Serve with ROASTED VEG and TOMATO SAUCE

Serve the burgers in a FLATBREAD (or pitta bread) with COLESLAW or ROAST MEDITERRANEAN VEG

Serve the roast or burgers with mash, gravy and green veg

Make smaller burgers and serve over spaghetti with TOMATO SAUCE

Jamie's Eggy Bread Muffins



These muffins are fantastic served with a big bowl of veg soup or on their own as a breakfast-on-the-go. They are a great way of using up stale bread and odds & ends of veg to reduce food waste.

It is generally better for your body to avoid snacks between meals because the digestive system functions better with time off. Sticking to whole- and minimally-processed foods (ingredients as close to their natural state as possible) at meal times will help you avoid blood-sugar (hunger) crashes between meals.

On the occasion you do need a snack, these eggy muffins would be a nutritionally superior choice to buying ready made snacks which can be high in sugar, salt and fat - or all three - encouraging you to overeat!

Small changes such as mainly eating at mealtimes and sticking to nutritious foods for any snacks can make a big difference to your health in the long-run.

INGREDIENTS (Makes 8 muffins)

Note: all veg weights are for trimmed, prepped vegetables.

200g Mediterranean veg (courgettes, mixed-colour peppers, mushrooms, red onion)

75g leafy green veg

15ml vegetable oil

200g stale white or brown bread

4 free-range eggs

175ml milk

60g hard cheese (Cheddar, Red Leicester, Parmesan)

METHOD

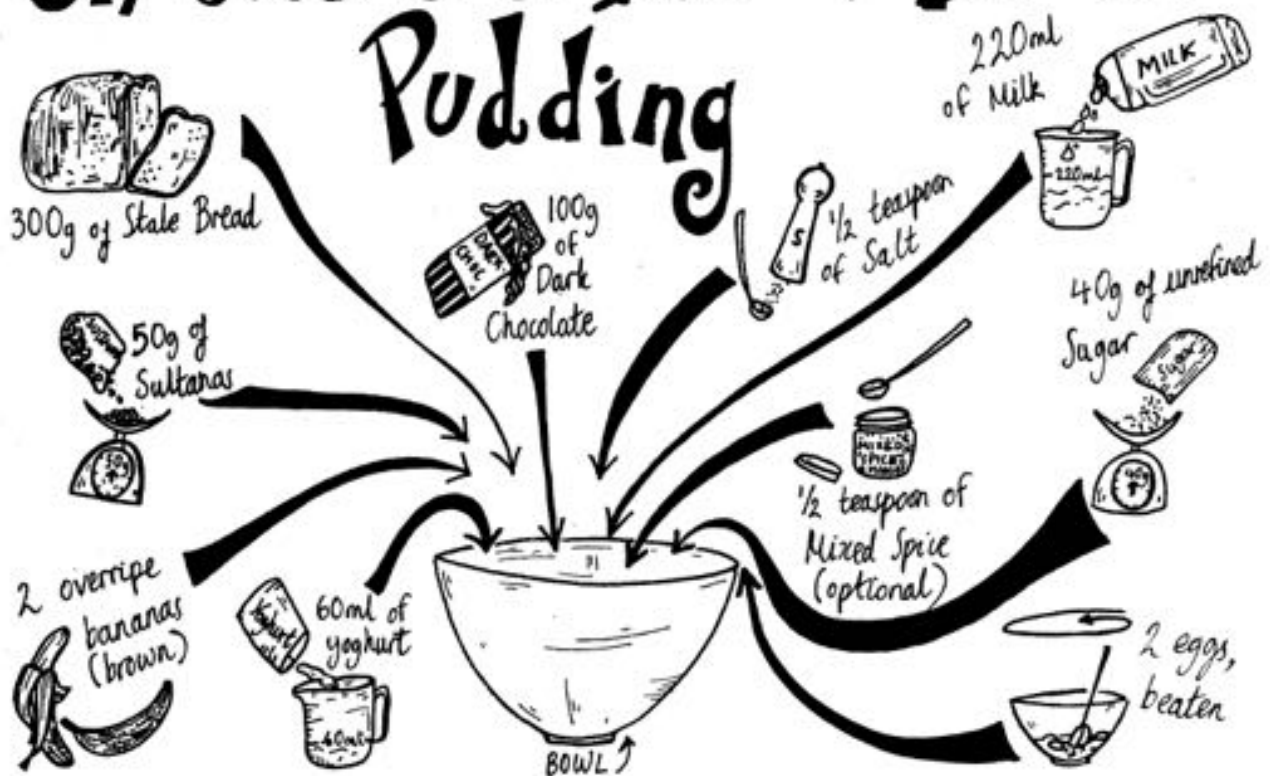
- Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas 4.
- Line a 8 of a 12-hole muffin tin with paper cases or 15cm folded squares of greaseproof paper.
- Roughly chop the Mediterranean veg into small pieces. Trim and finely shred the leafy greens.
- Place a pan large enough to hold all the vegetables on a medium heat with the oil.
- Cook the chopped veg until softened and golden, then stir through the leafy greens and cook for a few minutes more, or until wilted. Remove from the heat and leave to cool a little.
- Roughly chop the bread into small cubes and place into a large bowl.
- Whisk the eggs with the milk until combined. Pour half the egg mixture over the cubed bread, then grate in the cheese and give everything a good mix. Set aside for 10 minutes, or until the bread has absorbed all the egg.
- Stir the cooled veg through the eggy bread, season with a little sea salt and black pepper, then divide the mixture between the prepared muffin cases, topping each one up with the remaining beaten egg.
- Bake for 25 minutes or until golden and set. Enjoy warm from the oven or at room temperature.

TIPS

If you have any leftover muffins, simply pop them in the fridge to enjoy the following day.

This is a brilliant recipe that showcases seasonal vegetables and is really versatile – you can use fresh, frozen or tinned veg, add your favourite ingredients, and use up any odds and ends you may have in your fridge, freezer or cupboards.

Chocolate & Banana Bread Pudding



This recipe is based on one by Tom Hunt (The Guardian 03/04/21) and adapted and tested by Peter Wilson. Peter writes:

Bread is the most wasted food stuff in the UK and so any way to use up some of this food must be a good thing. This recipe also uses bananas that have gone soft and brown and can also utilize milk on the turn. It is a variation on the classic Bread-and-Butter pudding and imagination can add to this variety.

So, this is a tasty, nutritious version which is easy to make!

Notes: I have made this with and without eggs and both work well. Experiment with different types of bread, dried or seasonal fruit, nuts and other spices.

INGREDIENTS

300g stale bread (the original recipe used sourdough but you can use any bread)

50g sultanas

100g dark chocolate, roughly chopped

2 over ripe (brown-skinned) bananas, mashed

60ml yoghurt

220ml milk

40g sugar

2 eggs, beaten

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon mixed spice (optional)

METHOD

Line a 1kg bread tin with baking paper and preheat oven to 180-190 °C / Gas 5-6.

Chop the bread into 1cm cubes and put into a mixing bowl.

Add the sultanas and chopped dark chocolate.

In a separate bowl blend/whisk together the bananas with the yoghurt, milk, sugar, salt, and beaten eggs. Mix in the mixed spice if using.

Stir this mixture into the bread mix, thoroughly coating all the pieces.

Pour into the lined bread tin, level the surface and bake for about 30-40minutes until the top is a nice dark brown.

Serve hot or chilled with yoghurt, crème fraiche or cream. Enjoy!