



the  
**Healthy**  
MEAL METHOD

 eat well, be well

by JULES CLANCY

For my little family xx

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Module 1.

Healthy  
Habits





# Module 1 Video & Audio

Module 1 Video

[CLICK HERE](#) to view the video for Module 1.



# Module 1. Overview

Welcome to the very first module of The Healthy Meal Method! I'm so excited to be starting this journey with you so let's dive in!

In this video I'll give you a quick overview of the program and some tips for the best way to approach the lessons. We'll clear up the confusion about what healthy eating actually is and empower you to make the best choices for you and your body. You'll also discover why healthy habits and not willpower are the secret to success. And how to go about developing habits that are right for you. .

**A birds eye view of overview of the healthy meal method:**

Module 1 all about habits

Module 2 fresh ingredients – the cornerstone of healthy eating

Module 3 setting up and using your pantry

Module 4 simplest method for weekly meal planning

Module 5 avoiding waste. Covers 'Mise en place' or partially prepping ingredients so they're ready to use AND they keep longer.

Module 6 the art of adaptation!

PLUS our extra bonuses



## How to approach the lessons

Each module is released on a Friday. I'd recommend booking in a regular time with yourself to watch the video for the class module such as Friday afternoon or Saturday morning

You'll need at least 20-30 minutes for the weekly module content. I should note that this first module is by far the biggest in the course. We're covering a lot of material here so we can get you results ASAP. The aim is to strike while the iron is hot. So I'd really encourage you to spend some extra time with this module, knowing that this is as big and heavy as it gets in this program.

It's also a good idea to set aside some time to choose at least 2 recipes to try out each week – more if you're up for it. Then make a list of the ingredients you need and plan some time to make these two recipes before the next module is released.

Some weeks there will also be homework for you to complete. If you can complete it straight after watching the module video that's the best option. But don't leave it more than 24 hours so everything will be fresh in your mind.

The only way you're going to get results is to take action on the lessons you're learning. You can watch all the videos you like but until you actually DO something different you're not going to see results. It's that simple.

## How to approach the lessons

And a final note on setting yourself up for success...

Countless studies have shown that we break promises to our self all the time. But we will bend over backwards most of the time to avoid breaking promises we make to others.

So use this basic bit of human nature to your advantage and make a public promise to follow through on all the homework exercises in this program. Choose the forum that's going to be the most motivating for you. It might be telling your partner or best friend. Or maybe announce it on Facebook, in the comments below this video or wherever else you hang out online.





## 3 Principles+

### What is healthy eating?

Nutrition can be a very confusing topic. There's no doubt about that. There are a few reasons for this. And I think it's helpful to understand why it seems so confusing.

First nutrition is really complex especially when we're looking at overall health. There are so many factors beyond just how many calories we eat each day. There's the type of calories, (carbs protein fat), the presence of micro nutrients like vitamins and minerals, the presence of toxins, our stress levels, how much exercise we're getting, how much sleep, the state of the beneficial microbes in our digestive systems. Then add to that the fact that not everyone has exactly the same biochemistry and you can see why it isn't so straight forward.

And on top of all that, big food companies have lots of influence in nutrition policy and recommendations put out by the government. Another factor which muddies the water is that much of the funding for nutrition scientific research comes from big businesses who are looking to make health claims and sell more food products. I know.

It's actually surprising it's not even more messed up!

Before you start getting totally depressed about the state of nutrition science there is a happy ending to this story. So sit tight.

## What is healthy eating?

But first I'd better be clear about my credentials.

I'm not a professional dietitian or nutritionist. However, for my food science degree studied nutrition along with basic biochemistry. So do I understand the fundamentals. I also love reading nutrition blogs and books so I keep up to date with the latest findings.

But as I mentioned earlier, there is an easy way to approach nutrition. It comes down to 3 main principles....

## My 3 Healthy Eating Principles

### 1. Find what works for you.

We're all slightly different in our genetics and our biochemical makeup.

For example, some people are very sensitive to insulin, and others need to produce much more insulin to get the same result. This explains why some people can eat junk all day and remain lean whereas others just think about chocolate cake and they gain weight.

So really the only option is to take responsibility for figuring out what is best for you and your body.

What do I mean by that?

Simple. You just need to try things for yourself and then observe how it makes you feel. Think of it as being a healthy eating 'detective' who is curious about finding out what's best for you.

It might seem a little scary at first. But you'll soon find it's very empowering to take control of your own healthy eating path.

We'll go into this in more detail when we look at developing your healthy habits.



## My 3 Healthy Eating Principles

### 2. Eat real food.

The rate of obesity has increased at the same rate as our consumption of processed factory food. Coincidence? I think not.

So what is real food?

Michael Pollan recommends not eating anything your grandparents wouldn't recognise as food. But that would rule out sushi for me!

I prefer to think of real food as anything that you can buy without an 'ingredients list' on the pack. And if there is an ingredients list, it only contains a few items. And all of those items sound like real ingredients that you'd find in a pantry, not chemicals in a lab.

And of course 'real food' includes anything that comes WITHOUT a package like vegetables, meat and fish.

### 3. Eat lots of vegetables.

Vitamins. Minerals. Fiber. Antioxidants. Plus they're delicious. What's not to love about veg!

Actually eating lots of vegetables has been the one constant healthy eating message. It's about the only thing that everyone agrees on.

You often hear that it's important to eat a wide variety of foods, especially veg. And while I agree, I think it's more beneficial to be eating the same few vegetables rather than none at all.

I also think it's important not to get overwhelmed or put too much pressure on yourself. After all you won't want to give up because it's all too hard.

So rather than try and fit all the variety into every meal, I prefer to keep it simple and focus on including at least one healthy dose of a particular vegetable each meal. I then try and vary the veg I eat over the week so I'm getting my variety on a weekly or fortnightly basis rather than daily.

You've probably also heard that we should be eating 5 serves of veg a day. While I agree with this target, again I wanted to point out that it doesn't mean you need to eat 5 different serves of different veg.

Again, I prefer to keep it simple have 2 serves of salad leaves at lunch and then 3 serves of broccoli with my dinner. And then look to changing the type of veg throughout the week.

I find this way I'm way more likely to be getting more veg without stressing myself out.

That's what works for me. But I should remind you about principle number 1. If it doesn't work for you, that's totally cool. It's up to you to experiment and find an approach that does.



## My 3 Healthy Eating Principles

Really if you follow these three things, find what works for you, eat real food and eat lots of veg, that's all you really need to do.

However there are a few misconceptions about nutrition that are important to address to make sure you don't get misguided.

So I have another 3 follow-up guidelines just to make it super clear...

4. Don't be afraid of fat. Including saturated fat.

In my first job as a young food scientist I worked on developing low fat cereal and snack products. And what did we replace the fat with? Sugar. Lots of different types of sugar. I still feel guilty that I contributed to the whole 'low fat' fiasco.

The thing is fat is an essential part of a healthy way to eat. Not only that, fat is the best fuel for us to burn for energy. I won't go into the details here. All you really need to know is to avoid low fat food products. But if you're eating real food, you're already doing that. Right?

If you're interested in learning more about the benefits of burning fat for energy, see the links to 2 articles from Mark's Daily Apple below:

- [What Does It Mean to Be Fat-Adapted?](#)

- [Why Fat is the Preferred Fuel for Human Metabolism](#)

And before we move away from fat, It also turns out that saturated fat does have a place in healthy eating. It tends to be the most stable fat for cooking and is beneficial for our brains, lungs and immune systems. I'll include a link in the resources if you'd like to read up more about this. [7 Reasons to Eat More Saturated Fat.](#)

### **5. Be wary of sugar, especially fructose.**

So you're probably all over the concept that eating loads of jelly beans isn't good for you. But how about fruit? While fruit does contain vitamins, antioxidants and fiber, it's also laden with fructose, or fruit sugar.

The problem with fructose is that it gets stored directly as fat by our bodies. Not ideal.



## My 3 Healthy Eating Principles

Then to make matters worse, our bodies don't have a system for detecting when we've eaten enough fructose. So there's no 'off' switch. If you're interested in learning more about the evils of sugar and fructose 'Sweet Poison' by David Gillespie is a good read.

And just to be clear, if you are someone who needs something sweet, fresh whole fruit is totally the healthiest option. Of course not all fruit have the same sugar levels. The best choices include berries especially blueberries, apples, pears, peaches, nectarines, plums and cherries.

We're talking fresh whole fruit. Not fruit juice, or any packaged 'fruit' product. And dried fruit isn't ideal because it's easy to eat way more than you would of the same fruit when fresh. But all other sweet things I treat as 'treats' and only indulge once, sometimes twice a week.

And of course because you're eating Real Food you won't fall for the trap of packaged 'sugar-free' products.

### **6. Go easy on grains, especially wheat.**

The main problem I have with grains, even 'whole grains' is they provide loads of carbohydrates without enough beneficial micro nutrients. So I prefer to get my carbs in the form of vegetables and legumes (especially lentils and chickpeas).

Even if you think you don't have a problem with wheat or gluten, you may find your health improves if you experiment with removing wheat from your diet. And it's not just a digestive thing. In the book 'Wheat Belly' William Davis links consumption of modern wheat to all sorts of ills including schizophrenia.

And

I could also add 'watch the carbs' but if you're avoiding sugar and grains you'll mostly be keeping your carbohydrate intake to a moderate level. Unless of course you have a heavy potato addiction...





# Why Habits NOT Willpower

Why you need habits not willpower to eat well and be well.

Have you ever 'resolved' to start eating healthy only to have the wheels fall off after a short time? Well you're definitely not alone.

The good news is it wasn't your fault your resolution didn't stick. Pretty much everyone will struggle to succeed if they're relying on will power.

As Kelly McConigal PhD writes in her book, 'The Willpower Instinct' willpower is something that we only have a finite amount of. So if you've been using your willpower all day to get through your work, your willpower supply is low when it's time for dinner. Which is why it can be so difficult to exert self control at times.

Especially when we're tired.

And what's even worse, studies have shown that willpower is dependent on blood sugar. So when you're hungry, your willpower is at its weakest. Which explains why it can be so difficult to make good food choices when you're starving.

So what's the alternative?

In a word. Habits.

## Why you need habits not willpower to eat well and be well.

One of the biggest differences between healthy active slender people and their overweight counterparts is that healthy people tend to automate their decisions by making healthy habits a part of everyday life. This way eating healthy isn't something they battle with every meal, its on autopilot so healthy choices become effortless.

So the best plan is to save your willpower for changing or creating your healthy habits. And then let your habits put your healthy eating on autopilot





# 6 Steps

## 6 steps to put your healthy eating on autopilot.

Last year I took a fabulous short online course learning how to develop the habit of meditation. It was run by Leo Babauta from Zen Habits – a master at the art of developing new habits. By changing his habits Leo has completely transformed his life. He quit smoking, lost weight, became vegetarian, started running marathons, he got out of debt, and has built an incredibly successful blog that has allowed him to quit a job that he hates. All with a wife and six kids.

He's pretty much turned his whole life upside down. And how did he do it?

One small change at a time.

As Leo says on his blog, "Small steps. That's how you're going to change your life. You'll probably get impatient and want to do more, but trust me: this will work."

## 6 steps to developing healthy eating habits

### **STEP 1. Identify which habits you want to break and which you want to form.**

If you're confident you know what you want to change, or need to change (!) just write a list and move onto step 2.

If you're not so sure, and you're up for it, I recommend giving yourself a little healthy food habit 'audit'. This way we can be sure you're working on the habits that will have the most impact for you.

For two weeks, keep a food and habit diary. It can be a paper notebook or on your phone. I like to use a note in Evernote so then it's in my phone and on my computer too. Just make sure it's easy to enter the data.

Record what you eat and drink, roughly how much and when. It can be helpful to also record how you're feeling each time you eat. Tired, hungry, bored, stressed, happy. There's no need to be completely over the top. Just do what feels most comfortable for you. If you want you can track your exercise as well.

After the two weeks are up, review your notes twice.

The first time look for your strengths. What healthy habits do you already have? Can you build on these? Write a list of your healthy 'strengths'.

Then review the list again to look for the biggest problem areas. Prioritize these problem areas based on which you think will have the biggest impact and which will be the easiest to change.

### **STEP 2. Choose which habit you want to focus on first.**

Look at your two lists and decide which habit you want to go after first. It's up to you, but I suggest starting with building on one of your strength habits first to get some runs on the board. If you're not sure what habits you could develop or change, I've included a list of 'Healthy Food Habit Ideas' on a separate tab to get you started.

I also recommend mapping out the next 6-12 months focusing on one habit each month since it takes at least 21 days to form a new habit. Some habits may take around 60 days though so be prepared to repeat a month if needed.

The secret to making changes in your life is to set small goals and take baby steps.

By setting ourselves up for success, we gain the confidence and the motivation to keep making changes, one after the other. It also helps us persevere and try again when we fail.

Even though you might be tempted to do more, focus on one habit at a time. This is really important. Remember your health is a journey, not a destination so we want to focus on making lasting changes that will stick with you for the long term.



## 6 steps to developing healthy eating habits

### **STEP 3. Develop a plan for developing your new habit / kicking your old habit.**

There are three parts to any habit:

- i. The 'trigger' or 'cue' that starts the process.
- ii. The actions you take
- iii. The reward you get.

In order to change your habit you need to identify the trigger and reward. Then you need to develop a plan so that when you feel the urge or trigger, you do a different set of (healthier) actions to get your reward. It will take some conscious effort or willpower in the beginning but with time you'll reprogram yourself and a new habit will be born.

There's an excellent video by Charles Duhigg sharing how he went about this process to kick a daily cookie habit and lose 12 pounds in the process. I highly recommend [watching this short video](#) to give you a great practical example of how habits work.

### **STEP 4. Write it down and make a public commitment.**

This is about public accountability. I don't know about you but I break promises to myself all the time. But promises to other people – I do everything I can to keep them. So we're aiming to use this natural human instinct to our advantage.

It can be sharing your habit goal with your partner or best friend. Or you can do it online on Facebook or in the comments below this video. Just make sure it's public enough to motivate YOU

### **STEP 5. Start as small as possible.**

I know I've already covered this but it's so important it deserves a step on its own!

The smaller and easier the change, the more likely it is that the habit will stick. Once we've had one small success we can build on that to make the next tiny change. And the next.


### **STEP 6. If you fail, keep trying.**

Making changes in your life can be tough. And there will be setbacks along the way. That's a given no matter how dedicated you are.

The key thing to remember is that you only 'fail' when you give up or quit trying. So the answer is to treat 'failures' as learning experiences and just keep trying!

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." – Aristotle





# Habit Ideas

## Healthy Food Habit Ideas

This is just a list of habits you might want to consider working on. It's by no means exhaustive! If you have another idea for a habit you'd like to change share in the comments below so we can all be inspired!

Cooking dinner at home a certain number of nights per week

Taking your lunch to work

Shopping at your local farmers market

Doing a regular food shop (weekly or whatever works best for you)

Eating breakfast

Mindful Eating – When you start to load up your fork for the next mouthful, check to see if you're already chewing. If there's food already in your mouth, put your fork down and focus on chewing and enjoying your mouthful.  
Eating at a table instead of the TV.

Eating 3 meals instead of grazing.

Chew thoroughly

Eating more home cooked food

## Healthy Food Habit Ideas

Eating healthier restaurant food

Switching to healthy snacks, like nuts

Cutting out snacks

Using all the food you buy (module 5 on waste will help here)

Eating vegetables at every meal

Cutting out sugar

Cutting out processed food

Going gluten-free without relying on 'gluten-free' products.

Not drinking your calories. Sticking to water, tea, herbal tea or coffee.

Using a meal plan (see module 4)

Not using a meal plan (see module 6 and the 'Master Your Meal Plan' program)

Keeping an ongoing shopping list

Replace dessert on week nights with fresh fruit

Replace dessert on week nights with herbal tea

Weigh yourself every day

Regular 'Mise en Place'





# Action

## Your HOMEWORK!

1. Complete Step 1. for developing your habits.
2. Watch the [Charles Duhigg video](#).
3. Choose at least 1 new recipe from the list below to try out this week.



# Resources

## VIDEO

Charles Duhigg's [Cookie Habit](#)

## BLOGS

Mark's Daily Apple

- [What Does It Mean to Be Fat-Adapted?](#)

- [Why Fat is the Preferred Fuel for Human Metabolism](#)

Tim Ferriss: [7 Reasons to Eat More Saturated Fat.](#)

Zen Habits: [The Habit Change Cheat Sheet](#)

## BOOKS

'Sweet Poison' by David Gillespie

'Wheat Belly' by William Davis

'Foodist: Using Real Food and Real Science to Lose Weight Without Dieting' by Darya Pino Rose

'The Power of Habit' by Charles Duhigg

'The Willpower Instinct' Kelly McConigal



tabbouleh *fried* egg

# Tabbouleh Fried Egg



It can be easy to forget about eggs as a dinner food given their association with breakfast. They're one of the cheapest and most complete sources of protein. And they're super quick to cook which makes them ideal for quick healthy dinners too!



1. Heat a small frying pan on a medium high heat.
2. Meanwhile combine lemon juice with 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil. Season.
3. Toss rice and mint into the dressing.
4. Add a generous glug of oil to the hot pan. Crack eggs into the oil.
5. Fry eggs for about 2 minutes or until the whites are no longer 'snotty'. Spooning a little hot oil over the top can help.
6. Serve eggs on a bed of the brown rice salad with yoghurt on top.

## VARIATIONS

**carnivore** - fry some chopped bacon and toss through the tabbouleh. Then fry your eggs in the bacon fat. Yum!

**low GI / slow carb** – replace the rice with cooked quinoa or lentils.

**vegan** – Replace the yoghurt with hummus and replace the fried egg with a generous handful of brazil nuts or almonds.

**dairy-free** – Replace the yoghurt with hummus or a tahini lemon sauce (3 tablespoons each lemon juice, tahini, water).

**different herbs** – use any combo of mint, parsley, basil or coriander (cilantro).



video

# Tabbouleh Fried Egg...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland?** - A little more seasoning should do it. Next time try using better quality eggs – the flavour makes a difference.

**rice too dry** – Commercial cooked rice in pouches can be a little dry – just add a little more lemon juice and olive oil to moisten.

**eggs sticking to the pan** - add more oil – this helps give lovely crispy edges to your fried eggs as well.

**eggs not cooking on top** – this is always the tricky bit of cooking eggs ‘sunny side up’. Spoon a little hot oil over the top with help.

**eggs rubbery** – this means they’re overcooked. For now just be generous with the yoghurt to moisten them. Next time get them off the heat earlier.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Fried eggs are best when hot from the pan. But you could make the salad in advance and refrigerate until you’re ready – the mint will wilt a little but will still be tasty. Will keep for a week or so in the fridge but is better the fresher it is.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

A great one dish meal.



Goats Cheese & basil Omelette

# Goats Cheese & Basil Omelette



It's hard to go past an omelette when you feel like a super quick, healthy meal. The possibilities are endless when it comes to additions and flavours but this goats cheese and basil combo is one of my all time favourites.

Per Person

3 eggs

50g (2oz) goats cheese

5-6 basil leaves

large handful salad leaves to serve, optional

1. Preheat a small frying pan or omelette pan on a medium high heat.
2. Lightly whisk eggs in a bowl. Season.
3. Add a few glugs of oil or butter to the pan. Add eggs and cook for about 30 seconds. If they're sizzling too rapidly, turn the heat down.
4. After 30 seconds gently bring the cooked edges of the egg into the centre and let the raw egg flow out to the edges.
5. Top with goats cheese. When the egg is mostly cooked and set (about 1 minute or a little longer), slide the omelette onto your plate. Sprinkle over basil.
6. Serve with accompaniments on the side.

## VARIATIONS

**different cheese** - finely grated parmesan, cheddar, ricotta, cottage cheese, crumbled feta, blue cheese.

**vegetables / dairy-free** - replace goats cheese with halved cherry tomatoes, sun dried tomatoes, cooked mushrooms, artichoke hearts in oil, finely shaved asparagus, shaved fennel, cooked zucchini or leftover roast potatoes.

**carnivore** - replace cheese with prosciutto, finely sliced salami, diced cooked bacon, or shredded cooked chicken.

**fishy** - replace cheese with smoked salmon, smoked trout, salmon roe, caviar, canned sardines, smoked oysters, cooked crab meat, lobster, canned tuna, canned salmon.

**different herbs** - lemony sorrel, thyme, basil, parsley, mint.

**different accompaniments** - baby spinach, salad leaves, shaved fennel, shaved zucchini, shredded kale, wilted kale, wilted spinach, a glass of wine!

**vegan** - try scrambled tofu instead.

**richer** - use butter instead of the oil and add a few tablespoons of cream or sour cream as you whisk the eggs.



video

# Goats Cheese & Basil Omelette...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**eggs sticking to the base of the pan** – eggs have a tendency to stick. Be generous with the oil or butter and use either a nonstick pan or a well seasoned omelette pan.

**eggs rubbery** – the first sign that eggs are overcooked is the texture goes all rubbery. Next time take the pan off the heat before you think the eggs are cooked AND use a lower heat to begin with.

**eggs watery** – when eggs get overcooked, the protein coagulates and squeezes out any excess moisture which results in water weeping out from your eggs. Not much you can do now, but next time take the pan off the heat before you think the eggs are done. The residual heat will be enough to finish them off.

**too bland** – season with a little more salt & pepper. Also make sure you're using the best quality free range eggs you can afford.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Not great. Best when hot from the pan but you could keep in the fridge if needed. Gently reheat in the oven or in a pan.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Best served HOT straight from the pan with a wicked glass of white wine.

Warm butter bean Salad



# Warm Butter Bean Salad



Canned legumes are one of my favourite ingredients because they're packed with veggie protein AND they're pretty much ready to eat. All you need to do is warm them up and you've got a super satisfying and comforting dinner. These butter beans fried with garlic and rosemary also make a brilliant starter without the salad.

I'm super excited that my local supermarket has started selling washed baby kale leaves! I've used them in the picture and video.

enough for 2

*1 can butter beans (400g / 14oz), drained*

*1 clove garlic, finely sliced*

*1 sprig rosemary, leaves picked*

*1 tablespoon sherry or wine vinegar*

*4 large handfuls washed salad leaves*

1. Heat a little oil in a small pan. Fry beans, garlic and rosemary on a medium high heat, stirring every now and then.

2. Meanwhile combine vinegar with 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil in a large bowl. Season and toss in the leaves to coat.

3. When the beans are browned, scatter over the leaves and sprinkle with sea salt flakes.

## VARIATIONS

**carnivore** – serve layered with finely sliced prosciutto.

**different legumes** – replace the butter beans with other white beans or chickpeas.

**hot!** – Replace the rosemary with a teaspoon of dried chilli or a few finely sliced fresh red chillies.

**more substantial** – serve as a side to grilled lamb cutlets or steak. Or with a soft poached egg on top.



video

# Warm Butter Bean Salad...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland?** Give the sauce a little more seasoning. The beans love salt.

**too oily / too much dressing** – Just transfer the salad to a clean bowl, leaving behind as much of the dressing as possible, then toss in the new bowl to rub some of the dressing off onto the sides. If things are really bad a bit of judicious paper towel blotting will help.

**bitter** - of the garlic gets burnt it will add a bitter flavour – just try and pick out the garlic bits and next time stir more frequently.

**beans sticking to the pan** – more oil should help. It's also important that the beans are well drained before adding to the pan.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep for a week or so in the fridge but is better the fresher it is as the leaves will wilt.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great as a simple supper on its own.



quick pork ragu

# Quick Pork Ragu



If you're not normally a huge sausage fan, I highly recommend seeking out a super good quality butcher who preferably makes their own sausages and trying them out. Trust me there's a whole world of difference between a cheap and nasty banger and one made with love.

enough for 2

3-4 thick pork sausages

1 can tomatoes

2-3 tablespoons butter

4 large handfuls baby spinach leaves

1. Heat a little oil in a large frying pan or skillet on a medium high heat.
2. Remove sausage meat from the casings and crumble into the pan. Discard casings.
3. Cook for 3-5 minutes, stirring to break up the chunks, until the meat is starting to brown.

## variations

**vegan** – replace sausages with 1 drained can of lentils or about 250g (9oz) of cooked red or green lentils and swap the butter for olive oil.

**different sausages** – pork are a firm favourite in our house but feel free to use other sausages such as beef or chicken if you like them.

**herby** – cook a few thyme leaves or rosemary in with the sausages.

**budget** – replace half of the sausages with cooked or canned white beans.

**more substantial** - feel free to serve the ragu with your favourite cooked pasta, preferably something short like rigatoni or penne.

**gluten-free** – use GF sausages or replace with about 400g (14oz) minced (ground) pork or other meat.



video

# Quick Pork Ragu...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland** – Season with salt & pepper. A little tomato paste can help.

**too tomatoey** – I like my ragu quite tomatoey – feel free to use less tomatoes if you prefer a more porky flavour.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Excellent! The ragu will keep in the fridge for a week or so. The baby spinach not so much.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great on its own. You could serve with a little parmesan if you're eating cheese or shave some brazil nuts over with a microplane grater – the nuts look heaps like parmesan and add a lovely subtle nutty richness.



thai inspired *beef* salad

# Thai Inspired Beef Salad



In the Summer this is my favourite type of dinner. Quick, light yet also satisfying with the beef. I've kept things super simple here by using roast beef from the deli but sometimes I cook a steak and use that instead.

enough for 2

3 tablespoons lime juice

3 tablespoons fish sauce

2 lebanese cucumbers

200g (1/2lb) rare roast beef

1 bunch mint, leaves picked

1. Combine the zest of one lime, lime juice, fish sauce and 3 tablespoons peanut oil in a medium sized bowl.
2. Halve cucumbers lengthwise and chop into little half-moons. Add to the dressing.
3. Tear the beef into bite sized pieces and add to the dressing.
4. Add mint leaves and toss gently.

## variations

**vegan / vegetarian** – A thai mushroom salad would be lovely. Replace the beef with finely sliced roast or pan fried field mushrooms. And use soy sauce instead of the fish sauce.

**fish-free** – Replace the fish sauce with soy sauce.

**cucumber-free** – My Irishman is allergic to cucumber so if I was making this salad for him I'd use sliced green capsicum (bell peppers) or a few handfuls of well washed bean sprouts in place of the cucumber.

**steak** – replace roast beef from the deli with 2 small steaks. Just pan fry until cooked to your liking then slice and toss in the dressing.



video

# Thai Inspired Beef Salad...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland** – Season with salt, pepper or more fish sauce.

**too salty** – different brands of fish sauces vary quite a bit in saltiness and flavour strength. Next time use less fish sauce

**no fish sauce?** – Soy sauce will be acceptable but less authentic.

**need a chilli hit?** – Real Thai people wouldn't even think of serving a salad like this without chilli! I ran out of ingredients space with my self-imposed 5 ingredient limit but you could easily toss a couple of finely chopped fresh red chillies in with the dressing.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

OK. Will keep in the fridge for a day or so.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Perfect on its own or as part of a Thai meal.

Spiced Beef *with* Hummus



# Spiced Beef with Hummus



This is one of my all time favourite ways to use minced (ground) beef without any tomato products. It's based on a Lebanese dish and is great with lamb as well. Baharat is a wonderful Lebanese spice blend containing 7 different spices. It adds a gorgeous fragrance but if you can't find it, see below for an easy alternative home made spice blend.

enough for 2-3

2 onions, peeled & diced

500g (1lb) minced (ground) beef

2 teaspoons baharat

handful pine nuts

8-10 large tablespoons hummus

1. Heat a generous glug of oil in a large frying pan. Cook onion over a medium heat for about 5 minutes, until starting to soften but not brown.
2. Add beef and increase the heat to high. Cook, stirring often until the beef is well browned all over.
3. Add the baharat and stir fry for another minute or so. Taste season.
4. Serve spiced beef on a bed of hummus with pine nuts sprinkled over. Good with a green salad.

## variations

**can't find baharat?** – No problem. Just use 1/2 teaspoon each of ground coriander, cumin, paprika and cinnamon.

**even more minimalist baharat substitute** – just use ground cumin.

**vegetarian / vegan** – replace the beef with lentils that have been simmered in water until tender (anywhere from 15-30 minutes) and drained. Drizzle in a little extra virgin olive oil to make up for the lentils being low in fat.

**budget** – skip the pine nuts or use toasted bread crumbs instead. You might like to add in some lentils as well to make the beef go further.

**home made hummus** – just whizz together a can of chickpeas with 1-2 cloves garlic and 3 tablespoons each lemon juice, tahini and the canning liquid.

**sesame free** – for a tahini / sesame free version, skip the hummus and serve on a bed of mashed white beans or chickpeas with lemon juice and a little olive oil.



video

# Spiced Beef with Hummus...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**can't find baharat?** – make your own by combining equal parts of ground cumin, paprika and cinnamon. OR simply replace with ground cumin on its own.

**beef burning** – the heat is probably too high, or you haven't been stirring often enough. Reduce the heat quickly and give it a good vigorous stir. A little more oil may help.

**too dry** – if your beef is low in fat, it can be quite dry. Normally the hummus balances it out, but if you're worried you could drizzle over some extra virgin olive oil.

**too spicy?** – the baharat can be intense. If you're tasting on its own, remember it will be diluted when you eat the finished meal with the hummus and salad

**too bland?** don't forget to season. Salt, pepper and lemon juice are all your friends here.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep in the fridge for a week or so.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great as a meal on it's own. Or you could serve a little Lebanese bread or pita bread on the side to help scoop everything up..



Quick Steak & *rocket* Salad

# Quick Steak & Rocket Salad



Inspired by a lunch I had at Matricinella on a recent trip to [Rome](#). I love a warm salad for a quick dinner. There's something about having part of the meal served warm that makes it feel more substantial and 'dinner-like'. There are 2 benefits to chopping the steak into slivers. First it cooks in a flash and second it tenderises the meat. Win win! You can easily increase this recipe. If cooking for more than 2 people I'd cook the beef in batches to make sure it browns properly and doesn't get crowded in the pan.

enough for 1

1 steak about 200g (7oz)

1 tablespoon lemon juice

2 handfuls rocket (arugula), washed & dried  
parmesan shavings, to serve

1. Heat your frying pan on a very high heat. Trim any fat from the steak and slice into super fine strips. Drizzle with a little olive oil and season.
2. Cook beef in the hot pan for about 1 minute. Then stir and keep cooking till browned on all sides.
3. Meanwhile, combine lemon juice and 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil in a bowl.
4. When the steak is cooked transfer to the lemon dressing.
5. Toss in rocket leaves. Serve with parmesan shaved over.

## VARIATIONS

**vegetarian** – skip the parmesan and replace the steak with halloumi sliced into batons.

**vegan** – replace the steak with sliced field or portabello mushrooms. You'll need 1-2 per person and they'll take more like 7-8 minutes to cook. Replace the parmesan with either chunks of avocado or some slivered almonds.

**chicken** – replace steak with a chicken breast or thigh fillets. Make sure the chicken is cooked through before tossing in the dressing.

**different leaves** – I love the bitterness of rocket but you could use any salad leaves. A little radicchio is lovely here in the Autumn or Winter.

**dairy-free** – replace the parmesan with a handful or toasted breadcrumbs, some halved cherry tomatoes or just skip it..



video

# Quick Steak & Rocket Salad...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland?** Give it more salt and pepper. Extra parmesan can help too

**too oily / too much dressing** – Just transfer the salad to a clean bowl, leaving behind as much of the dressing as possible, then toss in the new bowl to rub some of the dressing off onto the sides. If things are really bad a bit of judicious paper towel blotting will help.

**steak tough / chewy** – there are three potential problems here. IT could be the quality of the steak in which case I'd try a different butcher or a different more tender cut like rib eye (scotch fillet). The other thing to watch out for are overcooking the steak and making sure it's sliced really finely.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Better fresh it is as the leaves will wilt. Still edible after a week in the fridge though.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great as a simple supper on its own.



Beef & *broccoli* Stir Fry

# Beef & Broccoli Stir Fry



This is one of my all time favourite week night dinners.

enough for 3

500g (1lb) ground (minced) beef

2 cloves garlic, finely sliced

2 heads broccoli

4 tablespoons oyster sauce

1 bunch coriander (cilantro), chopped

1. Preheat a large wok or frying pan on a very high heat.
2. Add a few tablespoons peanut or other neutral flavoured oil and stir fry the beef.
3. While the beef is browning, finely slice the broccoli stems and chop the head into bite sized pieces. Add garlic to the beef and continue to cook until well browned.
4. Add broccoli and a few tablespoons water and cover the pan.
5. Continue to cook on a high heat with the lid on, stirring every 2 minutes until the broccoli is bright green and tender but still a tiny bit crunchy. If it starts to burn, add a little more water.
6. Stir in oyster sauce. Taste and season and serve with chopped coriander on top.

## VARIATIONS

**vegetarian / vegan** – replace the ground beef with crumbled firm tofu or 2 drained cans of lentils. It won't brown up as much as the beef but will still be lovely. And make sure you use a 'vegetarian' oyster sauce – they are available.

**no oyster sauce?** - Replace with hoisin sauce or even sweet soy sauce. Although to be honest – oyster sauce has the best flavour here – even the vegetarian oyster sauces taste delicious.

**chilli beef** - add in some fresh or dried chilli.

**ginger** - My irishman likes to add a few tablespoons of finely shredded fresh ginger in with the garlic.

**coriander-free** - Some people aren't keen on coriander (cilantro). If you're not sure, serve it on the side so everyone can add their own. Otherwise replace the coriander with fresh mint or parsley leaves.

**nutty** – a handful of roasted cashews adds a different dimension and some crunch. Especially good in the lentil vegetarian option.



video

# Beef & Broccoli Stir Fry..

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**burning on the bottom** – it can be a bit tricky getting the broccoli to cook in such a dry environment. Remember to add a little water and cover the pan tightly as it cooks so the broccoli steams from the top.

**too salty** – oyster sauces vary in their saltiness levels. I find it rare that I need to add extra salt. For now, a little sugar can help tone down the saltiness but next time try a different brand of oyster sauce.

**too bland?** add in a little more salt and pepper. A dash of lime juice or lemon juice may also bring the flavours to life.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep in the fridge for a week or so. Reheats well and is also delicious at room temperature.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great on its own. With the browned meat and veg it feels like a complete meal in a bowl.

You could serve with steamed rice or cauliflower rice if you prefer.

And it might also be nice to serve it with a curry and another stir fry as part of an Asian-ish banquet.



Broccoli & *feta* Salad

# Broccoli & Feta Salad



Raw broccoli salads are very popular around here. At least once a week or so, some sort of raw broccoli dish turns up for lunch. If you do prefer your broccoli cooked, however, this salad is just as delicious with steamed broccoli.

enough for 2

1 tablespoon seeded mustard

1 tablespoon rice wine vinegar

1 head broccoli

100g (3.5oz) feta

handful pine nuts

1. Combine mustard, vinegar and 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil in a medium bowl. Taste. Season.
2. Finely slice the broccoli stems and chop the florettes into tiny bight sized trees. Toss in the dressing.
3. Crumble feta and sprinkle over the salad with the pinenuts.

## VARIATIONS

**carnivore** – replace the feta with a few handfuls of fried crispy bacon.

**vegan** – replace the feta with an avocado, flesh scooped into chunks.

**nut-free** – replace the pine nuts with sesame seeds or finely diced red capsicum (bell pepper) or red onion.

**herby** – serve sprinkled with fresh herbs such as coriander (cilantro), parsley, mint or basil.

**more substantial** – increase the amount of feta and/or toss in a drained can of chickpeas or white beans.



video

# Broccoli & Feta Salad...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too dry** – splash in some more oil and vinegar.

**can't find rice wine vinegar?** – replace with lemon juice, white wine vinegar or sherry vinegar.

**too bland** – season with a little more salt.

**difficult to eat** – it's important to chop the broccoli finely as large chunks of broccoli can be tough on the jaws.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep in the fridge for a week or so. Actually one of those rare salads that will keep pretty well for a few days. So a good make-ahead salad.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great as a super quick lunch or dinner on its own. Also great for picnics. Also works as a side salad to roast or BBQ chicken or pork..



The Magic *Sausage* Supper

# The Magic Sausage Supper



So you're probably wondering where the 'magic' comes from. It's all about how this dish turns some pretty common ingredients into something truly delicious. All it takes is a little time in the oven. This is one of those dishes that's best served at the table in the roasting pan so everyone can help themselves and pick at the crispy bits on the bottom of the pan.

enough for 2-3

*1/2 butternut pumpkin (squash)*

*2 medium onions, quartered lengthwise*

*1/2 teaspoon dried chilli flakes*

*4 thick sausages*

*1 small bunch flat leaf parsley, leaves picked*

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F).
2. Halve pumpkin crosswise then chop into wedges. Place pumpkin, onion, chilli and sausages in a roasting dish. Drizzle generously with olive oil.
3. Roast for about an hour, stirring at the half way mark. It's ready when everything is golden and tender.
4. Serve with parsley leaves sprinkled over the top.

## VARIATIONS

**different veg** – feel free to play around. Parsnips and sweet potato are lovely. Unpeeled cloves of garlic are also great.

**no sausages?** – use chicken drumsticks or thighs instead.

**spanish** – use fresh chorizo as your sausage and toss in a can of drained chickpeas instead of the pumpkin.

**vegan** – replace sausages with field mushrooms.

**vegetarian** - skip the sausages and serve the roast veg with a poached or fried egg on top.



video

# The Magic Sausage Supper..

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**burning** – the heat is probably too high, or you haven't been stirring often enough. If things aren't cooked through yet, cover with foil for the remainder of the cooking time.

**too dry** – Drizzle over some extra virgin olive oil. Next time consider cooking less.

**too bland?** don't forget to season. Salt, pepper and lemon juice are all your friends here.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep in the fridge for a week or so.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great as a meal on it's own. Or you could serve a green salad on the side.

Module 2.

Fresh  
Ingredients





# Module 2 Video & Audio

## Module 2 Video

[CLICK HERE](#) to view the video for Module 2.

NOTE: This video is quite large so may take a little while to load.



# Your Genetics

## Module 2. Maximizing the Life of Fresh Ingredients

Eating real, fresh food is the cornerstone to healthy eating. But fresh ingredients can be expensive so it's important to make sure they last as long as possible. In module 2 we'll go much deeper into all aspects of fresh produce including seasonality and optimum storage techniques.

But first I thought I'd followup our first module with another reason to get your healthy habits in order...

Your genetics. A good news story.

Think your genes are something you're born with? Something you can't change?

I used to think the same.

But [a recent study](#) has shown that changes in our lifestyles such as our diet, our exercise levels and stress levels actually changes which genes are expressed in our bodies.

Amazing stuff.

## Module 2. Maximizing the Life of Fresh Ingredients

In the study, 30 men with low level prostate cancer were tracked over 3 months where they changed their diets, exercised for 1/2 hour every day and engaged in stress management practices such as meditation.

And while the men all improved their health as expected with lower blood pressure and weight loss, the surprising thing was they also changed the expression of around 500 genes. Genes related to disease prevention were turned on and genes known to be linked to disease were turned off.

So next time you're feeling a bit hopeless with your habits and feel like giving up, remember this study.

Any positive changes you make to your lifestyle aren't only going to impact your external health, it's making a difference at the genetic level!





# Best Practice

## Best Practice Storage Techniques to Maximize the Life of Fresh Produce

Before we get into these, you may recognize some of these recommendations from the free video training series. So if it's doubling up for you, I'm sorry, but this stuff is super important so I wanted to be certain no one would miss out!

### 1. Select the best storage temperature

Just like the way some people love the heat and others, like my sister Batgirl, are chasing an eternal winter going from ski season to ski season, different vegetables have different preferences for climate. Some things like avocado, tomato and banana are actually sensitive to the cold and keeping them in the fridge causes browning known as 'chilling injury'.

I used to give my students a pdf that lists a whole variety of vegetables and their optimum storage temperatures. But I've since realised it doesn't need to be that complicated. Basically I now go with the rule of thumb that

'if in doubt, keep them in the fridge'.

The reason for this is that most chemical reactions slow down at cooler temperatures. Same with micro-organism growth.

So in general cooler = longer shelf life.

## Best Practice Storage Techniques to Maximize the Life of Fresh Produce

There are, of course, exceptions. Here are the produce I do store at room temperature: Everything else pretty much goes into the fridge.

:: potatoes – in a hessian sack – allows them to breathe & protects from light

:: whole avocado (sensitive to chilling injury) once cut, though I tend to keep in the fridge.

:: garlic

:: onions – in a hessian sack – allows them to breathe & protects from light

:: tomatoes (sensitive to chilling injury) refrigeration changes their texture and dulls their flavour

:: bananas (sensitive to chilling injury)

:: lemons – I love having a big bowl of lemons on the dining room table. They're fine in the fridge too.

:: eggs. Eggs will last for longer in the fridge but I like to have them at room temperature so they cook more quickly. If you don't eat eggs on a regular basis best to keep them in the fridge.

:: anything that is under ripe.

And I should mention that fresh fish are super sensitive to temperature. Even more so than meat or poultry. This is because when the fish are alive swimming in the water, their body temperature is much lower than say cows roaming around a field. That's why fish shops keep their produce on ice. When you buy fish or seafood, ask the fishmonger to wrap up a bag of ice with them and then keep the fish wrapped with the ice in your fridge until you're ready to cook.

### 2. Invest in a good fridge.

When my brother moved to Darwin last year he gave me his big new fridge. I was really surprised how much longer most produce seemed to last. So if you suspect your fridge isn't doing its job, it might be worth while putting a new one on your wish list and investing when you can.

Of course if that isn't possible, there is something you can do now. Just have a look at your fridge settings. Basically you want the fridge section as cool as possible without it freezing your veg. So try tweaking the settings until you get to that sweet spot.

### 3. Minimize dehydration

After temperature, one of the biggest contributors to aging in fresh produce from vegetables to meat to cheese is loss of moisture.

The refrigeration process removes moisture from the air inside your fridge, making it particularly drying. Because veg and fruit tend to have high water contents, they are very sensitive to drying. You've probably noticed yourself, if you leave a lettuce in the fridge uncovered, it will wilt pretty quickly.



## **Best Practice Storage Techniques to Maximize the Life of Fresh Produce**

The solution is to keep your veg wrapped in plastic bags, like this. You can buy bags specifically designed for storing veg but I haven't bothered trying them. I just save and reuse the bags I buy my veg in. And as extra protection I keep as many veg as possible in the crisper section with it set on the 'veg' setting. Its a good idea to keep your other fresh produce like meat, fish and poultry well covered either in containers or the bags they came in.

### **4. Avoid condensation & sweating**

Of course too much moisture can also be a bad thing and can encourage produce to go slimy. Paper towel can be useful to absorb excess moisture without allowing things to get too dry.

If I've purchased loose salad leaves, or picked excess from the garden, I wash them and spin dry in a salad spinner and then wrap them in paper towel and store in a plastic bag with the air removed as much as possible. This makes a huge difference to their shelf life.

I don't do this with bags of salad from the supermarket because they are usually packed with nitrogen gas which removes oxygen needed for spoilage organisms to grow and extends the shelf life that way... Its also the main reason these leaves go bad so quickly when you open the pack.

Mushrooms are probably the most sensitive to sweating. Best to store them in a brown paper bag in the fridge. If you do have to buy them from the supermarket in a plastic tray, take them out and free them when you get home.

For cheese, I wrap it in baking (parchment) paper and store it in a container like this (show image or hold up container). So I avoid sweating AND dehydration.

### **5. Protect from exposure to light**

Sunlight can promote sprouting in things like potatoes and garlic. It can also destroy light sensitive vitamins, like Vitamin E. So, it's best to store them in the dark. I keep my spuds in hessian sacks in the pantry. I've had my garlic hanging on a plait because it looked so pretty, but come to think of it my garlic started sprouting much earlier than I'd expect so I should be following my own advice!

### **6. Minimize cutting or bruising**

Cuts and bruises damage the cell walls of fruit and veg and open them up to spoilage by microbes. Exposed surfaces also increase the risk of drying out or oxidation from exposure to air. This is why a whole cabbage or cauliflower will keep for much longer than a cut piece. The same holds true of meat, fish and even cheese. So a whole chicken will keep for longer than chicken mince (ground chicken). It's best to leave trimming and chopping until the last minute if you can.



## Best Practice Storage Techniques to Maximize the Life of Fresh Produce

And its also important to remember that once you have one rotten piece of veg, it passes on the decay to it's mates. So if you do notice any damaged vegetables, best to get rid of them ASAP.

### 7. Be aware of ethylene gas

Different fruit and veg are either sensitive to ethylene or ethylene producers. Rather than trying to remember which is which, the easiest thing to do is to keep everything in separate bags in the fridge.

A special case to note is Bananas which produce heaps of ethylene gas when they are ripening. This gas stimulates ripening in anything they snuggle up to. So if you want your avocado to ripen more quickly, put it in a paper bag with a banana. But if you don't want it to over ripen keep them in separate spaces.

### 8. Select the freshest produce

One of the biggest factors that determines how long your produce will keep is how old they are when you take them home. If you find yourself often throwing out 'veg gone bad' it might be time to change where you shop.


Sometimes it's worth paying a little more for super fresh veg from the markets if it means they'll last longer than tired old supermarket produce.

### 9. Consider home preservation methods

There are some ingredients I know aren't going to keep for long in their fresh state. Fresh basil comes to mind. So if I'm not going to be using it within 48 hours, I either make pesto or a basil oil which will keep happily for a couple of weeks.

Of course there are loads of ways you can use different home preservation to minimize waste. And they aren't necessarily time consuming or difficult. See the next tab for the preservation techniques I use on a regular basis.





# 6 Quick Easy Ways

## 6 quick and easy ways to 'preserve' food at home

### i. Freezing

The home freezer is a pretty amazing invention. It gives us access to a really effective food preservation technique right in our kitchens. Freezing is great for things like meat, bread, cooked food like soups and stews, some vegetables like peas and spinach, pastry, fruit like berries, bananas.

The benefits of freezing is that it usually doesn't change the flavour of the food. The downside is that it can impair texture, especially in higher moisture foods.

For more on freezing:

:: [7 golden rules of freezing food](#)

:: [8 time-saving ideas using your freezer](#)

### ii. Chilling

It doesn't get much quicker than opening the fridge and popping something in. But in effect when we're using the fridge we are doing a little bit of home 'preservation'. That meat or cheese would certainly not last as long if you just left it out on the kitchen bench.

## 6 quick and easy ways to 'preserve' food at home

### iii. Heating

When it comes to destroying two of the biggest causes of food spoilage: microbes and enzymes, high temperatures are the most effective. This is why cooked produce will keep for much longer than fresh. We'll go into examples of this in module 5, avoiding waste when we cover 'mise en place'.

### iv. Reducing moisture

By either adding salt or sugar, we can reduce the moisture content of foods and decrease potential microbial growth. I tend not to use these at home, apart from making the odd batch of 'gravalax' or preserved salmon every now and then. But it is a technique to keep in mind.

Drying in the sun or a low temperature oven. Or a 'dehydrator' machine are other ways of reducing moisture. Again, I'm less likely to use any of these apart from the odd batch of oven dried tomatoes. But it is another home preservation technique we can use.

### v. Reducing exposure to air

Exposure to air can increase browning through oxidation. If the air is dry, like in the fridge, it can dehydrate food and cause wilting. 2 good reasons to keep food covered. Keeping fruit and veg whole, rather than chopping is the easiest way to reduce air exposure. But covering cut surfaces with plastic wrap is the next best thing. For liquids or sauces like pesto, popping them in a jar and covering with a layer of oil to protect from air is another good trick.

### vi. Adding acid

Reducing the pH of food, or making it more acidic makes it tough for microbes to grow and for enzymes so it can be a win-win. Of course the acid will dramatically change the flavour and sometimes the texture of foods.

The most common example is pickling vegetables. Again, not a technique I personally use on a regular basis but a good one to be mindful of. A piece of fish given a squeeze of lemon, will last for longer than the same fish left untreated.





# Biggest Game Changer

## The Biggest Game Changer

The trick is to pay attention to when food is in danger of going bad, and taking some action to prevent that actually happening. Remember you have the power to stop spoilage!

My first tip is when I bring home my new veg, I quickly gather up all the old veg and 'rotate' them into the smaller chiller drawer in my fridge. I then know to look there first for things that are going to need eating up.

**My biggest recommendation for this module is that you develop the habit of having a good look in the fridge every day or so, just to keep in mind how everything is progressing.**

For me 'out of sight is out of mind', so I'm always looking in my fridge to keep on top of it.

If you only remember one thing from this module, regular fridge inspections are the biggest game changer for avoiding waste!

A little extra 'freezer inspection' can be helpful as well.



# Seasonality

## The truth about seasonality & vegetables

There's been a lot of talk about food and seasonality over the last decade or so. Maybe too much talk.

While I agree that growing your own veg and eating with the seasons is an admirable goal, and one I'd like to achieve.

I also recognise that it isn't practical, or even desirable for everyone to eat that way. We just don't have enough space in the world.

seasonality can be a personal preference thing

I've been reading Nigel Slater's fabulous book *The Kitchen Diaries* and in the introduction, he talks a lot about seasonality. There's his own kitchen garden, his organic CSA veggie box AND the local farmers markets.

The man isn't a supermarket fan by any stretch of the imagination.

He talks about seasonality not just in terms of Summer, Autumn, Winter and Spring. To Mr Slater, what we should be eating not only varies by the month, it varies with in months as well. Wow. That really made me think.

And then the man went and used fresh tomatoes in the middle of Winter. Not once, but multiple times.

## The truth about seasonality & vegetables

What the?

Then it dawned on me. He doesn't have 'my rules' when it comes to seasonality. Like my 'rule' that fresh tomatoes are a Summer-time only. He has his own. And who knows, maybe he has access to fabulous tomatoes in Winter grown who knows where.

So rather than preach at you about the seasons, I thought I'd share my personal rules about seasonality. Just to give you a starting place for developing your own.

After-all, it makes sense that these things will vary depending on where you live AND where you shop.  
my thoughts about seasonality

### **1. Some vegetables should really only be eaten at certain times of the year.**

And others aren't so sensitive. For example I can buy pretty decent broccoli any time of the year, but asparagus are something I think are only worth bothering with in the Spring. To help you with this concept I've created a list of seasonal and not-so-season-sensitive veg. Or what I call my 'year-round' veg. I'll take you through these in a moment.

### **2. Just because something is on 'special' doesn't mean it's in season where you live.**

One of the things that makes it difficult to keep track of seasonality is the global nature of food commerce these days. I've noticed that there are two times of the year when cherries are on special. Once during the Australian Summer, when it's actually cherry season here. And secondly when it's Summer and cherry season in the Northern Hemisphere.

### **3. Even if you can buy something out of season, it's nice to impose your own limits.**

I love the concept of seasonality. Limiting availability of different foods to certain times of the year makes life (and meal planning) a bit more interesting. Even though I can sometimes buy relatively decent fresh tomatoes outside of Summer, I tend to choose canned tomatoes or tomato paste. And save lovely fragrant fresh tomatoes for tomato salads only in the height of Summer.



## The truth about seasonality & vegetables

### my seasonal vegetables

#### summer

tomato, bell peppers [capsicum], peas [fresh] including snow peas & sugar snap peas, beans, summer squash, eggplant [aubergine], zucchini flowers, sweetcorn

#### autumn (fall)

pumpkin [squash], wild mushrooms

#### winter

brussels sprouts, cabbage [although I do buy it more frequently than just winter], parsnip, turnip, sweeds [rutabagas], radicchio, celeriac [celery root], horseradish, jerusalem artichoke, kohlrabi

#### spring

artichoke, asparagus, broad beans

## my 'year round' vegetables

The brackets denote when the traditional 'season' is for these veg.

avocado, broccoli [autumn / winter], broccolini [autumn / winter], bok choy & other asian greens, belgian endive [witlof], beets [autumn / winter], cauliflower [autumn / winter], carrot [autumn / winter], collard greens [autumn / winter], cucumber [spring/summer], celery, garlic [summer], fennel [autumn / winter], leeks [spring/summer], lettuce [spring/summer], mushrooms [autumn], onion [autumn / winter], peas [frozen], potato [autumn / winter], radish [summer], salad greens, swiss chard or silverbeet [autumn / winter], sweet potato [autumn / winter], spinach [autumn / winter], zucchini or courgettes [summer]





# Veg Life Expectancy

## A hierarchy of fresh produce life expectancy and how to use this to your advantage

The thing is, not all veg and fresh produce are created equal when it comes to how long they generally last.

Just like people...

Some veg fall in the 'live fast, die young' category, others will have the average life expectancy of 1-2 weeks, and others are more happy hanging out with the octogenarian crowd. We'll go into examples of these three categories in a moment. But first, let's talk about how you can use this 'hierarchy' of fresh produce life expectancy to your advantage...

When you're shopping for meat and veg, the type of fresh produce you choose can make a massive difference to how often you'll have to throw things out. If you only buy 'short life' produce, you're making it really difficult for yourself to use everything before it goes bad.

The trick is to choose a mixture of produce so you have some that need eating 'now' and others that are fine if you don't eat them this week, or even the week after.

When I first figured this out, there was a dramatic reduction in the amount of food I wasted. It's one of those simple ideas that makes a really big difference!

## **A hierarchy of fresh produce life expectancy and how to use this to your advantage**

So here are lists of my 'james dean' (less than 1 week), average (1-2 weeks) and long life (2 weeks or more) produce. And a reminder... these will be included in the ebook at the end of the class so you don't need to take notes if you don't want to.

### **the 'james dean' produce (less than 1 week)**

These are the things I try to eat up as soon as I can. I put them on the priority eating list, if you will. Some will be OK only for a few days, others are fine for 4-5 days.

#### **VEGETABLES**

coriander (cilantro), basil, mint, lettuce, loose salad leaves, avocado, tomatoes, spinach, baby spinach, chard (silverbeet), corn (more for loss of flavour – will still be edible for a week or so), peas (more for loss of flavour – will still be edible for a week or so), broad beans (more for loss of flavour – will still be edible for a week or so), asparagus, mushrooms

#### **PROTEIN**

shellfish, fresh fish, all fresh poultry, fresh meat not packed in cryovac, soft cheeses not packed in cryovac

### **average life expectancy veg (1 to 2 weeks)**

These veg will hang around in the fridge for at least a week without any apparent ill effects. Sometimes you'll even get more than 2 weeks out of them.

#### **VEGETABLES**

flat leaf parsley, woody herbs (rosemary, thyme, oregano), broccoli, broccolini, snow peas, sugar snap peas, fresh beans, bok choy, other asian greens, capsicum (bell peppers), eggplant (aubergine), zucchini, summer squash, chillies, brussels sprouts, kale, collard greens

#### **PROTEIN**

smoked fish (salmon / trout), eggs (room temp), cryovaccated fresh meat, cryovaccated fresh chorizo & bacon, cooked meats



## the long livers (more than 2 weeks)

I've often kept the produce in this group for longer than a month, sometimes months. Of course if stored incorrectly, they are still perishable so make sure you show them a little care and you'll be well rewarded.

### **VEGETABLES**

cabbage, cauliflower, celery, carrots, beets (although the leaves will wilt), potatoes, parsnip, celeriac (celery root), kohlrabi, sweet potato, onion, green onions (scallions), garlic, ginger, pumpkin (winter squash), swedes & rutabagas.

### **PROTEIN**

halloumi, packaged soft cheeses, hard cheeses, packaged smoked fish, eggs (in the fridge), cured meats, dried chorizo, packaged tofu.





# Your Actions

## Your Actions

Remember that insight without action is worthless. If you want to see results you must take action!

1. Complete Step 2. for developing your habits from Module 1. (ie. Choose which habit you want to focus on first.)
2. Choose at least 1 new recipe from the list below to try out this week.



# Resources

## Resources

### ARTICLES

[Healthy lifestyle triggers genetic changes: study](#)

[7 golden rules of freezing food](#)

[8 time-saving ideas using your freezer](#)

### BOOKS

Anything by Nigel Slater but especially Tender Volume 1. and The Kitchen Diaries (I and II).



Crunchy Bok Choy & avocado Salad

# Crunchy Bok Choy & Avocado Salad



Bok choy used to be one of those veg I'd buy because it looked so fresh and lovely and then I would struggle to figure out what to do with it apart from adding to a stir fry. Then I had the brainwave to chop it up and use it as a salad green. And I haven't looked back! Most weeks we will have a raw bok choy salad for lunch.

enough for 2

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

1 tablespoon lemon juice

1 bunch bok choy, washed

1 avocado

2 handfuls toasted almonds

1. Combine mustard, lemon juice, 2 tablespoons olive oil and some salt and pepper in a medium sized bowl.
2. Slice bok choy into bite sized pieces and toss in the dressing.
3. Cut avocado in half lengthwise. Then use a spoon to scoop out the flesh into chunks. Add to the salad.
4. Divide between 2 bowls and top with almonds.

## VARIATIONS

**carnivore** – fry some chopped bacon until crispy and toss in at the end. Shredded cooked chicken is also good here,

**nut-free** – replace the almonds with a few tablespoons of finely diced raw red onion or red capsicum (bell pepper).

**different veg** – play around with other Asian greens. Kale is also good here but be sure to slice it super finely. Raw broccoli or asparagus are also favourites.



video

# Crunchy Bok Choy & Avocado Salad...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**bland?** Give the salad more seasoning. Serve with an extra dash of mustard to spice things up.

**watery** – it's super important to have the bok choy as dry as possible before dressing. Either use a salad spinner or paper towel. Adding extra mustard can help add flavour and punch.

**gritty-** bok choy often comes with dirt hidden in the base, make sure you wash it thoroughly before chopping. And be vigilant with quality control when you're chopping.

**dressing too sharp** – sharpness will vary with your vinegar and mustard so don't be afraid to balance it out with a little more olive oil.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep for a week or so in the fridge.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great as a super fresh lunch on its own. Will survive in a lunchbox, provided you can keep it in a fridge.



Steamed Fish with Soy & Ginger

# Steamed Fish with Soy & Ginger



It doesn't get much healthier than steamed fish. I love the clean simple flavours of this dish.

enough for 2

*golf ball sized hunk of ginger*

*2 white fish fillets*

*4 tablespoons soy sauce*

*2 small red chillies, finely sliced*

*lime halves, to serve*

*coriander (cilantro) leaves, to serve*

1. Heat about 2cm (1in) water in a large pot. Finely slice ginger. Chop some into matchsticks so you have about 1 tablespoon of matchsticks. Leave the remainder as slices.
2. Place the ginger slices (save the matchsticks for later) in the base of a steamer or strainer. Place fish on top of ginger. Making sure the 2 fish fillets aren't touching.
3. Pop the steamer / strainer on top of the boiling water. Cover with a lid and steam for 4-6 minutes or until the fish is cooked and flakes when touched with your finger.
4. Meanwhile, combine soy, chilli and ginger matchsticks in a small bowl.
5. When the fish is cooked transfer to 2 plates and pour over the soy & ginger dressing. Serve with lime and coriander.

## VARIATIONS

**soy-free** – replace the soy sauce with 2 tablespoons each fish sauce and lime juice.

**no steamer?** – just pan fry the fish in a little oil and serve with the dressing.

**steamed chicken** – replace the fish fillets with chicken breasts or thigh fillets. Best to chop the chicken breasts in half lengthwise so they cook more quickly. Will take more in the 10-15 minute time frame. Make sure the chicken is totally cooked through.

**vegetarian / vegan** – try steamed eggplant. Replace the fish with a medium eggplant sliced crosswise into rounds about 1cm (1/2in) thick until the eggplant is super soft and silky. Steamed tofu will also work.



video

# Steamed Fish with Soy & Ginger...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too salty** – if the soy is too intense, water it down with a splash of water or a little lime juice.

**fish tough / rubbery / mushy** – all signs of overcooked fish. Next time check earlier in the steaming process.

**fish not cooking on the bottom** – the ginger can block the steam to the fish so you might like to move the ginger out of the way or turn the fish over about half way.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep in the fridge for a few days. Be careful when reheating not to overcook the fish.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Lovely as a super healthy meal with steamed Asian greens, steamed rice, or cauliflower 'rice'. Or serve as part of a Thai banquet.

Roast Baby Veg with chunky Cashew Pesto



# Roast Baby Veg with Chunky Cashew Pesto



This is just the thing when you feel like something virtuous after a weekend of over-indulging. And the good news is you can make both the pesto and the veg ahead of time if you like.

Enough for 2 as a main or 4 as a side:

*4 handfuls baby veg for roasting  
(see right for ideas)*

*for the pesto:*

*2 bunches green herbs*

*1 clove garlic*

*1 handful parmesan, finely grated*

*3 handfuls cashews*

1. Preheat oven to 200C (400F). Wash and trim veg, cutting them into roughly the same size.

2. Place veg in a roasting tray. Drizzle with a little oil and salt and pepper. Bake for 30-45 minutes or until veg are browned & tender.

3. Meanwhile whizz all the pesto ingredients except the cashews in a food processor until finely chopped. Add enough oil to make a chunky paste, about 1/3 cup. Stir in cashews.

4. Serve veg with pesto on the side.

## VARIATIONS

**types of veg** – I used 3 small red onions, 6 small parsnips, 1 small bunch baby carrots, and 1 small bunch baby beets. Other veg possibilities include potatoes, sweet potato, pumpkin, winter squash, butternut squash, spring onions, asparagus, zucchini, red capsicum (bell peppers).

**herbs** – I used a bunch of basil and the leafy tops from my baby carrots. Parsley or coriander (cilantro) would also be great.

**grown-up veg** – baby veg are lovely here but feel free to use their grown up cousins if you prefer.

**vegan** – replace the parmesan with some different nuts such as almonds or brazil nuts. Or just increase the cashews.

**nut-free** – replace the cashews with extra parmesan. You might like to serve with a poached or fried egg or some goats cheese to make it more substantial without the cashews.

**more substantial** – toss in a drained can of chickpeas for the last 10 minutes.

**carnivore** – brown some sliced chorizo in the pan before heating the veg. Or serve as a side to BBQ or roast chicken.



video

# Roast Baby Veg with Chunky Cashew Pesto...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**dry?** – drizzle over some extra olive oil.

**bland** – season with salt and pepper and possibly a squeeze of lemon.

**crunchy veg** – it's important to make sure your veg are no longer crunchy when you remove them from the oven. If in doubt keep cooking because slightly overdone veg are nicer than underdone veg. If some veg are done and some aren't just remove the done ones and keep cooking the others. Next time try cutting the ones that took longer to cook into smaller pieces so it all comes together at the same time.

**burning veg** – cover with foil if the veg are getting too burnt on the outside before the middles cook. Next time cook at a lower temp.

## DO AHEAD POTENTIAL?

Great, although best to mix the pesto and the hot veg at the last minute. Leftovers will keep for 1-2 weeks in the fridge.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great as a veggie meal on its own. Or for something more substantial serve with warm chickpeas or pita bread.



Addictive *roast* Brussels Sprouts

# Addictive Roast Brussels Sprouts



When I was growing up I used to hate brussels sprouts. I always thought my mum was punishing us when she cooked them. If you had have told me I would one day write a recipe that had the words 'addictive' and 'brussels sprouts' in the title, I would never have believed you. But I'm serious. These sprouts are the best. I could eat them every day. For vegetarians / vegans / fish sauce detesters, feel free to skip the dressing and serve your sprouts with a generous squeeze of lemon instead.

serves 2-3 as a side or 1 if your name is Jules!

300g (10oz) brussels sprouts

2 tablespoons fish sauce

1 tablespoon sherry vinegar or rice wine vinegar

1/2 teaspoon chilli flakes

small handful pine nuts, optional

1. Preheat oven to 200C (400F). And get an oven-proof skillet or frying pan on a high heat.
2. Trim the bases of your sprouts and halve lengthwise.
3. Add a few tablespoons oil to the pan and add the sprouts. Cook for a few minutes or until they start to smell good.
4. Transfer to the oven and continue cooking for 10-15 minutes or until sprouts are tender and well caramelised on the side facing down.
5. Meanwhile, mix fish sauce, vinegar, chilli and 1 tablespoon water. Season to taste with a few pinches of sugar.
6. Toss hot brussels sprouts in the dressing and serve with pine nuts, if using.

## VARIATIONS

**carnivore** – fry some chopped bacon in a pan to serve on top or layer with finely sliced prosciutto.

**nut-free** – replace the pine nuts with parmesan shavings or toasted bread crumbs.

**vegan / vegetarian/ fish sauce-free** – replace fish sauce with soy sauce.

**more substantial** – serve with a poached egg..



video

# Addictive Roast Brussels Sprouts...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland?** Give the dressing a little more seasoning. And a splash more vinegar.

**sprouts burning** – The secret to delicious sprouts is to get the right balance of crispy bits and not burning them. Next time check earlier in the cooking process and if they're browning too much cover with foil.

**cabbagey flavour** – A sign that the sprouts aren't quite cooked enough. Pop them back in the oven for a little while longer.

**too pungent** – sharpness will vary with your vinegar, so don't be afraid to balance it out with a little more olive oil.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will still be edible after a week or so in the fridge. Reheats well in a warm pan on the stove.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

I love them as a side to roast or pan fried chicken. Also great as a meal in their own right with a poached or fried egg on top.



Green chickpea Salad

# Green Chickpea Salad



Canned chickpeas are one of my go-to items when I'm looking for something quick. This salad started out without the chilli or greens but has evolved over the years. The chilli is very much optional but adds some lovely warmth. This is a pretty forgiving salad and will keep in the fridge for a few hours or even overnight without any ill effects - so it's great for work lunches or picnics.

Enough for 2

*1 small red chilli, finely diced, optional*  
*1 tablespoon sherry vinegar or lemon juice*  
*1 can chickpeas (400g / 14oz), drained*  
*1/2 bunch cavalo nero, kale, spinach or silverbeet (chard)*  
*2 handfuls finely grated parmesan*

1. Combine chilli, if using, with vinegar or lemon juice and 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil. Season.
2. Toss chickpeas in the dressing.
3. Slice cavalo nero or kale super finely into shreds, removing the stem if it is too coarse. Toss the shredded greens into the salad with the parmesan.

## VARIATIONS

**summery** – replace the cavalo nero or kale with a punnet of cherry tomatoes and a few handfuls of torn basil leaves.

**dairy-free / vegan** – replace the parmesan with finely grated brazil nuts or sliced almonds.

**lighter** – replace the cavalo nero or kale with a few handfuls of rocket (arugula) or baby spinach.

**legume-free** – replace the chickpeas with 2-3 hard boiled eggs.

**carnivore** – serve with finely sliced prosciutto draped over the top.

**chicken salad** – add in some shredded BBQ chicken as well as or instead of the chickpeas.

**other legumes** – replace the chickpeas with other cooked or canned legumes such as lentils, white beans, black beans, split peas or butter beans. You'll need about 250g (9oz) of cooked legumes.

**warm salad** - heat chickpeas in a little olive oil in a pan or the microwave before tossing in the salad.



video

# Green Chickpea Salad...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland?** Give it a little more seasoning. And a splash more vinegar.

**too oily / too much dressing** – Just transfer the salad to a clean bowl, leaving behind as much of the dressing as possible, then toss in the new bowl to rub some of the dressing off onto the sides. If things are really bad a bit of judicious paper towel blotting will help.

**dressing too sharp** – sharpness will vary with your vinegar, so don't be afraid to balance it out with a little more olive oil.

**difficult to eat** – it's super important to slice your greens super fine, otherwise it can be quite 'chunky' to eat. Tossing the salad in a pan to warm and let the greens wilt a little can help.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will still be edible after a week or so in the fridge. One of those rare salads that is still tasty when the leaves wilt a little.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great as a quick light dinner on its own.

Pear & *parmesan* Salad



# Pear & Parmesan Salad



This was inspired by a recent visit to Jamie's Italian restaurant in Sydney. There were a couple of main course salads on the menu which reminded me just how delicious and satisfying a big salad can be.

enough for 2

1 tablespoon sherry, rice or other wine vinegar

1 pear, finely sliced

4 large handfuls rocket (arugula)

2 large handfuls shaved parmesan

2 small handfuls shelled pistachios

1. Whisk vinegar with 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil. Taste and season.

2. Toss pear and rocket in the dressing. Divide between 2 plates.

3. Serve with parmesan and pistachios sprinkled over.

## VARIATIONS

**carnivore** – replace the pistachios with finely shaved prosciutto.

**nut-free** – replace the pistachios with a handful of semi dried tomatoes.

**vegan / dairy-free** – replace parmesan with chunks of avocado.

**different leaves** – replace rocket (arugula) with other salad leaves. Radicchio is also lovely here for a more Autumnal vibe.

**more substantial** – double the parmesan and pistachios.



video

# Pear & Parmesan Salad...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland?** Give the sauce a little more seasoning. And a splash more vinegar.

**too oily / too much dressing** – Just transfer the salad to a clean bowl, leaving behind as much of the dressing as possible, then toss in the new bowl to rub some of the dressing off onto the sides. If things are really bad a bit of judicious paper towel blotting will help.

**dressing too sharp** – sharpness will vary with your vinegar, so don't be afraid to balance it out with a little more olive oil.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will still be edible after a week or so in the fridge but best when the leaves are freshly dressed.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great as a quick light dinner on its own. Also wonderful without the pistachios as a side to most Italian food.

Chorizo with Kale



# Chorizo with Kale



Inspired by my favourite food writer, Nigel Slater in his latest book the Kitchen Diaries II. When I say I 'adapted' this recipe, the only thing I really changed was adding in a splash of lemon juice for freshness. It's not very often I find myself adding an ingredient to other people's recipes! This is now a firm favourite in our house and there has been much discussion on possible variations. See below for ideas...

Enough for 2

2 chorizo, sliced

1-2 cloves garlic, peeled & sliced

1 large bunch kale, finely sliced crosswise

1/2 lemon

handful roasted almonds

1. Heat a frying pan on a medium high heat. Add a little oil and the chorizo. Cook for 2-3 minutes or until well browned on the first side.
2. Turn and cook for a few seconds on the other side. Remove from the pan to a clean plate.
3. Add garlic and kale to the chorizo oil in the pan and stir fry for 2-3 minutes or until kale is wilted and tender.
4. Return chorizo to the pan to warm up. Taste and season with salt, pepper and a small squeeze of lemon.
5. Serve with almonds sprinkled over.

## VARIATIONS

**vegetarian** – replace chorizo with sliced halloumi and add in a teaspoon smoked paprika with the kale.

**vegan** – replace the chorizo with 2 large red onions or bell peppers (capsicum) chopped. Cook on a medium heat until soft. Add kale and 1 teaspoon smoked paprika and continue to cook as per the recipe. Double the almonds to serve.

**no chorizo?** – use spec, chopped bacon, pancetta, salami or even ham.

**different greens** – most greens will work well here. Try cavolo nero, collard greens, spinach, silverbeet (chard), rainbow chard even baby spinach or defrosted frozen spinach. Cabbage, brussels sprouts, broccoli, asparagus, broccoli rabe can also be used but will need a little longer to cook.

**nut-free** – skip the almonds or replace with toasted bread crumbs.

**budget / more substantial** – make the chorizo go further – toss in a drained can of chickpeas or white beans with the kale.

**sunday breakfast** – serve topped with a poached or fried egg.



video

# Chorizo with Kale...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland?** Use more seasoning. And a splash more lemon. Next time use a different chorizo supplier.

**chorizo falling apart** – Some chorizo are more like fresh sausages and can be quite crumbly. I prefer fermented chorizo that has a texture more like salami.

**too dry** – drizzle with a little more olive oil or try a dollop of good quality mayonnaise.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Great! Will last a week or so in the fridge but best to add the almonds at the last minute otherwise they lose their crunch.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great as a quick light dinner on its own.



Warm beets with Goats Cheese

# Warm Beets with Goats Cheese



Beets, or beetroot as we call them in Australia are one of my favourite veg. If you have time to roast your own beets that's great, just scrub and cut them into chunks. Drizzle with a little balsamic and olive oil and roast at 200C covered for 45mins to 1hour or until tender. This salad is equally delicious with pre-cooked or canned beets from the store, so feel free to use that option if you're short on time.

enough for 2

*1 bunch beets, roasted or 1 can beets, drained*

*4 handfuls baby spinach*

*1 tablespoon sherry vinegar*

*100g (3oz) soft goats cheese*

*handful sunflower seeds, roasted*

1. Heat a few tablespoons olive oil in a large frying pan. Add spinach and cook, stirring over a medium high heat until the spinach is starting to wilt.
2. Add beets and continue to cook and stir until beets are warm. Another minute or so.
3. Remove from heat and drizzle with vinegar. Taste & season.
4. Divide between two dinner plates. Top with crumbled cheese and scatter over the sunflower seeds.

## VARIATIONS

**vegan / dairy-free** – replace the cheese with roast cauliflower florettes or roast field mushrooms.

**seed-free** – either skip the sunflower seeds or replace with very finely diced red onion for crunch and sharpness.

**higher protein** – sunflower seeds are quite rich in protein, so feel free to double or triple the seed addition. Otherwise a can of drained lentils added with the beets will make for a more substantial meal.

**carnivore** – brown a few sliced chorizo sausages in the pan before wilting the spinach.



video

# Warm Beets with Goats Cheese...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**can't find sherry vinegar?** – No problem. Replace with red wine vinegar or balsamic.

**bland** – season more generously and sprinkle over a little more vinegar.

**too acidic** – precooked or canned beets can be quite sharp. Drizzle with a little peppery extra virgin olive oil to balance out the acid.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

OK. Will keep in the fridge for a few days depending on how fresh your cheese was.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great as a simple meal on its own.



Herby Green Roast Chicken

# Herby Green Roast Chicken



This is one of those brilliant dinners that you can just pop in the oven and let dinner practically cook itself. The chicken can be marinated in the sauce for up to about 36 hours if you like. But its still delish if you don't have time. I love how the herby marinade keeps everything moist and fresh at the same time.

enough for 2

- 1 bunch coriander (cilantro), leaves & stems
- 1 bunch flat leaf parsley, leaves & stems
- 2-4 small red chillies
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 6-8 tablespoons neutral flavoured oil, (rice bran oil)
- 4 chicken thigh fillets, bone out (about 450g / 1lb)
- 2 limes, halved, to serve
- 4 handfuls baby spinach, to serve

1. Preheat your oven to 200C (400F).
2. Whizz coriander, parsley, chilli, soy sauce and oil until you have a chunky paste.
3. Toss chicken in the herb mixture. Marinate for up to 36 hours or cook straight away.
4. Lay chicken fillets out flat in an oven proof dish and pour over the herb mixture.
5. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until chicken is no longer pink in the middle.
6. Serve on a bed of baby spinach with lime on the side.

## VARIATIONS

**vegan** – marinate and roast some tofu or mushrooms instead.

Root veg like sweet potato, carrots or parsnip could be cooked like this. As could asparagus or sliced zucchini (courgettes).

**vegetarian** – try roast halloumi. Will take about 15 minutes or less.

**different herbs** – you could just use either coriander or parsley. Basil or oregano are also good.

**different meat / fish** – try chicken breasts (will take a little longer to cook'), chicken on the bone such as wings or drumsticks (will take 45mins or so), whole chicken cut into pieces (about 1 hour), whole chicken butterflied (cut down the back bone and flattened out like a book), pork chops, fish fillets (will take about 15 mins or less depending on how thick), whole fish (about 1/2 hour depending on size), pork sausages will also work (about 1/2 hour), lamb cutlets (about 15 – 20 mins).

**budget** – serve with steamed rice or cauliflower rice and just serve 1 thigh fillet per person.



video

# Herby Green Roast Chicken...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**bland** – Next time buy a better quality chicken I've found it really makes a huge difference in terms of flavour. For now, just season with more soy sauce.

**chicken too pink inside** – Either it wasn't cooked for long enough or the chicken was too cold before you started roasting, Next time make sure you allow the chicken to come to room temperature before you start cooking.

**too dry** – Some chickens are naturally less moist. Next time try another supplier. But for now, be generous with the lime juice. It could also mean your chicken is over cooked so next time, check it earlier.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep in the fridge for a week or so. Makes a lovely salad to tear the chicken into bight sized pieces and toss into a shaved zucchini salad.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great on its own. Or you could serve with steamed rice or cauliflower 'rice'.

Green Goddess Salad



# Green Goddess Salad



This salad was a bit of an accidental discovery. I had some snow peas (mange tout) in the fridge that needed using up so I just finely sliced them and popped them in a green salad. I just love the crunch and freshness the snow peas add. To make it more of a substantial lunch I've added in some avocado and shelled pistachios.

enough for 2

2 tablespoons rice wine or sherry vinegar

2 handfuls snow peas (mange tout)

1 avocado

1/2 bunch flat leaf parsley

small handful shelled pistachios

1. Combine vinegar with 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil in a large bowl. Season.
2. Trim and string snowpeas. Then finely slice them into julienne strips (think long and skinny).
3. Toss snowpeas in the dressing.
4. Halve avocado and scoop flesh into the salad.
5. Roughly chop parsley toss in.
6. Scatter over pistachios.

## VARIATIONS

**carnivore** – skip the avocado and serve as a side dish to roast chicken. Or shred some cooked chicken breast and toss into the salad with or without avocado.

**nut-free** – replace the pistachios with a few tablespoons of finely diced raw red onion.

**can't find rice wine or sherry vinegar?** – No problem. Lemon juice would be just as good, if not better. Add in the lemon zest as well, if you like.

**different peas** – replace the snow peas with sugar snap peas or raw shelled fresh peas or a mixture of all of the above. If you have some pea shoots, you could use them instead of as well as the parsley.



video

# Green Goddess Salad..

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland?** Give the sauce a little more seasoning. And a splash more vinegar or lemon juice.

**too oily / too much dressing** – Just transfer the salad to a clean bowl, leaving behind as much of the dressing as possible, then toss in the new bowl to rub some of the dressing off onto the sides. If things are really bad a bit of judicious paper towel blotting will help.

**short on time** - skip the snow pea chopping.

**dressing too sharp** – sharpness will vary with your vinegar, so don't be afraid to balance it out with a little more olive oil.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep for a week or so in the fridge but is better the fresher it is.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great as a super fresh lunch on its own. Will even survive in a lunchbox, provided you can keep it in a fridge.

Module 3.

Your  
Pantry






# Module 3 Video & Audio

Module 3 Video

[CLICK HERE](#) to view video for Module 3.



# Step-by-Step Guide

## A Step by Step Guide to Setting up and Using Your Pantry

### **STEP 1. Choose 2 pantry recipes.**

You thought I was going to say something like 'set aside some time to clean out your pantry' didn't you?

Well the good news is, for your pantry to really help you it just needs to do two things:

1. Supply enough of the right ingredients to make a particular meal.
2. Help you remember you have said ingredients when you're feeling tired & hungry.

And all it takes for this to happen is for you to choose just 2 recipes that you want to have as your backup.

Then it's up to step 2...

### **STEP 2. Buy the ingredients for those recipes.**

It doesn't matter how you look at it, unless you have actual ingredients in the house, you won't be able to cook.

So make sure you buy some ingredients that you know will actually go together to make something delicious and quick. Then move onto step 3.

## **A Step by Step Guide to Setting up and Using Your Pantry**

### **STEP 3. Relax.**

Pat yourself on the back and remember that next time you need a quick, emergency meal, instead of resorting to pizza, just head home and have some fun whipping up one of your delicious pantry dinners.

It's that simple.

### **OPTIONAL BONUS**

#### **STEP 4. Set aside some time for a pantry 'spring cleaning' session.**

It's up to you to choose the format. Sometimes I take on the whole pantry at once, but mostly I just clean one shelf at a time. Here's how I do it....

1. Remove everything from the shelf.
2. Throw out anything that smells funny, is well past the 'best before' date, you have no idea what you'd use it in OR anything you don't really like.

3. Wipe down the shelf.

4. Put the 'keepers' back in some sort of order.

I try and keep 'like' items together so I have the bottle together with things like vinegars and sauces and oils, spices live in my 'spice box' the canned goods live together and so on. You'll see what I mean when you watch the 'virtual tour video' on the next tab.





# Virtual Tour

A Virtual Pantry Tour.

[CLICK HERE](#) to view the video Virtual Tour.



# Stocking Your Pantry

## How to Stock Your Pantry

**SUPER IMPORTANT!** Please don't feel like you need to rush out and buy everything on this list. It's designed to give you ideas. If you feel like it, you're welcome to choose one or two items from each category, but you could also just let your pantry grow organically by choosing 2 or more pantry recipes below and making sure you stock those ingredients.

### **oils**

good quality extra virgin olive oil – for salads and drizzling  
§ cheaper extra virgin olive oil – for cooking (I buy in bulk)

rice bran oil or macadamia oil – for frying and where you need a neutral flavoured oil.

### **vinegar**

sherry or rice (wine) vinegar – my favourites. Red wine vinegar would also be OK.

balsamic – because sometimes you want a little more sweetness.

lemons – not technically vinegar, but they do the same thing.

## How to Stock Your Pantry

### **canned things**

tomatoes – preferably whole peeled

chickpeas – my all time favourite pantry ingredient

beans – butter beans, cannellini, red kidney

lentils

fish – tuna in oil (with chilli), sardines

chicken – I preferred smoked chicken

coconut milk – especially for Asian cooks and vegan / dairy free fans.

### **jars**

curry paste – red Thai or Indian

tomato – paste, puree or pasta sauce (marinara sauce)

tahini – ground sesame seeds

vegetables – roast red peppers, grilled eggplant (aubergines)

pesto

vegemite – not for everyone

peanut butter – for people who don't like vegemite

sweeteners – honey, rice malt syrup, maple syrup

### **saucses & condiments**

mustard – I always have both dijon & wholegrain

soy sauce – wonderfully versatile

mayonnaise – I've gotten into making my own, but that's not for everyone

ketchup – that's tomato sauce for the Aussies out there

oyster and/or fish sauce – for Asian cooks



## How to Stock Your Pantry

### pantry vegetables

potatoes, garlic, onions

### seasonings

salt – sea salt flakes like Maldon, cheaper fine sea salt or kosher salt for salting water.

black peppercorns – best quality you can afford

spices, dried chilli flakes or chilli powder, curry powder, ground cumin, ground coriander, garam masala (Indian spice blend), smoked paprika

### baking – [not for everyone]

flour – plain flour, bread flour, rice flour (or gluten free flour), almond meal

sugar – white sugar, brown sugar, stevia

other – cocoa powder, baking powder, dried yeast

chocolate – 70% cocoa solids

### dry goods

lentils – red, puy or french-style green lentils dried beans & chickpeas

carbs – pasta / noodles / couscous / basmati rice (definitely not essential!) / barley

other – rolled oats, quinoa, chia seeds, oat bran, chia seed bran



## How to Stock Your Pantry

### nuts

[not necessarily all at once] almonds, pinenuts, hazelnuts, walnuts, hazelnuts, pistachios, brazil nuts, cashews

### fridge

cheese – parmesan, ricotta, goats cheese, halloumi, cottage cheese, other hard cheeses other dairy – butter, yoghurt

condiments – mayonnaise, aioli, pesto, miso paste, pickled veg, mustard, sauerkraut, kimchee, capers, olives, harissa, wasabi.

long life vegetables (fridge) – cabbage, cauliflower, celery, carrots, beets (although the leaves will wilt), parsnip, celeriac (celery root), kohlrabi, sweet potato, green onions (scallions), ginger, pumpkin (winter squash), swedes & rutabagas

protein – packaged smoked fish, eggs, cured meats (prosciutto, salami), dried chorizo, packaged tofu, cryovaccated meat (only keeps for about 2 weeks)

### freezer

vegetables – frozen peas, broad beans, spinach

fruit – berries, bananas, mango

protein – meat, sausages, fish, poultry

herbs – rosemary, kaffir lime leaves, curry leaves, thyme,

spices – fresh turmeric, ginger

other – puff pastry, bread





# 13 Ways

## 13 Ways To Help Your Pantry Come to the Rescue

Without some sort of pantry backup, life can be much harder than it needs to be.

The thing is, having some sort of pantry doesn't need to be difficult or scary. Or require some sort of super human organisation.

### **1. Automate your shopping list.**

A pantry is only as helpful as the ingredients it stocks. By developing the habit of having an ongoing list for pantry and other household items, you'll find that you 'automatically' replenish pantry stock on a regular basis.

### **2. Organise your pantry into groups of similar items.**

Now I'm not suggesting that you alphabetize your spices, but having some sort of structure or order to your pantry can make a massive difference. If like items are grouped together it can save you time trying to find what you need. And you'll also be able to tell at a glance which types of items you're getting low on.

## 13 Ways To Help Your Pantry Come to the Rescue

### 3. Avoid the trap of deep shelves

There's a saying of of sight out of mind for a reason. If you're ever lucky enough to be designing a pantry, make sure your shelves aren't too deep so you have maximum visibility. If a complete pantry redesign isn't possible, consider investing in a few boxes so you can easily slide them out and have full view of all the contents.

### 4. Develop the habit of actually looking in your pantry on a regular basis

You know when you're deciding what to wear and it feels like you have nothing suitable. And then you look in your wardrobe and find heaps of things you'd forgotten about. It's the same with food and pantries. Don't rely on your memory. Use your eyes and you'll find possibilities opening up.

### 5. When shopping choose some 'long shelf life' vegetables

I've had celery and cabbages which have lasted up to a month in the fridge. Making sure some of your veg will last into the next week or longer, takes the pressure off getting the amount of food you buy exactly 'right'.

### 6. Develop the habit of actually looking in your fridge and freezer on a regular basis.

There can be a whole world of options in both these locations. But you need to know about them to take advantage of them. I'm guilty of only opening the freezer when I want to get something out. And I'm always surprised at whats in there.

### 7. Explore options for stocking your 'fridge' pantry

Don't fall into the trap of thinking your pantry is only about the store cupboard ingredients stored at room temperature. The marvel of modern refrigeration makes 'pantry' staples out of many different foods. Think cheeses (especially halloumi), tofu, yoghurt, other dairy products, eggs, smoked fish, salami and other cured meats.

### 8. Find a butcher who will cryovac for you.

Meat will keep for up to a month in the fridge, ready to use when vacuum packed or 'cryovacced'. We've started buying our meat direct from the farmer and he packs everything up in cryovac. So some goes into the freezer but much of it just sits in the fridge until needed.



## 13 Ways To Help Your Pantry Come to the Rescue

### 9. Rotate produce in your fridge on a regular basis

Lets face it, things can easily hide at the back of the fridge and get forgotten. I have a large and a smaller space in my veg drawer. Since I adopted the policy of transferring all the older veg to the small drawer before putting new purchases away. AND remembering to look in the smaller drawer first. I've made a massive difference to the amount of veg I throw away.

### 10. Freeze in small, easily accessible packages.

We'll cover freezing and defrosting in greater detail soon. But for now remember, taking the time to divide food into small packets before freezing makes it much quicker and easier to defrost as you need.

### 11. Explore the world of frozen veg & fruit.

Frozen produce can be just as good, and in the case of frozen peas even better than 'fresh' produce from the supermarket. Think beyond frozen peas and berries. Soy beans (edamame), broad beans, mango, spinach, broccoli, cauliflower can all be wonderful from the freezer.

### 12. Have a spring clean from time to time.

A clean pantry can be a thing of joy. It's also helpful to identify what you aren't using to stop repeat purchase mistakes. Or inspire you to

### 13. Have a 'use up the pantry' project every now and then.

If you're feeling a little broke. Or you know you're going away for a while. It can be fun and economical to try eating from the pantry to have a little clear out.





# 4 Common Mistakes

## 4 Most Common Pantry Mistakes (How to Avoid)

### **Mistake 1. Running out of essential ingredients.**

I've said it before, a pantry is only useful if it contains actual ingredients you can use for actual dishes or recipes you love to cook and eat.

Think about your shopping habits. Decide on the best frequency for you to have a dedicated 'pantry' shop – it could only be once a month where you write a list and do a big stockup. Or it might be something you do once a week.

Another solution is to decide whether it would be helpful to have a list that you create 'as you go' near the pantry or on the fridge. (I don't but my Mum used to live by her list)

### **Mistake 2. Suffering from 'pantry chaos'**

An overflowing pantry with things stuffed in willy-nilly, can be just as useless as an empty pantry. And a lot more daunting. Chaos is also unlikely to inspire you when you're feeling tired and hungry.

Think about it, isn't the thought of a chaotic pantry enough to make you want to avoid your scary pantry all together and just pick up the phone and order some delivery?

## 4 Most Common Pantry Mistakes (How to Avoid).

Overcoming pantry chaos isn't as difficult as you'd think. Develop some sort of order to your pantry that works for you. I find keeping like ingredients together helps.

### 3. Letting items go past their use-by date.

Even long-living items eventually go bad, but the good news is this is really easy to avoid. When you put your shopping away, remember to rotate. Add newly purchased items to the back of the stack or row and use front items first. Too easy.

### 4. Allowing infestation to strike.

This used to be a big problem when I was living in Sydney. Between the cockroaches and Indian meal moths, there was a lot of waste in my pantry. That was until I invested in a set of glass canisters from Ikea that look great and weren't very expensive.

I can't recommend this enough. Get a system for sealing open packets – preferably glass canisters but at the least use zip-lock bags – open packets are an invitation to insects and moths.





# Your Action Steps

## Your Actions

### Your Actions

Remember insight without action is worthless. So take action now while all of this is fresh in your mind.

1. Complete Step 3. for developing your habits from Module 1. (STEP 3. Develop a plan for developing your new habit / kicking your old habit.)
2. Choose 2 pantry recipes below.
3. Write a shopping list and buy the ingredients you need. And next time you need a quick dinner, cook one of your pantry meals.
4. Report Back! Share your experience with your pantry meal. Either leave a comment on the recipe page OR take it up a notch and share a pic of your creation on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#).



Rice & Greens

# Rice & Greens



There's a classic Cuban dish of rice and beans which was everywhere when I visited. This is a 'fresher' healthier take. If you can get spinach frozen into little 'bricks' rather than one big block, it's much better because it defrosts much more quickly. If you're stuck with a big frozen chunk of spinach, it may need a little spin in the microwave to speed up the defrosting process.

enough for 2

*2 cloves garlic, finely sliced*

*1 can coconut milk (400mL / 1.5 cups)*

*1 packet frozen spinach (250g / 9oz), defrosted*

*1 packet par-cooked brown rice (250g / 9oz)*

1. Heat a little oil in a medium saucepan. Cook garlic on a medium heat for about 30 seconds or until starting to brown.
2. Add coconut milk, spinach and rice. Bring to a simmer and cook for about 2 minutes or until everything is hot.
3. Taste. Season.

## VARIATIONS

**sauteed greens** – just replace frozen spinach with your own sauteed greens (recipe here)

**no coconut milk?** – replace with almond or soy milk – they'll be a little more watery so be prepared to simmer longer to thicken up.

**can't find par-cooked brown rice?** – most supermarkets now have 'pouches' of cooked rice but feel free to cook your own brown rice, just boil in water until just tender. Drain and use as per the recipe.

**rice alternatives** – risoni (rice shaped pasta), cooked short pasta, canned beans, canned chickpeas + see below.

**lower GI / slow carb** – replace rice with cooked lentils, canned chickpeas, cooked split peas or quinoa.

**higher protein** – add in a drained can of black beans.

**carnivore** - stir fry some sliced chicken breast or thigh fillets in the pan before adding the other ingredients and proceeding from step 1.

**fresh greens** – replace frozen spinach with sliced kale, cavolo nero spinach, chard or silverbeet. Add with the garlic and cook until wilted before adding the other ingredients.



video

# Rice & Greens...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too watery?** – simmer for a little longer to reduce down.

**rice too crunchy** – simmer for a little longer to soften.

**bland** – it needs salt.

**too rich** – Next time use less coconut milk. A splash of lemon juice will help freshen things up for now.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

OK. Will keep in the fridge for 1-2 weeks. The rice will absorb the liquid over time so it may dry out. Just add a splash of water as you reheat to moisten.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Lovely in big nourishing bowls on its own.



Quick Veg Curry

# Quick Veg Curry



enough for 2

1 jar tomato pasta sauce (400g / 14oz)

1 can white beans (440g / 15oz), drained

1 jar roasted red peppers (280g / 10oz),  
drained

1/2 - 1 teaspoons chilli flakes

4 teaspoons curry powder

1. Place tomato sauce (marinara sauce), beans, peppers, chilli and curry powder and bring to a simmer.

2. Cook gently for 2 -3 minutes or until the curry is hot.

3. Taste and season, adding more curry powder and chilli if you think it needs it. Serve with a generous drizzle of extra virgin olive oil.

## VARIATIONS

**carnivore** - brown some diced chicken, beef or pork in a pan then add the curry ingredients as per the recipe.

**no chilli flakes?** – Use fresh chilli or chilli powder.

**different veg** – feel free to add in any veg you have on hand. Wilting some spinach or card through will add a different dimension.

**no curry powder?** – Replace with another spice blend such as garam masala or just use an equal mixture of ground cumin and ground coriander.

**no tomato sauce** – replace with canned tomatoes.



video

# Quick Veg Curry...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too hot** – if you've overdone it on the chilli, add in a generous slug of olive oil to take the edge off or serve the curry with some chopped cucumber or natural yoghurt.

**too thick** – add in more water and bring back to a simmer.

**too watery** – simmer for a little longer to help it reduce down.

**too bland?** add in more curry powder for now and next time, remember to try a different brand of curry powder. Spices also lose their flavour with age, so make sure your curry powder is fresh.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep in the fridge for a week or so.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

You could serve it in bowls like a stew like I have in the picture but it will be pretty full-on.

Steamed rice is a great accompaniment if you happen to have some on hand. For slow-carbers, try grating some cauliflower in a food processor and using that as a raw alternative to rice. It actually tastes really lovely.



Warm Salmon & Chickpea Salad

# Warm Salmon & Chickpea Salad



For me this is about as 'comforting' as food can get. It's also about as easy as well. The only down side is that it isn't the prettiest dish, but trust me, your taste buds don't care about superficial looks.

enough for 1 or 2

1 medium can salmon (200g / 7oz), drained

1 can chickpeas (400g / 14oz), drained

1 tablespoon rice vinegar or lemon juice

1. Heat a little olive oil in a frying pan / skillet.
2. Add chickpeas and stir fry for a minute or so to warm them. Add salmon and break up with a fork.
3. Meanwhile, combine vinegar or lemon juice in a bowl with 2-3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil. Season.
4. Toss hot salmon and chickpeas into the dressing.

## VARIATIONS

**prettier** – toss in a few handfuls of salad leaves or flat leaf parsley.

**budget** – replace salmon with tuna. And think about using home cooked chickpeas instead of canned.

**vegetarian** – skip the salmon and serve warm chickpeas with goats cheese or parmesan.

**vegan** – replace the salmon with grilled veg from the deli or a jar. Red peppers or eggplant are both great.

**no canned chickpeas?** – replace with other cooked or canned legumes, you'll need about 250g (9oz).

**short on time** – skip the cooking and toss the drained chickpeas and salmon into the dressing.



video

# Warm Salmon & Chickpea Salad...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**dry** – drizzle over a little more extra virgin olive oil.

**salmon has bones and skin** – I'm afraid it's normal for canned salmon. The bones are an excellent source of protein, so just mash them so you can't see them anymore.

**bland** – be generous with the salt and add a splash more lemon or vinegar.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Great! Will keep in the fridge for a week or so. You probably could freeze it if you wanted.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

In bowls with forks



Garlic & Chilli Spaghetti

# Garlic & Chilli Spaghetti



enough for 1

100g (3.5oz) spaghetti or other pasta

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

1/2 - 1 teaspoon dried chilli flakes

1 clove garlic, finely sliced

1. Bring a pot of salted water to the boil. Add pasta and set the timer for 1 minute less than the duration recommended on the packet.

2. Stir pasta every few minutes, but meanwhile make your sauce.

3. Gently heat oil in a small saucepan. Add chilli and garlic and fry for a minute or until garlic is starting to go a little brown. Remove from the heat.

4. When the pasta timer rings. Taste pasta and give it a little longer if it is still too crunchy. When the pasta is al dente, scoop out a cup of cooking liquid and drain.

5. Return pasta to the hot pan and toss in the oil. Taste and season and add a little cooking water if it looks too dry.

## VARIATIONS

**carnivore** – fry some pancetta or bacon in the oil. Or serve with some finely sliced jamon or prosciutto.

**lemon & garlic** – skip the chilli and proceed as per the recipe, add in the zest of half a lemon at the end and serve with a squeeze of lemon.

**rosemary** – ditch either the chilli, garlic or both and replace with the leaves from a sprig of rosemary.

**greens** – to make it into more of a complete meal, toss in a large handful of washed salad green or rocket (arugula) leaves and finish with a squeeze of lemon.

**cheesy** – serve with freshly grated parmesan if you like, but to be honest I like it better with the simplicity of just the chilli and garlic.

**gluten-free / slow carb** -because this dish is really relying on the quality of the pasta, don't be tempted to try it with GF pasta. Instead, drain a can of chickpea or white beans and gently fry in the oil with the garlic and chilli.



video

# Garlic & Chilli Spaghetti..

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**bland** - make sure you're generous with the salt and pepper.

**too dry** – toss in a little reserved pasta cooking water or if you've forgotten to fish some out before draining the pasta, just a little more of your best quality extra virgin olive oil instead.

**pasta gluey or falling apart** – this is either overcooking or poor quality drained pasta. Next time reduce the cooking time or use a different brand of pasta.

**pasta chalky** – if the pasta isn't cooked enough, you get a white chalky centre in the middle of each strand. A little of this is good and is what the Italians call 'al dente' or to the tooth. Too much makes for unpleasant eating so next time cook a little longer.

**bitter flavours** – both the chilli and garlic will go bitter if they are overcooked and burnt so be careful not to get the oil too hot or to cook them too long.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep in the fridge for a week or so. Doesn't reheat that well. Either microwave or pan fry in a little more oil.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Makes a very comforting simple supper when the cupboard is bare.

For a more complete meal serve with a green salad or some steamed broccoli dressed with lemon juice.



Green *Spinach* Lentils

# Green Spinach Lentils



If I had to pick a favourite lentil it would be 'Puy' also known as 'French-Style Green Lentils'. For me, they're the 'rolls royce' of the lentil world. I just adore the deep, earthy flavour and the fact that if you over cook them they still keep their shape. If you can get spinach frozen into little 'bricks' rather than one big block, it's much better because it defrosts much more quickly. If you're stuck with a big frozen chunk of spinach, it may need a little spin in the microwave to speed up the defrosting process.

enough for 2 to 3

200g (7oz) French-style green lentils

250g (9oz) frozen spinach, defrosted

2 tablespoons soy sauce

2 tablespoons rice or white wine vinegar

parmesan cheese, to serve

1. Bring a saucepan of unsalted water to the boil.
2. Simmer lentils for 11-15 minutes, or until just tender. Drain.
3. Add a little oil to the pan and pop it back on a medium heat. Add spinach and stir to break up the chunks.
4. Return drained lentils to the pan. Add soy, vinegar and 2-3 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil. Taste and add more soy or vinegar if needed.
5. Serve with Parmesan shavings on top.

## VARIATIONS

**sauteed greens** – just replace frozen spinach with your own sauteed greens (recipe here)

**dairy-free / vegan** – replace parmesan with sliced almonds.

**can't find 'French-style' lentils** – replace with regular green or brown lentils or split peas. You'll need to adjust the simmering time – use the packet directions as a guide. Brown rice will also work.

**different veg?** – replace with frozen peas or broccoli. Cook the veg in the oil until just defrosted before adding the lentils back to the pot.

**carnivore** – fry some bacon or chorizo in the pot before adding the spinach. Or toss in a few handfuls of shredded BBQ chicken from the shop. Or serve layered with prosciutto or jamon instead of the parmesan.

**as a side** – serve along side grilled sausages or a roast or BBQ chicken.

**super quick** – replace lentils with 2 cans of lentils, drained and proceed from step 4.

**soy-free** – skip the soy sauce and season with fish sauce OR just use salt.



video

# Green Spinach Lentils...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**lentils too crunchy** – make sure you use unsalted water to cook the lentils as salt may cause their skins to toughen. And keep simmering (or boiling) until you're happy.

**mushy** – this just means the lentils were over cooked. Next time keep a closer eye on them. Not much can be done at this stage.

**spinach still frozen** – you may need to give it a zap in the microwave to speed things up. Or just add to the pot and stir to break up the chunks as best you can.

**bland** – add more soy and vinegar.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Great! Will keep in the fridge for 1-2 weeks. Will freeze OK.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

In big bowls with loads of parmesan. Or see above for suggestions as a side.

Pantry Cauliflower Cheese



# Pantry Cauliflower Cheese



Cauliflower cheese is usually served as a side and tends to be a bit on the 'stodgy' side. Here we're treating it as a simple main course and freshening things up by serving with fresh goats cheese and finely grated parmesan instead of the more usual heavy melted cheese. I love this method for cooking a whole range of veg from fresh broccoli and broccolini to asparagus to even things like bok choy. It's super quick and with the combination of charring and steaming give lovely complex veggie flavours. Frozen veg can be a little on the 'watery' side. This cooking method is brilliant because it cooks off all the extra water, leaving you with concentrated tasty veg.

enough for 2

1 bag frozen cauliflower (500g / 1lb)  
2 large handfuls grated parmesan cheese  
100g (3.5oz) goats cheese

1. Heat a frying pan on a super high heat for 3-4 minutes. You want it charring hot to instantly defrost the frozen cauli.
2. Add a little oil and the cauli. Cover and cook for 3 minutes, still on a super high heat.
4. Stir and return lid. Cook for another 1-2 minutes or until the cauli is browned in places and hot all over.
5. Divide hot cauli between 2 plates. Top with cheeses. Season.

## VARIATIONS

**vegan / dairy-free** – serve the hot cauli drizzled with tahini and lemon juice. Or try it on a bed of hummus.

**fresh** – chop cauli into tiny trees. And cook as per the recipe. May take a little longer for the cauli to be tender.

**different veg** – replace cauli with broccoli.

**different cheeses** – ricotta, gorgonzola, cheddar or whatever you have in the fridge. This is a great dish to use up odds and ends of cheese. Just grate harder cheeses and crumble or slice softer ones.

**carnivore** – serve as a side to a BBQ chicken.

**more substantial** - add a drained can of white beans such as cannellini to the pan and stir to heat through or serve with a fried egg per person.

**budget** - replace the goats cheese with ricotta.



video

# Pantry Cauliflower Cheese...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**watery cauliflower** – it means your pan wasn't hot enough or you didn't cook for long enough. Keep cooking until you're happy.

**bland / too dry** – try adding a little more goats cheese and pepper.

**cauli burning** – it's meant to brown and 'char' in a few places so don't stress too much. Although if it's blackening too much, just turn the heat down or stop all together.

**don't have a frying pan with a lid?** just use a baking tray or even some foil to cover. You just need something to keep the steam in so the veg char from the bottom and steam from the top.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

OK. Will keep in the fridge for a few days. But best when freshly made so you get the contrast between the hot cauli and cold creamy cheese.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Lovely on it's own. See the variations for some alternative ideas.



Quick Veggie Satay

# Quick Veggie Satay



There's a big peanut butter fan in our house. So anything satay tends to be an instant winner. This isn't the best looking dish, but please don't let that put you off!

enough for 2

300g (11oz) firm tofu, crumbled

1/2 bag frozen peas (250g / 9oz)

1-2 tablespoons Thai red curry paste

3-4 tablespoons peanut butter

1-2 tablespoon soy sauce

1. Heat a generous glug of oil in a large frying pan or skillet. Stir fry the tofu for 2-3 minutes or until starting to brown.
2. Add peas and continue to cook for another few minutes.
3. Add curry paste, peanut butter and soy and stir until combined. Taste and add extra of the 3 flavourings as you think it needs it.

## VARIATIONS

**carnivore** – replace tofu with pork sausage meat or minced (ground) chicken or even beef.

**soy-free** – use fish sauce or salt instead of the soy sauce. And see the carnivore section for tofu replacement ideas.

**no Thai curry paste?** – replace with 2-3 teaspoon of good quality curry powder instead.

**different veg** - replace peas with spinach.



video

# Quick Veggie Satay..

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**tofu sticking to the pan** – use more oil and stir a bit more energetically.

**bland** – add more soy and curry paste. Or just season with a little salt.

**dry** – this is meant to be a dryish, stir-fry style dish but the peanut butter can make it feel dryer than it really is. Next time back off on the peanut butter.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Great! Will keep in the fridge for 1-2 weeks.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

In big bowls.



Noodles with *Parmesan* Peas

# Noodles with Parmesan Peas



I love using noodles instead of pasta in more Italian style dishes because there are so many noodles which cook more quickly. It might sound a little weird, but if you give it a try you'll see that the noodles take on the flavours of the 'sauce' and it's actually really lovely.

My favourite are hokkien or Singapore noodles which are yellow and plump. They come in packets that are shelf stable but you can also find them in the chiller section of the supermarket or Asian grocery store. They are a great pantry staple because they take hardly any time to cook.

enough for 2

2-3 tablespoons butter

1/2 packet frozen peas (250g / 9oz)

1 packet soft noodles (200g / 7oz), see note above

2-3 handfuls grated parmesan cheese

1. Heat a frying pan or skillet on a medium high heat. Add a little oil, the butter and peas and cook for a few minutes to start the peas defrosting.

2. Break the noodles apart a little with your fingers and add to the pan. Stir fry until the peas are hot and the noodles softened. Season.

3. Serve with parmesan on top.

## VARIATIONS

**vegan / dairy-free** - use olive oil instead of the butter and serve with finely grated brazil nuts or almond meal instead of the parmesan.

**low GI / slow carb / gluten-free** – replace noodles with a drained can of chickpeas or white beans.

**different noodles** – replace with cooked pasta or dried wheat or soba noodles cooked according to the packet directions.

**carnivore** – brown some bacon or chorizo in the pan before starting at step 1.

**pea-free** – replace peas with frozen broccoli or cauliflower. Will need longer cooking before the noodles are added..



video

# Noodles with Parmesan Peas...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**can't find 'soft' noodles?** – replace with cooked pasta or dried wheat or soba noodles cooked according to the packet directions.

**noodles falling apart** – when noodles are overcooked they can get fragile. So keep an eye on them and remove from the heat before this happens.

**bland** – add more parmesan or next time consider trying a different brand of parmesan.

**too dry** – add in a little more oil or a splash of lemon juice.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

OK but best when freshly cooked

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

In bowls with extra parmesan on the side.



*creamy coconut lentils*

# Creamy Coconut Lentils



Red lentils are one of my favourite pantry staples because they're cheap, packed with protein, are really quick to cook and taste super delicious. This dish is 'comfort central' in a similar way to a good risotto.

I also think that coconut milk is an underutilized ingredient apart from Asian cooking. This recipe really showcases how versatile coconut milk can be.

enough for 2

1 can tomatoes (400g / 14oz)

1 can coconut milk (400mL / 1.5 cups)

200g (7oz) red lentils

1 teaspoon dried chilli flakes or 1/2 teaspoon chilli powder, optional

1. Place all ingredients in a saucepan. Bring to the boil.
2. Simmer for about 8 minutes or until lentils are 'al dente'. Taste. Season.

## VARIATIONS

**no canned tomatoes?** – replace with 1.5 cups commercial tomato based pasta sauce, 4 tablespoons tomato paste + 1.5 cups water or 1.5 cups tomato puree.

**no coconut milk** – coconut cream is fine or replace with water or stock and add in a few tablespoons of butter or olive oil at the end.

**can't find red lentils?** – replace with green or brown lentils or even quinoa or brown rice. You'll need to cook these for much longer and may also need to add water.

**greener** – stir in some defrosted spinach or fresh baby spinach leaves at the end.

**more veg** – feel free to add zucchini, red capsicum (bell peppers) or finely chopped cauliflower. Again you may need to cook a little longer and add water so the veg soften..



video

# Creamy Coconut Lentils...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**bland** – be generous with the salt & pepper. Try a little more chilli as well.

**burning** – red lentils have a tendency to stick to the bottom of the pan so it's important to stir on a regular basis. Try reducing the heat as well. You may need to add a little water if you find its getting too thick but the lentils aren't cooked. Start with 1/4 cup and add as required.

**too thick / lentils not cooking** – we're aiming for 'al dente' like pasta which means the lentils will still have a bit of chew to them. The aim is to cook them just enough so they won't break your teeth. You may need to add a little water if you find its getting too thick but the lentils aren't cooked. Start with 1/4 cup and add as required.

**mushy** – red lentils will go from just cooked to mushy very quickly. So its important to keep an eye on them. I tend to err on the side of undercooked rather than mush, but it's up to you.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Great! Will keep in the fridge for 1-2 weeks. Can be frozen.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

In big bowls. Lovely served on a bed of fresh leaves such as baby spinach if you have any in the house – but also good without.



Tuna & Lentil Salad

# Tuna & Lentil Salad



enough for 2

1 tablespoon sherry or white wine vinegar

1 can lentils (400g / 14oz), drained & rinsed

2 tablespoons capers

2 cans tuna in oil (125g / 5oz each)

1. If your tuna is in good quality olive oil, place 2 tablespoons of the oil in a large salad bowl. Drain and discard the rest of the oil or keep it for another use.
2. Toss vinegar in with the oil. Add drained lentils and toss to combine.
3. If the capers are salted, place them in a little bowl of water then remove and squeeze dry. Toss in with the salad.
4. Flake tuna into the salad and toss lightly. Taste and season.

## VARIATIONS

**carnivore** – crumble and pan fry a few good quality pork sausages and use them to replace the tuna. Or use drained canned chicken.

**vegetarian** – replace tuna with a couple of halved boiled eggs and/or soft goats cheese or feta crumbled over.

**vegan** – replace tuna with a large handful of brazil nuts or walnuts or an avocado cut into chunks.

**fresh** – to freshen things up, toss in a handful of chopped flat leaf parsley or torn mint leaves or a handful of washed baby spinach leaves.

**tomato** – toss in a large handful of halved cherry tomatoes and maybe a little fresh basil if you have it.

**fancy** – I generally use regular tuna in oil which is really great but to take it up a level, seek out some good quality tuna slices in oil. Seared tuna steaks would also be a great alternative.



video

# Tuna & Lentil Salad...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too salty** – be careful with the seasoning as the capers and tuna tend to be quite salty.

**too dry** – toss in a little more extra olive oil and vinegar or serve with a generous dollop of good quality mayonnaise.

**no canned lentils?** – replace with canned chickpeas, butter beans or other white beans. Or cook some dried lentils and use those.

**need some greens?** - toss in a small handful of spinach, salad leaves or flat leaf parsley leaves.

**no capers?**- replace with some finely chopped red onion or chives or even some roasted pine nuts.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep in the fridge for a week or so.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Brilliant on its own or toss in some leaves for a more salad-y vibe.

Broccoli Pantry Curry



# Broccoli Pantry Curry



I once asked a nutritionist friend of mine whether fresh or frozen veg were better nutritionally. I was surprised that she said unless the fresh veg are super-fresh, that frozen actually tend to have higher vitamin levels. A good reason not to feel guilty about the convenience of frozen veg as part of your repertoire of 'pantry meals'.

I used to think that you needed more than just 'curry powder' to make a curry. But as I've discovered time and time again, a good curry powder is a brilliant way to instantly transform a dish into a tasty curry. I like to make my own but most commercial curry powders will do the job. You might like to experiment with different brands to find your favourite.

enough for 2

1 can coconut milk (400mL / 1.5 cups)

1 bag frozen broccoli (500g / 1lb)

2-3 teaspoons curry powder

1. Add coconut milk, frozen broccoli and curry powder to a medium saucepan.

2. Cover and place on a high heat. Bring to a boil then cook for about 5 minutes or until the broccoli is hot and cooked.

3. Taste and season generously, it will need quite a bit of salt. You may like to add a little more curry powder too.

## VARIATIONS

**fresh broccoli** – replace frozen with 2 heads broccoli chopped into little trees and stems finely sliced. May need to simmer a little longer for the broccoli to cook.

**different veg** – try cauliflower or peas.

**more substantial** – serve on a bed of steamed rice or finely grated raw cauliflower (aka 'cauliflower rice').

**no curry powder?** – replace with 2-3 tablespoons thai style curry paste.

**richer** – stir in 2-3 tablespoon peanut butter.

**carnivore** – add some finely sliced chicken breast or thigh fillets with the broccoli. Make sure chicken is cooked through before serving.



video

# Broccoli Pantry Curry..

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**watery** – A downside to using frozen veg is they can seem quite watery. For a thicker curry, simmer a little longer with the lid off (best to remove the broccoli while you do this so it doesn't over cook).

**bland** – It will need quite a bit of salt. You may like to add a little more curry powder too. Or for a more fiery curry add a little fresh or dried chilli.

**mushy broccoli** – it's easy to overcook frozen veg because the freezing process changes the texture. Not much can be done for now but next time keep an eye on it.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Great! Will keep in the fridge for 1-2 weeks.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

In big bowls with a spoon. If you have fresh basil or coriander leaves (cilantro) you could serve them on top..

Pea & Pesto Soup



# Pea & Pesto Soup



Frozen peas are seriously one of the best pantry (or freezer) ingredients. I love that they don't require any prep and can actually taste better than fresh peas.

This is a great 'pantry' recipe to have up your sleeve. It's perfect for nights when you need dinner to be on the table in 10 minutes or less.

enough for 2

500g (1lb) frozen peas

2-4 tablespoons pesto

1. Bring 2 1/2 cups water to the boil in a medium pot.
2. Add peas and cook for 5 minutes, or until the peas are hot and tender.
3. Puree with a stick blender. Stir in a little pesto, taste and add more if desired. Season.

## VARIATIONS

**vegan / dairy-free** – either replace the pesto with a large handful of torn basil leaves or use a vegan pesto like this Sicilian nut pesto.

**no pesto?** – the peas on their own make a really lovely pure soup. Or add in a few handfuls of grated parmesan.

**pesto-lovers** – if you are using good quality home made pesto, you might like to serve with a big dollop of pesto on top.

**richer** – add in a few tablespoon of butter when pureeing the soup.



video

# Pea & Pesto Soup...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too watery** – This isn't a super thick soup. Feel free to decrease the amount of water to 2 cups and serve in smaller bowls. If the deed is already done, try stirring in some more almond meal or some grated parmesan or even a handful of couscous.

**too bland** – Season more generously with salt & lemon. A little parmesan can help too.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Brilliant. Will keep for a week in the fridge.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Wonderful on it's own. Or with crusty bread & butter.

Beet & Tomato Soup



# Beet & Tomato Soup



Beets are one of my all time favourite vegetables. I just can't get enough. And while I do prefer the flavour of home roasted beets, I keep canned beets in the pantry for beet emergencies! I like the flavour of beets canned or bottled in beet juice rather than vinegar - it completely changes the flavour and makes them much more approachable

enough for 2

1 jar tomato pasta sauce (400g / 14oz)

1 can baby beets (440g / 15oz), drained

2 teaspoons ground cumin or coriander

6-8 tablespoons almond butter

1. Place tomato sauce (marinara sauce), half a jar of water, beets and cumin or coriander in a medium saucepan and bring to a simmer.
2. Remove from the heat and puree with a stick blender or food processor.
3. Return to the heat and stir in almond butter. Bring back to a simmer taste and season. If it is too tart, add more almond butter or a little sugar to soften the acidity.

## VARIATIONS

**carnivore** – serve with some finely sliced salami.

**no cumin?** - Use ground coriander or leave it unspiced.

**fresh** – to make from scratch roast a large bunch of beets until tender then allow them to cool and use as per the recipe. You may need to season the soup with a little wine vinegar or balsamic to make up for the fact that fresh beets don't have the added acid of canned beets.

**nut-free** - Replace almond butter with fresh cream or soured cream.



video

# Beet & Tomato Soup...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too tart or acidic** – canned beets can be strong. Add a little sugar or some more almond butter or cream to balance out the tartness.

**too thick** – add in more water and bring back to a simmer.

**no tomato sauce** – replace with canned tomatoes.

**no almond butter?** replace with fresh cream or tahini (ground sesame seeds) or cashew butter.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep in the fridge for a week or so.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Brilliant on its own. Also lovely with a little natural yoghurt or some goats cheese.



Chickpea & Veggie Salad

# Chickpea & Veggie Salad



enough for 2

1 jar grilled red peppers (280g / 10oz), drained

1 jar grilled eggplant (280g / 10oz), drained

1 can chickpeas (400g / 14oz), drained

1 tablespoon sherry or red wine vinegar

handful almonds, optional

1. Place a medium frying pan or skillet over a medium heat. Add drained peppers, eggplant (aubergine) and chickpeas. Stir fry for a few minutes or until the veg are warm and the chickpeas have browned slightly.

2. Meanwhile, combine vinegar with 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil. Wait and season later as there is probably enough salt in the veg and chickpeas already.

3. Toss warm veg in with the salad. Taste and season. Serve with almonds scattered over the top.

## VARIATIONS

**carnivore** – fry some sliced chorizo or other sausage in the pan and add to the salad. Or serve with some finely sliced salami or prosciutto scattered over.

**more protein** – shed the meat from half a BBQ chicken and toss in at the end. Or serve with a couple of halved boiled eggs.

**greens** – to freshen things up, toss in a handful of chopped flat leaf parsley or torn mint leaves or a handful of washed baby spinach leaves.

**cheesy** - serve with soft goats cheese or feta crumbled over.

**nut-free** – skip the almonds completely or substitute in some cheese or protein as per the suggestions above.



video

# Chickpea & Veggie Salad...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too salty** – be careful with the seasoning as preserved veg tend to be quite salty.

**too dry** – toss in a little extra olive oil and vinegar.

**too oily** – next time drain your veg on paper towel before using. For now just transfer the salad to a clean bowl, leaving as much oil behind as you can. Toss in the clean bowl to disperse more of the oil onto the sides of the bowl.

**no veg?** – feel free to char grill some red pepper and sliced eggplant (aubergine) yourself if you can't find good prepackaged ones. Or use whatever veg you have on hand, some slice and softened onions would be lovely as would a drained jar of artichoke hearts or sun dried tomatoes. Olives would also work – pretty much all the antipasto veg are great.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep in the fridge for a week or so.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

With the chickpeas and almonds it's a great vegetarian meal on its own.

Also lovely as a side salad with grilled or roast meat or poultry. Would also be great with kebabs or falafels



Quinoa & Grilled Veg Salad

# Quinoa & Grilled Veg Salad



I just love quinoa in salads as it has the most wonderful chewy texture. This is one of those salad which improves with a little time to 'marinate' in the dressing which makes it perfect as a do ahead lunch.

enough for 2

100g (3.5oz) quinoa, any colour

2 tablespoons lemon juice

large handful roast eggplant, sliced & drained

large hand grilled red capsicum (bell peppers),

sliced & drained on paper towel

handful brazil nuts or almonds, to serve

1. Bring a medium pot of water to the boil. Rinse quinoa well then simmer for 10-12 minutes or until al dente like pasta. Drain.

2. Combine lemon juice with 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil. Season.

3. Toss warm quinoa in the dressing. Add eggplant and red capsicum and serve with nuts sprinkled over.

## VARIATIONS

**roast veg** – let your imagination run wild here, roast pumpkin or sweet potato, roast beets, roast parsnip are all lovely.

**other grilled veg** – feel free to use home grilled veg. In summer zucchini are a favourite. Fennel or grilled asparagus are good too.

**carnivore** – replace nuts with finely sliced salami or cooked chicken.

**nut-free** – skip the nuts and use a soft goats cheese or blue cheese instead.

**warm salad** – either serve while still warm or reheat in the microwave or a saucepan.

**leafy** – toss in some flat leaf parsley leaves or a handful of baby spinach.



video

# Quinoa & Grilled Veg Salad...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**can't find quinoa?** – use brown rice cooked according to the packet directions.

**bland** – season with a little salt and possible more lemon juice

**dry** – drizzle in a little more olive oil.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Great! Will keep in the fridge for 1-2 weeks. The nuts will lose their crunch over time so best if added at the last minute.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

A wonderful lunchbox salad. OR for a healthier option serve over a handful of baby spinach leaves.

Module 4.

10-Ingredient  
Shopping  
List





# Module 4 Video & Audio

Video

[CLICK HERE](#) to view the video for Module 4.



## 10 Ingredient Shopping List 1

### STEAK / CHICKEN / HUMMUS

This shopping list is the shortest of the collection. The go-to proteins in this collection of recipes are good old fashioned steak and chicken thigh fillets. Hummus has been included to add protein and substance to the 'meat-free Monday' vegetarian recipe of the group.

#### Shopping List

1. Steak
2. Chicken Thigh Fillets
3. Hummus
4. Cashew Nuts
5. Lime Juice
6. Lemon Juice
7. Salad Leaves
8. Broccoli

#### Pantry Items

- Oyster Sauce
- Fish Sauce
- Dried Chilli
- Olive Oil
- Salt & Pepper



chicken & broccoli stir fry

# chicken & broccoli stir fry



This is one of my all-time favourite stir fries. I just love how the chicken, broccoli and cashews come together to make a super tasty meal in a bowl.

enough for 2

2 chicken breasts, finely sliced

1 bag frozen broccoli (500g / 1lb) or fresh

3 tablespoons oyster sauce

1 tablespoon lime juice

1 cup cashew nuts (150g / 5oz)

1. Heat a large frying pan or wok on a very high heat.
2. Add a few tablespoons peanut or macadamia oil to the pan and add chicken immediately.
3. Stir fry for a few minutes or until the chicken is no longer pink. Remove chicken from the pan.
4. Add broccoli and cook stirring occasionally until the broccoli is tender and hot.
5. Return the chicken to the pan with the oyster sauce, lime juice & nuts. Stir until hot. Taste and season.

## VARIATIONS

**arnivore** – Feel free to try different types of meat such as beef or pork. Tender cuts are the best. Minced chicken (ground) would also be lovely.

**fish free** – Oyster sauce should actually contain some oysters (who knew?) replace the oyster sauce with hoisin sauce or soy sauce.

**gluten free** – Some oyster sauce brands contain gluten thickeners. Replace with gluten-free soy sauce (tamari) or find an oyster sauce that is gluten-free.

**vegetarian / vegan** – replace the chicken with tofu or a can of drained beans and replace oyster sauce with soy.

**nut-free** – replace cashews with 1/2 can drained white or black beans..



video

# chicken & broccoli stir fry..

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland** – Season with salt & pepper and extra lime juice.

**too dry** – Add a little more oyster sauce

**chicken too dry or tough** – next time cut the chicken into finer slices so it cooks more quickly and remains moist and tender. Also it's better to be sure you don't overcook the chicken so remove it from the pan as soon as it's done, cook the broccoli and return the chicken at the end (don't follow my method in the video of leaving the chicken in the pan with the broccoli)

**can't find limes?** – Lemon juice or even a little rice wine or other wine vinegar will be a lovely replacement.

**still can't find oyster sauce?** – replace with soy sauce or hoisin or other stir fry sauce.

**broccoli too crunchy** – Frozen broccoli tends to be naturally more tender due to the freezing process. If you're using fresh it will take longer to cook and will benefit from having the lid on while you cook. Add a little water if it starts to burn before it is tender.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will reheat OK. but I prefer it fresh and hot.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great on its own. If you're having cravings for rice, serve with breakfast lentils on the side.



Vietnamese *Beef* Salad

# Vietnamese Beef Salad



This is one of my go-to dinners when I'm looking for something fast and fresh. I just love the combo of lime juice and fish sauce for bringing boring old steak to life.

I've just used salad leaves here but feel free to add in fresh herbs, especially mint and coriander (cilantro).

enough for 2

2 steaks

5 tablespoons fish sauce

6 tablespoons lime juice

1 teaspoon dried chilli flakes, or fresh chilli

4 handfuls salad leaves

1. Drizzle 2 tablespoons fish sauce over the steak and allow to marinate while you heat a pan on a high heat.
2. Pan fry the steaks for about 3 minutes on each side until cooked to your liking.
3. Meanwhile, combine lime juice with remaining 3 tablespoons fish sauce and the chilli.
4. When the beef is cooked, transfer to the dressing and rest for a few minutes.
5. Finely slice the steaks and return to the dressing. Toss in the salad leaves and serve immediately.

## VARIATIONS

**carnivore** – serve as a side dish to roast lamb or lamb chops. Or brown some sliced chorizo in a pan and stir through the split peas.

**vegetarian / vegan** - replace the fish sauce with soy sauce (2 tablespoons should do it). And stir fry sliced mushrooms to use in place of the beef.

**herby** – add in fresh coriander (cilantro) or mint leaves as well as or instead of the salad leaves.

**budget** – replace the steak with ground (minced) beef. Brown it well then toss into the dressing.

**more substantial** – serve with cauliflower 'rice' or steamed rice or toss in some rice noodles cooked as per the packed directions.



video

# Vietnamese Beef Salad...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**steak too tough** – it could just be the steak, or it's overcooked. Next time try a different cut OR a different butcher.

**too salty** – different brands of fish sauce vary in their intensity. If it's too much, balance out with a little more lime juice and a pinch of sugar.

**bland** – add in a little more fish sauce or some salt. More chilli will help liven things up as well.

**short on time?** – slice the raw beef into strips and stir fry for a few minutes until just browned.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep for over a week in the fridge – the salad leaves will wilt but it will still be edible.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great as a light, fresh dinner on it's own. Or serve as part of an Asian banquet with a curry and possibly another stir fry.

Chilli Chicken *with* Hummus



# Chilli Chicken with Hummus



Hummus is one of my favourite ingredients. It's wonderful here as a cross between a sauce and an accompaniment. You can get some decent commercial hummus these days so don't feel like you need to make your own from scratch.

enough for 2

4 chicken thigh fillets

1 teaspoon dried chilli flakes (or 1/2 teaspoon chilli powder)

8 tablespoons hummus

2 large handfuls washed salad leaves

1 lemon halved lengthwise

1. Heat a frying pan or skillet on a very high heat.
2. Trim fat from chicken and bash with your fist to even out the thickness. Rub with a little olive oil and sprinkle with chilli. Season.
3. Sear with the oiled side down for 3 minutes. Turn and cook for another 2-3 minutes or until chicken is cooked through.
4. Smear hummus over the base of 2 plates. Top with chicken and serve with leaves and salad on the side.

## VARIATIONS

**vegan** – replace chicken with 2 field or portabello mushrooms per person. Trim and pan fry for about 4 minutes each side until the mushrooms are tender and juicy. Sprinkle on the chilli at the end before serving.

**vegetarian** – replace chicken with sliced halloumi cheese and cook in a little oil until golden and oozing.

**home made hummus** – whizz 1 can chickpeas with 3 tablespoons lemon juice, tahini, canning liquid and 1 clove garlic in a food processor until smooth.

**more substantial** – serve with pita bread for wrapping.



video

# Chilli Chicken with Hummus...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland** – Season with salt & pepper. Try some chilli.

**too dry** – Add a little more olive oil or serve with more hummus. If the chicken is very dry it means it's been overcooked. Next time get it out of the pan earlier.

**chicken pink** – Means it's not cooked properly. Just pop back in the pan and cook for another few minutes. Next time consider being a bit more aggressive with your bashing to make sure the chicken is thinner and will cook more quickly.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Pretty good. Can be eaten cold or the chicken reheated. Will keep in the fridge for 4-5 days. Hummus will keep longer.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Either serve chicken on a bed of hummus or serve hummus on top.



Lemon Steaks *with* Broccoli

# Lemon Steaks with Broccoli



Bashing the steaks like this has three benefits. First, it allows them to cook quicker. It also makes it easier to tell when the steaks are cooked. And finally it tenderises the meat, meaning it's fine for less expensive cuts as well. Although truth be told, my favourite part of this recipe is how the lemon juice and olive oil mingles with the juices as the steaks rest to make the most wonderful instant sauce.

enough for 2

2 steaks

1 head broccoli, sliced lengthwise

2 tablespoons lemon juice

1. Preheat a skillet or frying pan on a super high heat.
2. Using your fist or the base of a saucepan, bash steaks out until they are about half the thickness. Rub with olive oil and season.
3. Sear steaks for 2 minutes. Turn and sear for another 1-2 minutes, or until cooked to your liking.
4. Divide steaks between 2 warm dinner plates. Top with lemon and drizzle with your best peppery extra virgin olive oil.
5. Add a little oil to the pan and stir fry broccoli for a few minutes, or until charred on the outside.
6. Serve steaks topped with broccoli.

## VARIATIONS

**vegetarian** – Replace the steak with sliced haloumi cheese and cook in a little oil until golden and oozing. Serve straight away with the broccolini and chilli oil.

**vegan** – slice a block of tofu into 5mm (1/4in) thick slices and pan fry until golden on both sides.

**fun** – explore different types of meat. Chicken breast is lovely cooked in this way.

**hot!** – drizzle the steaks with chilli oil, or use a little dried chilli.



video

# Lemon Steaks with Broccoli...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland** – Season with salt & pepper. Try some chilli.

**too dry** – Add a little more olive oil.

**broccoli too crunchy / soft** – Next time cook it for longer / less time.

**steak tough** – sounds like you didn't bash your steaks out enough. Next time be more aggressive. And consider trying a different cut of steak.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great on its own. Or with a little Dijon mustard.



Hummus Charred Broccoli

# Hummus Charred Broccoli



This is one of my all-time favourite ways to cook broccoli. By getting the pan super hot and using the lid to trap the steam, the broccoli chars on the bottom and steams on the top, giving a really lovely texture and complex flavour.

enough for 2

2 heads broccoli

8 tablespoons hummus

large handful roasted cashews or almonds

1. Heat a large frying pan on a very high heat. Chop your broccoli into mini trees.
2. Add a few tablespoons olive oil to the pan and add broccoli immediately. Cover and cook for 2 minutes.
3. Stir broccoli, recover and cook for another 2 minutes or until how you like it.
4. Smear hummus over the base of two plates. Top with hot broccoli and scatter over the cashews.

## VARIATIONS

**carnivore** – For a more substantial meal. brown some ground beef until really well cooked. Season and sprinkle over the broccoli.

**nut-free** – Just skip the nuts or replace with chopped hard boiled egg.

**home made hummus** – Whizz 1 can chickpeas with 3 tablespoons lemon juice, tahini, canning liquid and 1 clove garlic in a food processor until smooth.

**more substantial** – serve with fresh pita bread.



video

# Hummus Charred Broccoli..

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland** – Season with salt & pepper and lemon juice.

**too dry** – drizzle over a few tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil. Or use more hummus.

**broccoli burning** – Add a few tablespoons of water to the pan to prevent burning and increase the steam. Make sure you are covering the broccoli as best you can.

**broccoli too crunchy** – This method does tend to give more al dente broccoli. If you prefer it more tender, just cook for longer. A little extra water can help as well. Or use frozen broccoli which naturally less crunchy because of the freezing process.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great on its own. Or with some well browned ground (minced) beef.



## 10 Ingredient Shopping List 2

### SALMON / PROSCUITTO / CHICKPEAS

This shopping list, features salmon, prosciutto, chickpeas and parmesan. If you find it difficult to buy fresh fish, chicken breasts can be substituted in the two salmon recipes.

#### Shopping List

1. Salmon
2. Prosciutto
3. Parmesan
4. Chickpeas
5. Natural Yoghurt
6. Lime
7. Mint
8. Coriander (Cilantro)
9. Baby Spinach
10. Pasta (or canned white beans)

#### Pantry Items

- Lemon juice or vinegar
- Dried Chilli
- Olive Oil
- Salt & Pepper



Prosciutto *Baked* Salmon

# Prosciutto Baked Salmon



Salmon wrapped with prosciutto was the first Jamie Oliver recipe I ever made. Jamie serves his salmon on a bed of 'herby lentils' but I prefer to keep it simple and serve on a bed of baby spinach.

This is a great way to cook fish if you want to avoid 'fishy' smells in your apartment.

enough for 2

1. Preheat your oven to 200C (400F).
2. IF the salmon has skin, use a sharp knife to remove the skin,
3. Wrap each fillet with two slices of prosciutto and place on a baking tray. Drizzle with a little olive oil.
4. Bake for 10-15 minutes or until prosciutto is starting to brown and the salmon is cooked but still pink in the middle.
5. Serve salmon on a bed of baby spinach drizzled with yoghurt and lots of freshly ground black pepper.

## VARIATIONS

**carnivore** – Try wrapping chicken breasts with prosciutto. Will take a little longer to bake than the salmon, In the 15-20 minute range.

**salmon & peas** – while the salmon is baking, cook some frozen peas in a pan with a little olive oil until hot and serve with the salmon either instead of or as well as the baby spinach.

**pescatarian** – skip the prosciutto and season the salmon with lots of salt & pepper.

**no oven?** – pan fry the wrapped salmon instead. It will take 3-4 minutes on each side.

**vegetarian** – roast mushrooms in a hot oven for 20-25 minutes or until tender and serve on a bed of baby spinach with the yoghurt sauce.

**vegan** – roast mushrooms as per the vegetarian recipe and serve with spinach & lentils. Mix a drained can of lentils in with the spinach and season with lemon juice and a little olive oil.



video

# Prosciutto Baked Salmon..

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**dry salmon** – this is tough to achieve. But sounds like your salmon is overcooked. Next time cook for less. For now be generous with the yoghurt.

**unevenly cooked salmon** – if your salmon fillets are quite different in size and shape it can be difficult to get them to cook evenly. Not much you can do now. but next time try to choose fillets from the middle of the fish rather than the tail end.

**bland** – next time try a different fishmonger for your salmon. For now be more generous with the salt & pepper and try a squeeze of lemon to freshen things up.

**short on time?** – pan fry the wrapped salmon instead. It will take 3-4 minutes on each side.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep for a few days in the fridge.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great as is.



Chickpea & *Yoghurt* Salad

# Chickpea & Yoghurt Salad



I love using yoghurt as an ingredient. It adds lovely creaminess without being too rich and heavy. Make sure you use a good quality full-fat yoghurt.

enough for 2

3 tablespoons natural yoghurt

1 tablespoon lemon juice

1 can chickpeas (400g / 14oz), drained

4-6 slices prosciutto, torn

1 small bunch mint, leaves picked

1. Combine yoghurt and lemon juice in a bowl. Season.
2. Toss in chickpeas, prosciutto and mint. Serve.

## VARIATIONS

**dairy-free** – replace yoghurt with extra virgin olive oil.

**vegan** – replace prosciutto with grilled red peppers or semi-dried tomatoes and replace yoghurt with extra virgin olive oil.

**vegetarian** – replace prosciutto with grilled veg or chopped hard boiled eggs (2 should do it) or a handful of roasted hazelnuts or almonds.

**warm salad** – warm chickpeas in the microwave or a small saucepan before tossing in the salad. The prosciutto can be pan fried until crispy as well if you like.

**different greens** – baby spinach or salad leaves or basil can substitute for the mint.

**budget** – replace prosciutto with chopped bacon that has been pan fried until crisp.



video

# Chickpea & Yoghurt Salad...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too watery** – make sure the chickpeas are well drained before tossing in the dressing. You may like to pat dry on paper towel. The other culprit could be the brand of yoghurt. Next time try a creamier natural yoghurt.

**bland** – season with a little more salt and possibly a splash more lemon juice.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep in the fridge for about a week. If making ahead best to add the mint leaves just before serving to avoid wilting.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Lovely in a bowl on its own. You could also consider serving with pita bread on the side.

Pasta with Prosciutto & Spinach



# Pasta with Prosciutto & Spinach



It's hard to go past a good quick pasta dinner. Especially ones like these where all you need to do is boil the pasta and make an 'instant sauce' by stirring the flavourings in at the last minute. Of course, I've included a 'pasta-free' option in the variation for those of you who prefer to go easy on the carbs or gluten.

enough for 2

200g (7oz) pasta

2 tablespoons lemon juice

4-6 slices prosciutto, torn

2 handfuls finely grated parmesan + extra to serve

2-3 handfuls baby spinach leaves

1. Bring a medium pot of salted water to the boil. Add pasta and set your timer as per the recommendations on the pasta packet.
2. When pasta is 'al dente' or tender, drain and return to the pot.
3. Add lemon juice and 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil to make your sauce.
4. Add prosciutto, parmesan and baby spinach. Toss to combine. Taste & season.
5. Serve with extra parmesan if needed.

## VARIATIONS

**vegetarian** – replace the prosciutto with sliced semi-dried tomatoes.

**vegan** – replace parmesan with finely grated brazil nuts or almond meal and replace prosciutto with semi dried tomatoes or grilled red peppers.

**dairy-free** – just skip the cheese or replace parmesan with finely grated brazil nuts or almond meal.

**pasta-free** - heat a drained can of white beans or chickpeas in a frying pan. Remove from the heat and continue from step 3.

**different greens** – replace spinach with fresh basil leaves or rocket (arugula)



video

# Pasta with Prosciutto & Spinach...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**bland – add more parmesan.**

**dry** – drizzle with a little more extra virgin olive oil and possibly a little more lemon juice.

**pasta sticking together** – either the pasta hasn't been stirred enough, especially during the initial few minutes of cooking. Or the pasta is overcooked.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep for a week or so in the fridge but tastes best when freshly made.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

A great quick one bowl meal. Or if feeding people who are a bit afraid of greens – serve with spinach on the side.



Salmon Lime & Chilli Salad

# Salmon Lime & Chilli Salad



When my Irishman asked what was for dinner and I told him it was this salad he wasn't very impressed with the idea and asked if we could have some beef or potatoes with it. After we ate the salad for dinner, however his story had done a complete backflip and he wanted to know if there were seconds! We both loved how the freshness of the herbs and dressing contrasted the rich hot salmon.

enough for 2

2 salmon fillets

1-2 small red chillies, finely sliced

4 tablespoons lime juice

bunch mint, leaves picked

bunch coriander (cilantro) leaves picked

1. Heat a pan on a medium high heat. Rub the salmon with a little oil.
2. Sear the salmon, skin side down first until cooked to your liking. I like it quite rare in the middle and cooked it about 4 minutes on the first side and 3 on the second.
3. Meanwhile, combine lime juice and chilli with 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil. Taste & season with salt or fish sauce.
4. When the salmon is cooked, slice or tear into chunks, discarding the skin or keeping it as you like.
5. Toss the herbs in the dressing and serve on top of salmon chunks.

## VARIATIONS

**different fish** – most fish fillets will work. Just adjust the cooking time accordingly.

**beef salad** – replace the salmon fillets with steaks.

**vegetarian / vegan** – replace salmon with tofu or seitan.

**different leaves** – feel free to use baby spinach or other salad leaves instead of or as well as the herbs. Thai basil is also really lovely.



video

# Salmon Lime & Chilli Salad...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**fish sticking to the pan** – make sure your pan is hot before adding the fish and be generous with the oil.

**fish burning** – reduce the heat or turn the fish so the other side gets cooked.

**bland** – spike with more lime and or chilli. You may need a little salt or fish sauce.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

The salad will wilt but the salmon will keep in the fridge for 3-4 days.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great as a quick healthy weeknight meal. You could skip the salmon chopping step and serve the whole fillets with the salad if you like.

Hot Cheesy Chickpeas



# Hot Cheesey Chickpeas



This is my favourite lunch for this class! I just love how the cheese forms a natural warm sauce for the chickpeas.

enough for 1

*1/2 to 1 can chickpeas, drained*

*handful freshly grated cheese such as guryere,  
parmesan or cheddar*

*small handful flat leaf parsley leaves, to serve*

1. Place chickpeas in a microwave proof bowl. Toss in the cheese.

2. Cook for 1-2 minutes on high until the cheese has melted and everything is hot. Serve with parsley on top.

## VARIATIONS

**different legumes** – feel free to use other canned or cooked beans instead of the chickpeas.

**different cheeses** – a good melting cheese is best. Or try a combination of parmesan, mozzarella, cheddar.

**carnivore** – add in a handful of chopped bacon or salami

**vegan / dairy-free** – heat the chickpeas on their own and serve drizzled with tahini.



video

# Hot Cheesy Chickpeas...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**bland** – choose a different cheese next time or use more!

**dry** – again a different cheese will help or drizzle with a little extra virgin olive oil.

**don't have a microwave?** - just heat the chickpeas and cheese under the grill until hot and melted.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Best when hot from the microwave.



## 10 Ingredient Shopping List 3

### WALNUTS / EGGS / LENTILS

This is the vegetarian collection of the series. If you don't have access to canned lentils, you can substitute cooked, dried lentils. We'll be going into more detail on cooking lentils in module 5. but for now just cook them in boiling water like pasta until they are tender and use as per the recipe.

#### Shopping List

1. Frozen Peas (or fresh)
2. Onions
3. Flat Leaf Parsley
4. Mixed Salad Leaves
5. Eggs
6. Canned Lentils
7. Parmesan Cheese
8. Soy Sauce
9. Balsamic / Sherry Vinegar
10. Walnuts

#### Pantry Items

- Dried Chilli
- Olive Oil
- Salt & Pepper
- Curry Powder
- Lemon Juice



Curried Scrambled Eggs

# Curried Scrambled Eggs



Scrambled eggs can feel a little 'breakfasty'. To make them more of a grown-up dinner in their own right, we've added the lovely complexity of onion, curry powder and a hit of chilli. Serving with a side of parsley leaves completes the evening ensemble.

enough for 2

*1 large onion, peeled & diced*

*1 teaspoon dried chilli flakes*

*2 teaspoons curry powder*

*4 eggs*

*1/2 bunch flat leaf parsley, leaves picked*

1. Heat a few tablespoons olive oil in a medium saucepan over a medium heat.
2. Add onion and cook, covered, stirring occasionally for about 5 minutes or until onions are soft and a little golden. If the onion starts to brown too much, turn down the heat and add a splash of water.
3. Meanwhile lightly whisk eggs in a small bowl and season.
4. When the onions are soft, add the chilli and curry and stir for a few seconds.
5. Add eggs to the pan and cook for about 30 seconds. Stir well, scraping up the cooked egg from the base of the pan and cook for another 30 seconds or until the egg is almost cooked.
6. Remove from the heat, stir in parsley & serve immediately.

## VARIATIONS

**carnivore** – serve with crispy bacon or some cooked sausages.

**vegan** – replace eggs with about 350g (12oz) crumbled firm tofu. And increase the curry powder a little.

**greener** - replace the parsley with a few handfuls of baby spinach and allow to wilt into the eggs before serving.



video

# Curried Scrambled Eggs ...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**onions burning** – it's important to remember to stir the onions and cook over a low enough heat that they soften without burning. Next time stir more frequently, but for now adding in a splash of water will help. Keeping the eggs covered so the steam stays in also helps avoid over browning or burning.

**eggs sticking to the base of the pan** – eggs have a tendency to stick. Be generous with the oil and stir vigorously to help avoid this.

**eggs rubbery** - the first sign that eggs are overcooked is the texture goes all rubbery. For now, add a little olive oil to moisten them but next time take the pan off the heat before you think the eggs are cooked.

**eggs watery** – when eggs get overcooked, the protein coagulates and squeezes out any excess moisture which results in water weeping out from your eggs. Not much you can do now, but next time take the pan off the heat before you think the eggs are done. The residual heat will be enough to finish them off.

**too bland?** don't forget to season generously. And possibly add in a little more curry powder and/or chilli.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Not great. Although I'm sure there are people out there who are happy to eat cold eggs, it's not really my thing.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Wonderful as a simple supper on it's own. Or serve with a green salad on the side or some steamed broccoli.



Warm Onion & Lentil Salad

# Warm Onion & Lentil Salad



There's something about onions and lentils together that just works. I think it's the warm earthiness that they both bring to this dish.

enough for 2

*2 large onions, peeled sliced*

*4 tablespoons balsamic vinegar*

*1 can lentils (400g / 14oz), drained*

*handful washed salad leaves*

*large handful walnuts*

1. Heat a few tablespoons olive oil in a medium saucepan over a medium heat.
2. Add onion and cook, covered, stirring occasionally for about 10 minutes or until onions are soft and deeply golden. If the onion starts to brown too much, turn down the heat and add a splash of water.
3. When the onions are cooked, remove from the heat and stir in lentils, balsamic and a little extra virgin olive oil.
4. Toss in salad leaves and serve sprinkled with walnuts.

## VARIATIONS

**carnivore** – toss in some chopped crispy bacon or chorizo.

**nut-free** – just skip the walnuts or replace with some soft goats cheese or ricotta.

**lentil-free** - replace the lentils with drained canned beans.



video

# Warm Onion & Lentil Salad...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**onions burning** – it's important to remember to stir the onions and cook over a low enough heat that they soften without burning. Next time stir more frequently, but for now adding in a splash of water will help. Keeping the eggs covered so the steam stays in also helps avoid over browning or burning.

**bitter** - burnt onions will give a bitter flavour to the whole salad. For now try and add a little more olive oil to soften the bitterness.

**too bland?** don't forget to season generously. And possibly add in a little more balsamic.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

OK. Will keep in the fridge for up to a week, The salad leaves will start to wilt down a little but it won't be the end of the world.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Wonderful as a simple supper on its own. Or serve as a side dish to grilled halloumi cheese or some pan fried pork sausages.



Pea & Parsley Baked Eggs

# Pea & Parsley Baked Eggs



Baked eggs are a wonderful thing to have in your quick veggie dinners repertoire. Feel free to explore different flavourings. Chilli, cherry tomatoes and mushrooms are work well here.

enough for 2

2 eggs

2 handfuls frozen peas

1 tablespoon sherry vinegar

1/2 bunch flat leaf parsley, leaves picked

parmesan cheese

1. Preheat your oven to 200C (400F) and bring your kettle to the boil.
2. Grease 2 ramekins and crack an egg into each. Place ramekins in a heat proof dish and fill the dish with boiling water to come 1/2 way up the sides of the ramekins.
3. Bake for 8-10 minutes or until the egg white just feels set to the touch.
4. Meanwhile combine the vinegar with 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil. Season.
5. Place peas in a strainer and pour boiling water over the peas to quickly defrost them. Drain and toss peas in the dressing.
6. Add parsley and toss. Serve eggs with salad on the side and parmesan grated over the top.

## VARIATIONS

**carnivore** – serve eggs layered with some finely sliced prosciutto.

**vegan** – skip the parmesan and serve the salad with avocado halves instead of the eggs. Feel free to bake the avocado and serve warm. Will take about 10 mins in a hot oven.

**egg-free** - replace the eggs with a few scoops of ricotta and bake until golden.

**more substantial** - crack 2 eggs into each of the buttered ramekins and bake for 12-15 minutes.

**super quick** – microwave the eggs on HIGH for 60 seconds per egg. It's important to butter the ramekins so the eggs don't stick.

**truffled eggs** - serve eggs with a small drizzle of truffle oil.



video

# Pea & Parsley Baked Eggs...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**eggs rubbery** – this is a classic sign of overcooked eggs. Next time start checking them earlier.

**snotty eggs** – undercooked whites look decidedly snotty. You could pop them back in the oven for a few minutes. Next time, feel the whites with your fingers to make sure they're firm before you serve.

**egg sticking to the ramekins** - next time make sure you butter the ramekins super generously.

**too bland?** add in a little more cheese to the salad and remember to season the eggs with salt and pepper.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

OK. Will keep in the fridge for up to a week, Be careful reheating the eggs. Probably best to pop them back in the oven in a water bath – OR eat them, cold.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Wonderful as a simple light lunch or supper on its own.

The pea & parsley salad also makes a great side salad to fish or anything Italian like risotto or pasta.



Pea & Lentil Salad

# Pea & Lentil Salad



This salad could almost be included in the pantry recipes. Just skip the salad leaves and you'd have a great pantry salad.

enough for 2

1 tablespoons sherry vinegar  
1 can lentils (400g / 14oz), drained  
2 handfuls frozen peas  
handful washed salad leaves  
parmesan cheese

1. Bring your kettle to the boil.
2. Combine vinegar with 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil in a salad bowl. Season.
3. Toss drained lentils in the dressing.
4. Pour boiling water over the peas and drain.
5. Toss peas and leaves into the salad.
6. Serve with parmesan shaved over the top.

## VARIATIONS

**carnivore** - toss in some finely sliced salami or prosciutto.

**vegan / dairy-free** - skip the parmesan and serve the salad with sliced almonds instead.

**different cheese** - a lovely creamy blue cheese would make a nice change from parmesan.

**lentil-free** - for a lighter, fresher salad skip the lentils and double the amount of peas.

**lemony** - for a different dressing substitute lemon juice for the vinegar and toss in the zest of a lemon.



video

# Pea & Lentil Salad...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**watery** – sounds like the lentils weren't drained properly. It's important to be thorough when draining the lentils. Rinsing with water may help get rid of the canning liquid.

**bland?** add in a little more salt & pepper and possibly a little more vinegar to sharpen things up.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Great. The leaves will go a little soggy but the rest of the salad will keep for at least a week.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great on it's own or as a side dish for grilled or pan fried meat such as lamb or beef.

Egg Fried Lentils



# Egg Fried Lentils



Inspired by egg fried rice which is apparently a hugely popular dish in Chinese restaurants in Ireland. If you struggle to get canned lentils, consider the rice option in the variations.

The original recipe calls for green onions (shallots) but I've substituted flat leaf parsley to keep to our 10 ingredient shopping list.

enough for 1 or 2

2 eggs

1 can lentils (400g / 14oz), drained

small handful flat leaf parsley leaves

1-2 tablespoons soy sauce

1. Place a medium frying pan (skillet) or wok on a medium heat. Crack eggs into a bowl and lightly whisk.
2. Add a few tablespoons neutral flavoured oil to the pan and add eggs.
3. Cook for about 30 seconds then stir the eggs to scrape the cooked egg away from the bottom of the pan and allow the raw egg to cook.
4. Add lentils and continue to stir fry until lentils are warm and the egg is cooked through.
5. Remove from the heat, add parsley and soy sauce. Taste and season with a little more soy if you think it needs it.

## VARIATIONS

**carnivore** – fry some diced bacon in the pan before you add the eggs or toss in some cooked chicken at the end.

**vegan / egg-free** – skip the eggs and serve with a generous handful of sliced almonds instead.

**rice** – for a more classic dish. Use 2 cups fluffy cooked basmati rice that has been allowed to cool.

**chickpeas** - replace canned lentils with a can of chickpeas.

**hot!** - add in a little dried or fresh chilli.



video

# Egg Fried Lentils...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**watery** – sounds like the lentils weren't drained properly. It's important to be thorough when draining the lentils. Rinsing with water may help get rid of the canning liquid.

**egg texture tough or rubbery** - sounds like overcooked eggs. Next time add the lentils earlier in the cooking process and remove from the heat before you think the eggs are 100% cooked. The residual heat from the pan will finish cooking the eggs.

**bland?** add in a little more soy sauce.

**can't find canned lentils?** Try substituting rice or chickpeas as per the suggestions above. Or use home cooked lentils. Just boil lentils in water and drain, like you would for pasta. You'll need about 250g (9oz) cooked lentils.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Great. Will keep in the fridge for at least a week.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great as a spartan meal on it's own.

Or serve as part of an Asian meal or as a rich side dish to serve with curries.



## 10 Ingredient Shopping List 4.

### BEEF / TUNA / LENTILS

Feel free to play around with this shopping list to add variety. Any canned beans could be used in place of the white beans. Salmon or sardines would be lovely in place of the tuna. Even smoked mussels or oysters would work. And the beef could be replaced with lamb, pork or chicken. Endless possibilities.

#### Shopping List

1. canned tuna
2. canned white beans
3. canned lentils
4. canned tomatoes
5. fresh baby spinach or frozen spinach
6. zucchini
7. ground (minced) beef
8. lemons
9. smoked paprika
10. chilli

#### Pantry Items

- soy sauce or tamari
- olive oil
- salt
- pepper

Smoky Tomato & Lentil Soup



# Smoky Tomato & Lentil Soup



My friend Heidi made this soup for her two adorable girls, Esme and Martha who aren't at school yet. Apparently it was a big hit with the little ones. Who knew smoky lentils would be popular with the pre-school crowd. If you are cooking for children you might like to tone down the chilli.

Smoked paprika is one of the most magical ingredients. If you can't find it the soup will be OK without, but I highly recommend tracking some down. I use dried chilli flakes because they look prettier, although you can't really tell in a soup. Feel free to substitute in chilli powder (about 1/2 teaspoon) or a few fresh chillies.

enough for 2

2 cans lentils (400g / 14oz)  
1 can tomatoes (400g / 14oz)  
1 tablespoon smoked paprika  
1 teaspoon dried chilli flakes  
1 tablespoon soy sauce

1. Place lentils, chilli, cumin, tomato and 2 1/2 cups water in a medium saucepan and bring to the boil.
2. Cover and boil for 9 minutes or until lentils are cooked to your liking.
3. Taste and season. Serve with a dollop of natural yoghurt.

## VARIATIONS

**soy-free** – skip it and season with sea salt instead.

**healthier** – stir in a few handfuls of frozen peas or baby spinach and simmer until warmed through / wilted.

**higher protein / more substantial** – toss in some diced tofu or shredded chicken or cooked sliced pork sausages to warm through before serving.

**can't find smoked paprika?** – replace with regular paprika or skip it and change the name to 'tomato & lentil soup'.



# Smoky Tomato & Lentil Soup...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland** – add a touch more soy sauce.

**don't have any canned lentils?** - No problem. Use canned white beans instead.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep in the fridge for at least a week or more and freezes well.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Wonderful on it's own.



Buttery *Zucchini* with Ground Beef

# Buttery Zucchini with Ground Beef



For simple week night dinners, one pot meals like this can be a life saver. I used to think dinner needed to have lots of different elements to be satisfying, but these days I'm just as happy with a simple modern meat and veg combo like this.

I love the texture of minced beef when it's been well cooked and crispy on the edges. Melting, buttery zucchini makes a wonderful contrast.

enough for 2

*450g (1lb) minced (ground) beef  
4 medium zucchini, sliced into thin rounds  
1-2 teaspoons dried chilli, optional  
fresh lemon, to serve*

1. Heat a few tablespoons olive oil in a large frying pan.
2. Cook beef over medium high heat, stirring for a minute or so.
3. Add zucchini and continue to cook stirring every now and then.
4. When the meat is well browned and the zucchini is soft and buttery remove from the heat.
5. Squeeze over 2-3 tablespoons lemon juice. Taste and season generously with salt & pepper.

## VARIATIONS

**different meat** – any minced (ground) meat is good here. Try chicken, pork, turkey, buffalo or even kangaroo!

**vegan / vegetarian** – replace the beef with crumbled tofu or setian. And add in a little ground cumin or coriander for extra flavour.

**herby** – add a little freshness with a handful of basil with mint or parsley.

**more substantial** – toss in a drained can of legumes or some cooked pasta. Or serve on a bed of either mashed potato or cauliflower puree.



# Buttery Zucchini with Ground Beef..

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too dry** – This is much nicer when you use a fattier grade of minced beef. For now, be generous with the lemon juice and maybe serve with a few tablespoons of butter or mayonnaise to moisten.

**bland** – Good quality beef tends to have better flavour so next time try getting your beef from a good butcher. For now you can increase your salt, chilli and or the lemon juice.

**crunchy zucchini** - I find undercooked zucchini really unappealing. You can add it back to the heat to cook for a little longer. Next time try slicing the zucchini more finely.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Excellent.



Tuna & White Bean Salad

# Tuna & White Bean Salad



If canned tuna isn't your thing, you can fancy up this recipe with smoked salmon or trout or even canned salmon.

enough for 2

2 tablespoons lemon juice

1 can tuna in oil (200g / 7oz), drained

1 can white beans (400g / 14oz), drained

2 handfuls salad leaves

1. Combine lemon juice with 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil in a medium bowl. Taste. Season.
2. Toss in tuna, beans and leaves.

## VARIATIONS

**carnivore** – replace the tuna with BBQ chicken or rare roast beef from the deli.

**vegetarian / vegan** – replace the tuna with an avocado, flesh scooped into chunks. Serve with a wedge of lemon for extra kick.

**different leaves** – replace the salad with other leaves such as watercress, mixed leaves, cos (romaine) or whatever else you happen to have on hand.

**other fish** – pretty much any canned fish will work here. Sardines, salmon, even smoked mussels or oysters if you're into them.

**wintery** – wilt the salad greens in a pan or use kale instead. Warm up the beans. Serve with the dressing and tuna sprinkled over.

**plus veg** – you can beef this up with whatever salad veg you feel like. Diced tomato, grated carrot, shaved cabbage, grated zucchini (courgettes) – the only limit is your imagination!



# Tuna & White Bean Salad..

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too dry** – splash in some more oil and lemon juice.

**too bland** – season with a little more salt and lemon. Next time buy a better quality can of tuna, preferably in oi.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

It will keep for a week in the fridge, but the leaves will be all wilted – not necessarily a bad thing as I discovered the other day.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great as a super quick lunch or dinner on its own.

Vegetable & *White Bean* Stew



# Vegetable & White Bean Stew



When you're in the mood for serious veggie fix, this is the recipe for you. Clocking in at 4 serves of veggies, with tomato, zucchini, spinach and beans, it almost takes you over the line for your 5-a-day target.

enough for 3 to 4

2 cans white beans (400g / 14oz each)

2 cans tomato (400g / 14oz each)

2-3 zucchini, sliced into coins

2 tablespoons smoked paprika

1 bag washed baby spinach leaves

1. Place beans and their canning liquid, tomato and their juices, zucchini and paprika in a large saucepan.
2. Bring to a simmer and cook uncovered for about 10 minutes or until the zucchini is soft.
3. Add spinach and continue to cook, stirring, until the spinach is just wilted. About a minute or so.
4. Taste, season and served drizzled generously with your best peppery extra virgin olive oil.

## VARIATIONS

**no smoked paprika?** – replace with regular paprika or try a different spice. Ground cumin or coriander are favourites.

**moroccan** – turn it into a vegetable 'tajine' by replacing the paprika with 1/4 preserved lemon finely sliced and using chickpeas instead of the beans.

**different veg** – pretty much any vegetables you like can be added including carrots, broccoli, red or green capsicum (bell peppers).

**hot!** – add in some fresh or dried chilli or serve with a generous drizzle of chilli oil.



A close-up photograph of a burger patty cooking in a black skillet. The patty is topped with a thick layer of red tomato sauce and garnished with fresh green basil leaves. In the background, a white bowl containing more tomato sauce sits on a wooden surface. The text "Burgers with Quick Tomato Sauce" is overlaid in the center of the image.

Burgers *with Quick* Tomato Sauce

# Simple Burgers with Quick Tomato Sauce



Cooking the burgers this way on a salt crust gives them a wonderful meaty crust. If you're worried about your salt levels, just fry the burgers in a little oil instead.

enough for 2

400g (14oz) minced (ground) beef

1 can tomatoes 400g (14oz)

1 tablespoon lemon juice

2 large handfuls baby spinach, to serve

1. Place tomatoes in a small saucepan and bring to a simmer.
2. Preheat a large frying pan or skillet on high.
3. Form beef into 2 patties.
4. Sprinkle a scant teaspoon salt on the hot pan and place burgers on top.
5. Sear burgers for about 4 minutes on each side. Remove meat and rest on 2 warm dinner plates.
6. Combine lemon juice with 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil. Toss in the baby spinach.
7. Serve burgers with sauce poured over and green salad on the side.

## VARIATIONS

**vegetarian** – Try serving [lentil burgers](#) with the tomato sauce. Equally delicious.

**vegan** – for a posh take on lentil burgers. Serve the lentil patties drizzled with some tahini sauce made with equal quantities of tahini, lemon juice and water and a side of [tabbouleh](#).



# Simple Burgers with Quick Tomato Sauce...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**burgers falling apart** – You need to be firm when forming your patties to help the burger maintain its shape. If the burgers start to stick or fall apart when you turn them, it usually means that they haven't cooked for long enough to form a crust. Leave for a minute or so longer and then try again.

**too salty** – The danger with this salt crust method is getting a super salty end dish. This is why I haven't seasoned the meat when making the patties. If you can see excess salt crystals on the pan or the burgers after they are cooked, gently wipe off with a piece of paper towel before making the sauce. Using unsalted butter will help. Next time use less salt in the pan but for now a little brown sugar whisked through the sauce can help sweeten and take the edge off the salty flavour.

**burgers raw in the middle** - When making thick burgers like this it can be easy to get the outside lovely and browned before the burgers are cooked through. If you're a little unsure, cut into one of the burgers to check they're done enough for you before removing from the heat – this isn't ideal but it's the best way to learn when meat is cooked. Eventually you'll be able to tell by feeling the burger without cutting into it – but that takes a little time.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Excellent. Great cold on sandwiches. Or just reheat with the sauce in pan over a low heat.



## 10 Ingredient Shopping List 5.

GROUND CHICKEN / WHITE BEANS / PORK SAUSAGES

### Shopping List

1. cherry tomatoes
2. red capsicum (bell peppers)
3. baby spinach
4. lemons
5. avocado
6. canned tomatoes
7. smoked paprika
8. chicken mince (ground chicken)
9. sausages
10. canned white beans (cannellini)

### Pantry Items

- Butter
- Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- Chilli
- Salt & Pepper



Quick Pork Ragu

# Quick Pork Ragu



If you're not normally a huge sausage fan, I highly recommend seeking out a super good quality butcher who preferably makes their own sausages and trying them out. Trust me there's a whole world of difference between a cheap and nasty banger and one made with love.

enough for 2

3-4 thick pork sausages

1 can tomatoes

2-3 tablespoons butter

4 large handfuls baby spinach leaves

1. Heat a little oil in a large frying pan or skillet on a medium high heat.
2. Remove sausage meat from the casings and crumble into the pan. Discard casings.
3. Cook for 3-5 minutes, stirring to break up the chunks, until the meat is starting to brown.

## VARIATIONS

**vegan** – replace sausages with 1 drained can of lentils or about 250g (9oz) of cooked red or green lentils and swap the butter for olive oil.

**different sausages** – pork are a firm favourite in our house but feel free to use other sausages such as beef or chicken if you like them.

**herby** – cook a few thyme leaves or rosemary in with the sausages.

**budget** – replace half of the sausages with cooked or canned white beans.

**more substantial** - feel free to serve the ragu with your favourite cooked pasta, preferably something short like rigatoni or penne.

**gluten-free** – use GF sausages or replace with about 400g (14oz) minced (ground) pork or other meat.



video

# Quick Pork Ragu...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland** – Season with salt & pepper. A little tomato paste can help.

**too tomatoey** – I like my ragu quite tomatoey – feel free to use less tomatoes if you prefer a more porky flavour.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Excellent! The ragu will keep in the fridge for a week or so. The baby spinach not so much.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great on its own. You could serve with a little parmesan if you're eating cheese or shave some brazil nuts over with a microplane grater – the nuts look heaps like parmesan and add a lovely subtle nutty richness.



White Bean & *Avocado* Salad

# White Bean & Avocado Salad



enough for 2

2 tablespoons lemon juice

1 cans white beans (400g / 14oz), drained

4 handfuls baby spinach

1 avocado

small handful roast almonds

1. Combine lemon juice with 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil in a large salad bowl. Season generously.
2. Toss drained beans and baby spinach in the dressing.
3. Halve avocado and scoop out bight sized pieces of flesh with a spoon and add to the salad.
4. Divide salad between two plates and serve with almonds sprinkled over.

## VARIATIONS

**carnivore** – avocado and bacon are great friends. Replace the almonds with some crispy fried bacon pieces. Add in a few halved tomatoes for a classic BLT salad.

**no baby spinach** – just substitute in whichever mixed salad leaves you have on hand.

**nut-free** - replace the almonds with some halved cherry tomatoes, for colour OR some finely diced red onion for crunch.

**mexican salad** – Replace lemon juice with lime and toss in a little dried or fresh chilli to spice things up.



video

# White Bean & Avocado Salad..

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**avocado browned** – next time try choosing an avocado that feels firm, rather than squishy and soft. For now just dig out and discard the icky bits as best you can.

**too acidic** – I've intentionally made this dressing quite punchy, but lemons can vary in their strength. If you find it too intense, toss in a little more olive oil to mellow things out.

**too bland?** avocado needs some seasoning to cut through the fattiness so be generous with the salt and pepper. A little more lemon may also help liven things up.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

The salad leaves will wilt and the avocado may brown a little, but some people don't mind that.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Wonderful as a simple Summer meal on it's own. Or serve as a substantial side salad to pan fried fish or roast chicken.



Sausages with Summer Veg Recipe

# Sausages with Summer Veg Recipe



enough for 2

4-6 good quality pork sausages

1 red capsicum (pepper)

1 punnet cherry tomatoes (250g/10oz)

1 teaspoon dried chilli

1 handful baby spinach leaves

1. Heat a medium pan on a high heat. Add a few tablespoons olive oil.
2. Remove sausage skins and crumble the meat into chunks in the pan. Discard the skins. Fry, stirring occasionally for a few minutes, or until sausages are starting to brown on the outside.
3. Meanwhile chop capsicum (pepper) into long chunks and add to the pan. Halve tomatoes and add them as well.
4. Continue to stir fry for another few minutes or until the sausages are browned and cooked through and the tomatoes have started to break down and go a little squishy.
5. Season with salt, pepper and chilli and serve with baby spinach leaves scattered over the top.

## VARIATIONS

**vegetarian** – try a tofu with summer veg. Replace sausages with about 350g (12oz) crumbled firm tofu. Add in a tablespoon smoked paprika to help give the tofu some colour and flavour.

**vegan** – Replace sausages with diced eggplant. No need to salt the eggplant first but the eggplant will take quite a bit longer to cook than the sausages and be prepared to be very generous with the olive oil. Super important to make sure the eggplant is cooked – there are few things worse than crunchy eggplant.

**different sausages** – I've used good Italian style pork and fennel sausages here but feel free to play around with different types. Chorizo would work really well with the tomato and peppers.



video

# Sausages with Summer Veg Recipe...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**sausages sticking to the pan** – if your pan is like mine, your sausages will stick unless you've very generous with the oil. Don't stress, when you add the tomato it will all cook in together and make your sauce taste even more delicious.

**too dry** – We're really relying on the tomatoes to break down a little and give us some sauce in this dish. If your tomatoes aren't ripe enough you may need to cook them for a little longer. A splash of your best extra virgin olive oil or a squeeze of lemon will help.

**too bland?** It's super important to use good quality sausages. For now season more generously, but next time try getting some good Italian style pork sausages from a reputable butcher.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Wonderful. Although the salad will wilt if kept in the fridge after it has been dressed.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

With the spinach on top, this is a great little mid week meal on its own.

For a more substantial meal, serve with crusty bread or even toss in some cooked pasta or a can of lentils.



Spanish Chicken with *White Bean Mash*

# Spanish Chicken with White Bean Mash



enough for 2

450g (1lb) minced (ground) chicken

1 tablespoon smoked paprika

1 red capsicum (pepper), sliced into ribbons

1 can white beans (400g / 14oz), drained

2 tablespoons lemon juice

1. Heat a large frying pan (skillet) on a very high heat.
2. Add a few tablespoons of olive oil, chicken and paprika. Stir fry for a few minutes.
3. Meanwhile chop the pepper and add to the pan. Continue to stir fry until the chicken is golden and cooked through. Season.
4. Mash beans and lemon juice together and season.
5. Serve chicken on a bed of beans with a little extra lemon if you think it needs it.

## VARIATIONS

**vegetarian / vegan** – replace chicken with crumbled tofu. You may like to increase the amount of paprika to add a little more flavour to the tofu. A few tablespoons of tomato paste will help too.

**bean-free** – serve chicken on a bed of your favourite pasta or noodles or even steamed rice.

**more colourful** – toss in a sliced green pepper or a handful of snowpeas at the end.



video

# Spanish Chicken with White Bean Mash...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**chicken sticking to the pan** – add a little more oil for now. But next time, best to use a hotter pan and stir more frequently.

**too bland** – it's important to use good quality free range chicken if you can. Seasoning generously and adding a little more smoked paprika can help.

**too dry?** This dish isn't super saucy. For now add a little more olive oil or maybe an extra squeeze of lemon. A little tomato puree will also help make it more saucy.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Great. Will keep in the fridge for up to a week

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great as is. Might be nice to have a little green salad or some steamed broccoli on the side.



Chicken Burgers *with Avocado* & Red Salad

# Chicken Burgers with Avocado & Red Salad



While it's hard to beat a good burger in a bun, for mid week dinners I often fancy up my burgers by ditching the bread and serving with salad or veg and an interesting sauce. I just love the colours in this dish with the vibrant 'red' salad and green avocado sauce. So pretty!

enough for 2

450g (1lb) minced (ground) chicken

1 avocado

lemon juice

1 punnet (250g / 8oz) cherry tomatoes, halved

1 red capsicum (pepper)

1. Heat a medium frying pan (skillet) on a very high heat. For about 3 minutes. You want it searing hot.
2. Divide chicken into 2 and form into 2 patties.
3. Sprinkle a scant teaspoon of salt over the base of the pan and add burgers.
4. Cook for about 4 minutes each side or until burgers are deeply golden.
5. Meanwhile, mash avocado flesh with 2 tablespoons lemon juice and season. Taste and add a little more lemon if you like.
6. Finely dice capsicum (pepper) and toss together with tomato and a squeeze of lemon.
7. Serve burgers on a bed of avocado mash with salad on the side.

## VARIATIONS

**vegetarian** – replace chicken with halloumi cheese. Slice into pieces about 1cm (1/3in) thick and pan fry in oil until golden.

**vegan** – replace chicken with large field mushrooms. You'll need 1-2 mushrooms per person depending on their size. Either pan fry the mushrooms in oil OR roast in a 200C (400F) oven for about 30 minutes or until tender and juicy.

**different meat** – ground beef, ground buffalo, ground port or ground lamb would all be lovely here.

**low sodium** – instead of cooking on a bed of salt, use a little oil in the pan.



video

# Chicken Burgers with Avocado & Red Salad...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**burgers sticking to the pan** – add some oil for now. Next time, make sure the pan is very hot before you add the salt.

**too bland** – it's important to use good quality free range chicken if you can.

**too salty** – It can be easy to overdo the salt with this cooking method so be very careful with your amount. If it does end up to salty, the best option is to scrape or cut the salty surface away.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great as is. Might be nice to have a little green salad on the side. For a more substantial (but less healthy) meal, serve with your favourite burger bun.



# Other List

Links to Other 10 Ingredient  
Shopping Lists on Stonesoup

[Eggs, tofu, lentils \(veggie\)](#)



# Your Action Steps

## 4 Steps to Make the 10 Ingredients Lists Work for You.

Remember, insight without action is worthless. So it's super important to take the first step now while everything is fresh in your mind.

1. Complete Step 4. for developing your habits from Module 1. (STEP 4. Write down your plan and make a public commitment)
2. Choose the shopping list below with the most exciting recipes.
3. Decide how many dinners to include.
4. Work out how much of each ingredient you need. (most of my recipes feed 2). Go shopping (or delegate it!).
5. Report Back! Share your experience with your 10 Ingredient Shopping List. Either leave a comment on the recipe page OR take it up a notch and share a pic of your creation on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#)

Module 5.

Avoiding  
Waste





# Module 5 Video & Audio

## Video

[CLICK HERE to view video for Module 5.](#)

NOTE: The video files cover the written content on the next few pages.



# 'Mise en place'

## 6 easy ways to use the magic of 'mise en place' in your kitchen

Ever eaten at a restaurant with an exposed kitchen so you could watch the chefs at work? And ever noticed all the little containers and bottles of sauces they have at their work stations?

### **What is Mise en place?**

Mise en place is a French term that I roughly translate as 'put in place'. In cooking it's used to describe the practice of chefs preparing food up to a point where it is ready to be used in a dish during food service.

It may be as simple as washing and picking herbs into individual leaves or chopping vegetables. Or more complicated like caramelising onions or slow cooking meats.

The main benefit in a restaurant is that it makes it much quicker and easier to get food on the table after the customer has ordered.

The secondary benefit is that the preparation can help to extend the shelf life of fresh produce.

### **How can we home cooks use this chef secret to our advantage?**

1. Prep when we have time to save time later

By taking the time on weekends or another time to do a little 'mise en place' preparation, we can make it much quicker and easier to get dinner on the table when we come home from work late and everyone is hungry.

## 6 easy ways to use the magic of 'mise en place' in your kitchen

### 2. Prolong the shelf life of our produce

Cooked ingredients tend to last longer than fresh. This is because cooking reduces the amount of bacteria in the food AND cooking destroys enzymes which can also cause spoilage. So employing a little 'mise en place' not only saves time, it can also reduce waste.

For example, a slow cooked meat dish will last for a few weeks in the fridge, where as fresh meat can only be a few days. Same goes for wilted spinach vs a bunch of spinach.

### 6 quick ways of using 'Mise en Place'

#### 1. Precooking grains or legumes

Dried grains and legumes such as rice, barley, lentils, chickpeas and beans tend to take between 30-90 minutes to cook. And longer if you factor in the soaking time for beans.

Once cooked, grains and legumes will keep in the fridge for a few weeks. To keep for longer they can be frozen – a great option as they tend to keep their shape and defrost easily, like frozen peas.

#### 2. Precooking meat or fish

Fresh fish and meat is highly perishable. Using mise en place to

pre-cook dramatically increases keeping time. Poaching keeps everything moist so is an excellent method. But roasting or even pan frying can also be employed.

#### 3. Wilting vegetables

Wilting veg prolongs their shelf life, primarily by deactivating enzymes. Consider methods such as sauteeing, steaming or even boiling briefly.

#### 4. Roasting vegetables

Roasting veg takes at least 30 minutes, or longer for larger pieces. Having a stash of pre-roasted veg opens up a world of possibilities for quick, healthy dinners.

#### 5. Making sauces or 'preserves'

Sauces can transform a meal from ho-hum to amazing. The balsamic onions from this module are a great example.

We'll cover 10 of my favourite quick sauces in Module 6 when we master the art of adaptation.

#### 6. Fully preparing meals.

Do-ahead dinners that just need heating and serving are another easy way to harness the benefits of 'mise en place'.





# 6 Tips for Making Leftovers Last

## 6 Tips for Making Leftovers Last

When it comes to the factors that make leftovers go bad, we're dealing with two of the same culprits that attack our fresh ingredients. Namely microbes and oxygen.

So here are 6 tips specifically targeted towards reducing the impact of microbes and oxygen to help leftover last as long as needed.

**1. Chill ASAP.** The worst thing for most food is to be hanging around at room temperature – perfect growing conditions for microbes. So the sooner you pop things in the fridge or freezer, the smaller your microbe populations are going to be to begin with.

And less microbes = you guessed it, longer shelf life.

I generally wait until hot food has cooled for 30 minutes or so before putting on the lid and chilling. This is to avoid loads of condensation and to avoid putting undue stress on my fridge.

**2. Keep different components separately, if possible**

The other night we had curry with quinoa and stir fried bok choy. There were leftovers of all 3 dishes. I could have just piled it all into the same container, but instead I chose to pack the items away separately. The main benefit of doing this is that it gives you more options for 'reinventing' the leftovers. So the quinoa can be used in a salad, or a soup, or served with yoghurt and berries. You get the idea.

## 6 Tips for Making Leftovers Last

**3. Consider packing individual serves** When I used to take my lunch to work, I'd pack most leftovers into little 'lunch sized' containers. Then pop them in the fridge, and sometimes the freezer. So in the mornings I'd be able to grab and go, making it much more likely that I'd actually take my lunch.

Individual serves are also great in the freezer because they're quicker and easier to defrost.

**4. Cover** Fridges and freezers are VERY dry environments. You know yourself that uncovered food dries out very quickly. I tend to use glass containers fitted with plastic lids or just cover things with cling wrap or foil. Whatever works for you, just don't be like my Dad and put your steaks in the freezer without any protection.

**5. Use appropriately sized containers.** This is more of a precaution against oxygen, less air or 'head space' in a container means less air and by extension, less oxygen. Poorly protected food will be more likely to suffer from freezer burn. A side benefit is that you'll fit more things in your fridge and freezer.

**6. Use freezer suitable bags** Not all plastic bags are created equally in their ability to act as a barrier for air and moisture under very low temperatures. So make sure you use proper freezer bags, or ziplock bags.





# Leftover Meals

## 11 Fun Ideas for 'Reinventing' Leftovers

Just like people, some leftovers actually improve with age while others aren't so lucky. The trick to having 'fun' with leftovers is knowing which dishes will fit into which category.

I also find it's super important to mix things up. Here are 11 ideas to keep leftovers in the 'fun' and tasty end of the food spectrum.

### **1. Take a break.**

Having the same leftovers for more than one meal in a row can make even the most unadventurous eater get a little tired. But a break of even just one day can make them seem 'new' again.

Most things will keep for a week in the fridge and much longer in the freezer so don't feel pressured into eating all the leftovers before moving onto other dishes.

### **2. Freeze some.**

If you've got way more than you can possibly eat in a week, be sure to freeze at least some. It's amazing how a few weeks spell in the freezer can make something totally 'old' seem fun again.

Most things, with the exception of raw veg dishes or salads, freeze well. So if in doubt give it a try!

# 11 Fun Ideas for 'Reinventing' Leftovers.

## 3. Share the love.

Either take leftovers into work to share with your colleagues. Or invite some friends over for dinner – no need to tell them they're doing you a favour by eating up your leftovers. When I was single I used to pack a leftover 'care package' to give to my guests (especially for leftover desserts) so I wouldn't be stuck eating the same thing for weeks.

## 4. Make a leftover leafy salad

Make a [classic green salad](#) and turn it into a meal by scattering over your leftovers, that have been chopped into bight sized pieces, if needed. Works with either cold leftovers or warm them up for a lovely warm salad.

## 5. Try a leftover & legume salad

If you've got some leftovers but not enough to make a meal out of them, give them a little 'stretch' by tossing warmed leftovers through cooked or canned lentils or beans. A handful of some fresh leaves, herbs or finely sliced celery can help to freshen it all up.

## 6. The leftover sandwich or wrap

The Earl of Sandwich was onto a good thing. Most things do taste better between two slices of bread. Just don't forget to add something fresh and something saucy to keep it moist. Slow carbers should apply the same rule to an 'ice berg lettuce wrap'.

## 7. The leftover 'toastie'

Without the fabulous invention that is the 'toasted sandwich maker', I would have starved to death during college. It never ceased to amaze me how a practically inedible meal could be turned into a tasty delight by popping it in a 'toastie'. The addition of a good melting cheese shouldn't be overlooked either.

## 8. The leftover soup

Bring a few cups of water, tomato puree or stock to the simmer and add your leftovers (chopped into bight sized pieces). Instant divinely warming soup.

## 9. The leftover baked frittata

Leftover cooked vegetables, legumes, starches, protein, herbs and even cheese, can all go into making the most divine baked frittata. Use the [recipe over here](#) as a base and get creative.



## 11 Fun Ideas for 'Reinventing' Leftovers

### 10. Change the nationality of your dish

This can be tricky with strongly flavoured dishes like curries. But for more European style recipes, a change in nationality can make all the difference.

For example, a pot of leftover beans could have curry powder added and served with yoghurt and fresh coriander (cilantro) to become an Indian curry. A little coconut milk and Thai curry paste and you have a smiling Thai almost-native.

If you'd like to discover more on this check out Module 5 of the 'Master Your Meal Plan' program when we discuss flavour profile templates and common flavour pairings.

### 11. Try the 'serving with a different side / accompaniment' trick

Take example from a classic sauce of minced meat with garlic and tomatoes. Add spaghetti and a generous sprinkling of cheese and it becomes 'bolognese'. Serve over corn chips and melt some cheese on top, add a splodge of sour cream and it becomes 'nachos'. Or serve on a baked potato and it takes on an Irish vibe.





## Common Leftover Ingredients. How to Keep them Fresh & Clever Ideas for Using Them Up.

Common Leftover Ingredients. How to Keep them Fresh & Clever Ideas for Using Them Up.

My first rule of thumb is to try and avoid leftover ingredients in the first place. Most recipes here at the SVCS are designed so you use all of a particular ingredient. But if you are following another recipe (it's OK, I won't feel betrayed :) ) that calls for 1/2 bunch of herbs, try using the whole bunch if you don't think it's going to ruin the dish.

But when you do find yourself with leftover ingredients, the easiest way to use them up is to remember to get them out of the pantry or fridge include them in your cooking.

### **Salad Leaves / Mesculun**

Tends to be the most perishable of all veg. When you buy them packed in sealed bags, there are often different gasses flushed into the bag to remove oxygen and prolong the life. That's why salad in bags had a longer use by date. But then when you open the bag (and let oxygen in) it deteriorates quite quickly.

## **Common Leftover Ingredients. How to Keep them Fresh & Clever Ideas for Using Them Up.**

I've found the best way to maximise the life of salad leaves is to wash and spin dry (leaving them slightly damp) then lay the leaves out on paper towel and wrap up into a bundle. Then put the bundle in a plastic bag and suck to remove most of the air before sealing. It's a bit of a hassle up front but they last longer and they're already washed when you need them.

A great way to use salad leaves, apart from making a side salad is to sprinkle a handful over protein based dishes to freshen up the plate. Or serving things like stews or curries on a bed of salad leaves as a lighter alternative to the usual carb-heavy accompaniments of rice, pasta or mashed spuds.

### **Spices**

Oxygen is the enemy of spices so it's important to store them in an air tight bag or container. Temperature and light can also make a difference so keep in a cool dry place.

Spices are an easy way to change the overall flavour profile of a dish. It may seem a little daunting at first, but the more you use spices, the easier it will be for you to predict a favourable outcome.

A great way to get started is to put a little of your dish in a cup and add tiny amounts of spice to it so you can have a preview of whether that spice will work in your dish. If you like it add the spice to the whole dish, if you don't try another option.

We cover classic flavour combinations for spices in module 5 of Master Your Meal Plan, which I recommend having a look at after this program is over. But for now, the following are the most versatile spices that can be used pretty much anywhere:

:: black pepper

:: smoked paprika & other paprikas

:: cayenne pepper

:: chilli powder, dried chilli flakes, whole dried chillies

:: cumin seeds or powder – adds a mild earthy 'curry' flavour to dishes

:: coriander seeds or powder – add a fresh lemony flavour

:: vanilla – with most things sweet



## Common Leftover Ingredients. How to Keep them Fresh & Clever Ideas for Using Them Up.

### Lemons

I just keep at room temp.. but they last for ages in the fridge.

Use excess lemons in salad dressings or as a side to squeeze over rich protein-based dishes.

The juice of half a lemon in a small glass of cold water makes a super invigorating start to the day.

### Celery

Make sure it's wrapped up in either foil or plastic to minimise loss of moisture and wilting. I've had celery last for over a month in my fridge.

The key to celery is to stop just thinking of it as an aromatic veg to use as a supporting ingredient and started using it as an ingredient in its own right.

My favourite is in a raw veg salad. Suddenly it won't seem to be such a problem. There's a recipe for my favourite [Celery Heart Salad](#) in the cooking on a budget class.

A little finely sliced celery is brilliant for adding crunch in all sorts of dishes.

### Basil

Basil gets a mention on it's own because I find commercial basil notorious for going brown and wilted after just one night in the fridge.

I try and grow my own basil but when I do buy it, I make sure I turn it into pesto either on the day or the next.

OR if I'm short on time, I make a basil oil by packing the washed & dried leaves into a jar and covering with a good peppery extra virgin olive oil. This way it will keep in the fridge for weeks and you can fish out the leaves or use the oil as you go.

### Leafy Herbs

Washing and wrapping in paper towel and a plastic bag as per salad can help. But I find it best to try and use them as quickly as possible.

Mint, parsley and coriander (cilantro) can be used as a salad leaf so they're pretty easy to find a home for. Or consider trying alternative pestos or herb oils.



## **Common Leftover Ingredients. How to Keep them Fresh & Clever Ideas for Using Them Up.**

### **Woody Herbs**

Woody herbs like thyme, sage and rosemary are fine in the freezer. Then you can just use them as needed.

This also works for bay leaves, curry leaves, kaffir lime leaves. Fresh horseradish, ginger & turmeric.

### **Sauces**

Sauces can be divided into two categories. Ones that need refrigerating after opening and those that don't. Read the label if in doubt.

For sauces that can be served as a condiment, it's a matter of getting them out and serving them on the table for everyone to experiment with. Although best to only have 1-2 options out at a time so it's not overwhelming.

For sauces that are more ingredients, first think about the style of sauce and where those styles can be used. For example if it's an Asian sauce like hoisin, it can probably be used anywhere that you'd use a thicker Asian sauce like oyster sauce or sweet soy sauce. Say stir fries or on steamed veg.

Likewise curry pastes can often be used interchangeably to give a different slant on an old favourite dish.

### **'Exotic' ingredients**

Two options for figuring out how to use up your 'orange blossom water' or pomegranate molasses.

1. Just search the SVCS site or google it with the word recipe and see what comes up.
2. Have a taste on its own and think about which common ingredients it is most like. Then try using it instead of the common ingredient. Or do a 50:50 replacement.

For example, tasting pomegranate molasses, it's sweet but also has quite a bit of acidity. So my first place to try it would be somewhere that I'd normally use balsamic vinegar which is also sweet and acidic.

### **Cheese**

Odd ends of cheese are easy to get rid of. Save them up for a pot luck mac & cheese extravaganza. Just grate or crumble and mix them together.



## **Common Leftover Ingredients. How to Keep them Fresh & Clever Ideas for Using Them Up.**

Rinds of hard cheeses like parmesan can be added to soups or stews to give extra richness and umami flavours. Just remember to fish them out before serving.

Salads and soups are another great repository for odd scraps of cheese. A tiny bit sprinkled or grated over just before serving can add interest without requiring a large amount of cheese.

### **Vegetables**

We've covered ideal storage conditions, The obvious homes for odd veg are soups, stews and slow cooked dishes.

But don't forget to add little bits and pieces to salads, especially 'slaw or raw veg salads. Vegetables can also be added to add textural variety to a pot of cooked legumes either in with the cooking water, or as a fresh ingredient later on.

#### **Cucumbers & Capsicum (Bell Peppers)**

You should be able to get 2 weeks out of these in the fridge. The thing that makes them go bad is dehydration. So keeping them in containers or as I do, in plastic bags is the solution.

### **Avocado**

I only put them in the fridge once they're cut. Avocados are warm weather creatures who don't like the cold. Refrigeration actually causes 'chilling injury' and speeds up browning. So keep them at room temp.

When cut, leaving the stone in the half you're not going to eat helps protect a large part of the surface area from browning.

I find they don't last for long. I tend to buy the firmest ones I can (unless I feel like eating avocado straight away) but they're always something I'm thinking about 'eating up' before they go bad.





# Prep Plan 1.

## Your Weekend Prep Plan 1.

prep time: 60 minutes

### **prep recipe:**

[Balsamic Onions](#)

### **weeknight recipes:**

[Burgers with Balsamic Onion & Mashy Peas](#)

[Bangers & Quick Mash](#)

[Balsamic Onion Soup](#)



# Prep Plan 2.

## Your Weekend Prep Plan 2.

prep time: 30-35 minutes

### **prep recipe:**

[Roast Diced Veg](#)

### **weeknight recipes:**

[Warm Roast Veg Salad](#)

[Roast Veg Frittata](#)

[Quick Veg Curry](#) (replace jarred peppers with 2 handfuls roast diced veg)



# Prep Plan 3.

Your Weekend Prep Plan 3.

prep time: 15 minutes

**prep recipe:**

[Cooked Quinoa](#)

**weeknight recipes:**

[Quinoa & Grilled Veg Salad](#)

[Egg Fried Quinoa](#)

[Quinoa 'Biryani'](#)



# Prep Plan 4.

## Your Weekend Prep Plan 4.

prep time: 10 - 15 minutes

### **prep recipe:**

[Sauteed Greens](#)

### **weeknight recipes:**

[Pasta & Greens](#)

[Rice & Greens](#) (replace the frozen spinach with your sauteed greens)

[Green Lentils](#) (replace the frozen spinach with your sauteed greens)



# Prep Plan 5.

Your Weekend Prep Plan 5.

prep time: 30 minutes

**prep recipe:**

[Poached Chicken Breasts](#)

**weeknight recipes:**

[Thai Chicken Soup](#)

[Chicken with Asian Slaw](#)

[Chicken & Broccoli Salad](#)



# Your Action Steps

## Your Action Steps

Remember, insight without action is worthless. So it's super important to take the first step now while everything is fresh in your mind.

1. Complete Step 5. for developing your habits from Module 1. (STEP 5. Start as small as possible)
2. Choose the weekend prep plan that sounds the most delicious.
3. Schedule some time this weekend (or week) to make your 'prep' recipe.
4. Use your mise en place for quick dinners this week.
5. Report Back! Share your experience with your 10 Ingredient Shopping List. Either leave a comment on the recipe page OR take it up a notch and share a pic of your creation on [Facebook or Instagram](#)



*Balsamic Onions*

# Balsamic Onions



Onions are one of the biggest gifts to cooks on a budget because they pack amazing flavour for their tiny price tag. These onions may seem like a bit of work, but you'll be well rewarded with a super versatile condiment.

Feel free to halve or quarter this recipe if you don't feel like chopping up so many onions.

Makes Heaps

1.5kg (3lb) onions

6 tablespoons cheap balsamic vinegar

1. Chop onions in half, lengthwise. Cut off the top and tail and peel the skins. Slice onions into thin half moon shapes.
2. Heat about 6 tablespoons oil in a large pot and fry the onions, covered over a medium low heat until the onions are super soft. About 40 minutes.
3. Remove the lid and add balsamic and cook the onions, uncovered on a medium heat until the onions are well browned and caramelised. Another 15-20 minutes.
4. Taste & season.

## VARIATIONS

**different vinegar** – by all means replace the balsamic with a cheaper vinegar. Malt vinegar would be lovely just start with about 3 tablespoons and add from there.

**thyme** – if you have access to a garden with fresh thyme, a few sprigs add a lovely fragrance.

**rosemary** – if you have access to a garden with fresh rosemary, a few sprigs add a lovely fragrance.

**onion jam** – for something sweeter and more chutney like, add in about 1/4 cup brown sugar with the balsamic.



video

# Balsamic Onions...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland?** Add in a little more vinegar and salt. And keep cooking until you have lovely caramelised flavours.

**bitter** - this means you've either burnt the onions too much or the vinegar is overpowering. Try adding a little white sugar to balance but it may not help the situation if it's gone too far.

**watery eyes** – the hardest part is definitely chopping the onions. Pop a slice of bread in your mouth to hang down while you chop the onions. It's weird but I'll guarantee you no tears every time..

**short on time** – try slicing the onions in the food processor and try a higher heat for the first cooking stage, just keep a super close eye on them to make sure they don't burn too much.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep for a few months in the fridge. Longer if you store in sealed, sterilised jars.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Makes a great accompaniment to pretty much all meat and poultry. Also great with hard cheese or as a dip.

Burgers with *Balsamic Onions*



# Burgers with Balsamic Onions



Everyone loves a good burger and the thing is they're one of the most affordable meat based dishes. So perfect for cooks on a budget. If you can't be bothered with the onion, the burgers are lovely with just the peas for both sauce and side.

enough for 2

400g (14oz) ground beef

2 large handfuls frozen peas

2 knobs butter

squeeze lemon juice

balsamic onions, to serve [recipe HERE](#)

1. Heat a frying pan or skillet on a super high heat for at least 3 minutes. You want it smoking hot.
2. Meanwhile divide beef into two and shape into burger patties.
3. Sprinkle a fine layer of fine salt onto the pan and slide the burgers on top. Cook for 4 minutes then turn, adding a little more salt.
4. Meanwhile, heat a little oil in a medium pan and add the peas. Cook covered on a high heat for about 4 minutes or until peas are hot.
5. Once the burgers are turned, cook for another 4 minutes or until burgers are how you like them.
6. When the peas are hot, add the butter then roughly puree with a stick blender or mash with a fork. Season with salt, pepper and lemon juice.
7. Serve burgers on a bed of mashy peas with balsamic onion.

## VARIATIONS

**vegan / vegetarian** – make lentil burgers by draining a can of lentils and roughly mashing with a fork. Mix with 2 large handfuls soft bread crumbs and form into 2 patties, using more bread if the burgers feel too wet. Fry in oil until golden on both sides (about 3 minutes a side).

**chicken burgers** – use good quality chicken mince instead of the beef. Serve with a dollop of mayo or aioli instead of the onion.

**traditional burgers** – cook salt crusted burgers as above but serve on a burger bun with ketchup and a little mayo and some crisp lettuce.

**chilli burgers** – serve with chilli oil or your favourite hot sauce instead of the onion.

**freshly made onions** – finely slice 750g (1.5lb) onions. Cook in oil, covered until super soft. Add 3 tablespoons cheap balsamic vinegar and cook lid off until thickened and reduced.



video

# Burgers with Balsamic Onions...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**bland?** Give it a touch more salt & pepper.

**burgers dry** – if your minced beef is too lean, you'll get dry burgers. Fatty beef tends to be cheaper, so next time choose the best value.

**burgers too rare** – next time flatten the burgers more so they cook in the allotted time. Or pop them back in the pan until you're happy. Always a good idea to cut into a burger to check. It's the best way to learn.

**too salty** – be careful with the salt in the pan for the salt crust, it can be sary to overdo it. For now, wipe the burgers with a damp cloth, ot just cut off the salt outsides. Next time be more sparing with the salt.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

OK! Will keep in the fridge for at least a week.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

A quick dinner in one. Although I'd be tempted to serve a green salad on the side as well.



Bangers & *Quick* Mash

# Bangers & Quick Mash



It's hard to go past the classic combo of pork sausages and creamy mashed potatoes. But peeling and boiling spuds takes time. Here we're using canned white beans instead for a super-quick mash that's actually more healthy as well.

enough for 2 to 3

*4 thick pork sausages*

*1 can white beans (400g / 14oz), drained*

*4-6 tablespoons balsamic onions to serve*

1. Cover sausages with water in a medium saucepan. Simmer gently for 10 minutes, drain.
2. Pan fry the cooked sausages in a little oil until just browned all over.
3. Meanwhile, mash drained beans in the saucepan you used for the sausage simmering, adding a little olive oil if needed.
4. Serve mash on plates, topped with sausages & balsamic onions.

## VARIATIONS

**vegetarian / vegan** – Skip the poaching step and replace the sausages with mushrooms or tofu and pan fry these until well browned.

**fun** – try different types of sausages.

**different mash** – replace white beans with canned chickpeas or lentils.

**healthier** – serve on a bed of baby spinach leaves for some instant greens.



video

# Bangers & Quick Mash...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland** – Season with extra salt & pepper.

**don't feel like poaching the sausages** – I know it's a hassle but it really makes a difference to the flavour and especially texture of your sausages. Trust me, it's worth the effort.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great on its own or with a green salad.



Balsamic *Onion* Soup

# Balsamic Onion Soup



Onion soup can be such a wonderfully hearty vegetarian meal. Traditionally it's served with melted cheese on toast, but I've kept things lighter and quicker here by just throwing on a handful of grated cheese and letting it melt into the soup on its own.

enough for 2

2 cups balsamic onions

(1/2 quantity of the [recipe over here](#))

2 cups chicken or vegetable stock

large handful cheddar cheese, grated

1. Bring onions and stock to the boil. Simmer for 2 minutes. Taste. Season.

2. Divide soup between 2 bowls. Top with cheese.

## VARIATIONS

**healthier** – add in a few handfuls of sliced kale or baby spinach. Simmer until just wilted.

**vegan** – skip the cheese and add a can of white beans or chickpeas in to simmer with the stock.

**more substantial** – serve with crusty bread and butter. Or toast some sourdough and rub with garlic and place in the bottom of the bowl before pouring soup over.

**freshly made onions** – finely slice 750g (1.5lb) onions. Cook in oil, covered until super soft. Add 3 tablespoons cheap balsamic vinegar and cook lid off until thickened and reduced.



video

# Balsamic Onion Soup...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too sweet** – that's the onions, remember to season with salt or try a splash of soy sauce.

**onions crunchy** – that means your balsamic onions weren't cooked enough. Simmering for longer will help soften them now.

**bland** – be generous with the seasoning and try a splash of soy sauce.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Best in shallow bowls so there is lots of surface area for the cheese.

roast diced veg



# Roast Diced Veg



Chopping veg into a smaller dice allows them to cook more quickly. AND increases the surface area so you get lots of lovely roasted flavour.

enough for 2 to 3 as a side

3 parsnips

1 turnip / swede / rutabaga

1 head garlic

small bunch thyme, leaves picked

1. Preheat oven to 200C (400F).
2. Wash veg well then chop into cubes, about 2cm (1in) square. Break garlic into individual cloves, but don't worry about peeling.
3. Toss veg on a roasting tray with a generous glug of olive oil. Sprinkle with thyme. Season.
4. Roast for 25-35 minutes, stirring once or twice. They're done when the veg are tender and golden brown.

## VARIATIONS

**potatoes** – waxy potatoes are lovely here as well – don't worry about peeling them.

**beets** – chop beets small so they cook at the same time as the rest of the veg.

**sweet potato** – a lovely addition.

**carrots** – another sweet veg that doesn't get roasted often enough.

**pumpkin / winter squash** – much better if left unpeeled. Butternut is my favourite here.

**cauliflower** - don't worry about getting it into 'cubes'. One of my favourite roast veg.

**brussels sprouts** – another that don't 'cube' well. Chop in half and be amazed how tasty they are.



video

# Roast Diced Veg...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**burning** – reduce the heat and turn the veg more frequently. Make sure your foil is well sealed to prevent drying out. A splash of water can retard the burning process.

**hard / dry veg** – not cooked for long enough OR cooked at too high a temperature and not covered enough. Veg are much less sensitive to overcooking than meat.

**too bland?** Add in a little more salt.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep in the fridge for a few weeks.  
Can be frozen.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

**risotto** – stir into your favorite risotto or for something different (and slow carb!) try this lentil 'risotto'.

**baked frittata** – just lovely with eggs and a little parmesan like the frittata over here.

**stir fry** – toss into your fav stir fry to warm through before serving.

**hummus** - use instead of or as well as chickpeas in a different take on hummus.

**soup** – delicious in both chunky and smooth veggie soups.

**pizza** – especially good on pizza with blue cheese and mozzarella.

Warm Roast Veg Salad



# Warm Roast Veg Salad



This salad was inspired by Moro, a fabulous Middle Eastern restaurant in London. With warm roast veg and chickpeas contrasting a creamy nutty tahini yoghurt dressing, it's the kind of thing I could eat every day.

enough for 2

2 large handfuls roast veg ([recipe here](#))

1 can chickpeas (400g / 14oz), drained

3 tablespoons natural yoghurt

1 tablespoon tahini

3 sprigs parsley

1. Heat a little oil in a frying pan on a medium heat. Add veg and chickpeas and cook, stirring occasionally.
2. Meanwhile, mix tahini and yoghurt in a small bowl. Taste and season.
3. When the chickpeas and veg are hot, transfer to a serving platter or two plates.
4. Drizzle over dressing and sprinkle with parsley leaves.

## VARIATIONS

**carnivore** – brown some sliced chorizo in the pan before heating the veg.

**vegan / dairy-free** – use a lemon tahini dressing instead of the yoghurt. Mix 2 tablespoons each tahini, lemon juice and water.

**no roast veg handy?** – replace with grilled peppers and eggplant from the deli or from a jar.

**different herbs** – replace parsley with mint, coriander (cilantro) or even baby spinach leaves.

**hot!** – add a sliced red chilli in with the veg to warm.

**no chickpeas?** – replace with other canned beans or lentils or with 2 large handfuls of torn sourdough bread.



video

# Warm Roast Veg Salad...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**dry?** – drizzle over extra yoghurt and tahini.

**bland** – season with salt and pepper and possibly a little chilli.

**can't find tahini?** – replace with almond or other nut butter. Peanut butter could be used at a stretch but try to find one without sugar added. OR use lemon juice instead to make a super fresh, zesty dressing.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Leftovers will keep for 1-2 weeks in the fridge.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great as a veggie meal on its own. Or for something more substantial serve with warm pita bread on the side.

Roast Veg Frittata



# Roast Veg Frittata



This frittata, baked in the oven, is one of my go-to dinners when I'm feeling like something vegetarian. A good baked frittata is an essential for quick, easy meals. They're also a brilliant way to use up leftover bits and pieces hanging around the fridge.

enough for 2

2 handfuls roast veg ([recipe here](#))

4 eggs, lightly beaten

large handful grated cheese such as cheddar

1. Preheat oven to 200C (400F) and place a baking tray on the middle shelf.
2. Line a 20cm (8in) spring form pan with baking paper & grease generously with olive oil or butter. Or grease a small oven-proof frying pan.
3. Place veg in the prepared tin. Pour over the beaten egg & scatter over the cheese. Season.
4. Place on the preheated tray and bake until golden and puffy and the center feels firm and springy, 10-15 minutes.

## VARIATIONS

**larger frittata** - use 8 eggs and a 28cm (10in) pan to serve 4. Increase baking time slightly. Around 20 minutes.

**plain frittata** – skip the additional ingredients and double the amount of eggs.

**single serve frittata** – Bake in a large ramekin instead of the frying pan OR just make yourself an omelette in a fraction of the time.

**dairy-free** – replace the cheddar with a handful of thyme leaves.

**short on time?** – replace roast veg with a drained can of chickpeas.



video

# Roast Veg Frittata...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too runny** – Probably not baked through the centre. Pop it back in the oven for a little longer.

**leaking watery fluid** – Woops. When eggs are overcooked you get a phenomenon called syneresis where the protein loses the ability to hold water so you get watery fluid weeping out. Not the nicest but it won't hurt you if you eat it. Next time cook it less.

**frittata sticking to the pan** – Unfortunately one of the downsides of this method is the egg likes to stick to the pan. So it's important to grease well and line the pan with baking paper. Foil tends to stick worse than baking paper for some reason.

**don't have a spring form pan?** – A cake tin with a removable base will work or even an ovenproof dish. Just make sure you line the base and sides and leave some paper overhanging so you can lift it out when it's done.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

OK. I prefer it hot and puffy from the oven. Either leftovers serve cold or gently reheat in the oven for 5 minutes or so.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great on its own. Or with a green salad or wilted greens. Also good sliced and served as a sandwich filling.



Quick Veg Curry

# Quick Veg Curry



enough for 2

1 jar tomato pasta sauce (400g / 14oz)

1 can white beans (440g / 15oz), drained

1 jar roasted red peppers (280g / 10oz), drained

1/2 - 1 teaspoons chilli flakes

4 teaspoons curry powder

1. Place tomato sauce (marinara sauce), beans, peppers, chilli and curry powder and bring to a simmer.
2. Cook gently for 2 -3 minutes or until the curry is hot.
3. Taste and season, adding more curry powder and chilli if you think it needs it. Serve with a generous drizzle of extra virgin olive oil.

From '5 Ingredients 10 Minutes' Print Book page 111

## VARIATIONS

**carnivore** - brown some diced chicken, beef or pork in a pan then add the curry ingredients as per the recipe.

**no chilli flakes?** – Use fresh chilli or chilli powder.

**different veg** – feel free to add in any veg you have on hand. Wilting some spinach or card through will add a different dimension,

**no curry powder?** – Replace with another spice blend such as garam masala or just use an equal mixture of ground cumin and ground coriander.

**no tomato sauce** – replace with canned tomatoes.



video

# Quick Veg Curry...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too hot** – if you've overdone it on the chilli, add in a generous slug of olive oil to take the edge off or serve the curry with some chopped cucumber or natural yoghurt.

**too thick** – add in more water and bring back to a simmer.

**too watery** – simmer for a little longer to help it reduce down.

**too bland?** add in more curry powder for now and next time, remember to try a different brand of curry powder. Spices also lose their flavour with age, so make sure your curry powder is fresh.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep in the fridge for a week or so.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

You could serve it in bowls like a stew like I have in the picture but it will be pretty full-on.

Steamed rice is a great accompaniment if you happen to have some on hand. For slow-carbers, try grating some cauliflower in a food processor and using that as a raw alternative to rice. It actually tastes really lovely.



*cooked quinoa*

# Cooked Quinoa



Quinoa is actually a seed from South America. It's super high in protein and has a lovely 'chewy' texture. It only takes about 15 minutes to cook but I like to make a batch on the weekends to use for breakfasts and lunches during the week. It's great both with sweet and savoury seasonings.

makes about double the dried weight  
*approx 250g / 7oz quinoa*

1. Place quinoa in a fine sieve and rinse well under running water. Transfer to a medium saucepan and cover generously with clean cold water.
2. Bring to the boil with the lid on. Remove lid & simmer 12-15 minutes or until quinoa is tender.
3. Drain and allow to steam and cool.
4. Transfer to an airtight container and keep in the fridge until ready to use.

## VARIATIONS

**different colours** – quinoa comes in red, black and white. I've used a combo of all three in the picture. To be honest I can't taste much of a difference between the different varieties.

**savoury** – season the hot, drained quinoa with a few tablespoons each of extra virgin olive oil, sherry vinegar and soy sauce.

**sweet** – season the hot drained quinoa with a few pinches of brown sugar and a teaspoon or two of vanilla extract or vanilla bean paste. You could also simmer a cinnamon stick in with the quinoa.

**milky** – simmer in milk or half milk half water instead of just using straight water. A cinnamon stick or vanilla bean wouldn't go astray..

**can't find quinoa?** – you could do the same thing with brown rice or barley or even spelt. The cooking times will vary for larger grains, probably more like 30-45 minutes or even longer.



video

# Cooked Quinoa...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**hard / crunchy** – sounds like undercooked quinoa, pop back in the saucepan with some fresh water and simmer until tender.

**sticking together** – this hasn't ever happened to me, but I assume if you overcook quinoa it could turn mushy. Not much you can do at this stage. But next time set your timer and be more vigilant.

**bland** - it's important to season the quinoa before using. You can go either sweet or savoury..

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Brilliant!. Will keep in the fridge for a few weeks.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Serve with yoghurt and berries for breakfast OR with fried eggs and chilli oil for a savoury breakkie. Use it pretty much anywhere you'd use cooked rice or other grains.



Quinoa & Grilled Veg Salad

# Quinoa & Grilled Veg Salad



I just love quinoa in salads as it has the most wonderful chewy texture. This is one of those salad which improves with a little time to 'marinate' in the dressing which makes it perfect as a do ahead lunch.

enough for 2

100g (3.5oz) quinoa, any colour

2 tablespoons lemon juice

large handful roast eggplant, sliced & drained on paper towel

large hand grilled red capsicum (bell peppers), sliced & drained on paper towel

handful brazil nuts or almonds, to serve

1. Bring a medium pot of water to the boil. Rinse quinoa well then simmer for 10-12 minutes or until al dente like pasta. Drain.
2. Combine lemon juice with 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil. Season.
3. Toss warm quinoa in the dressing. Add eggplant and red capsicum and serve with nuts sprinkled over.

## VARIATIONS

**roast veg** – let your imagination run wild here, roast pumpkin or sweet potato, roast beets, roast parsnip are all lovely.

**other grilled veg** – feel free to use home grilled veg. In summer zucchini are a favourite. Fennel or grilled asparagus are good too.

**carnivore** – replace nuts with finely sliced salami or cooked chicken.

**nut-free** – skip the nuts and use a soft goats cheese or blue cheese instead.

**warm salad** – either serve while still warm or reheat in the microwave or a saucepan.

**leafy** – toss in some flat leaf parsley leaves or a handful of baby spinach.



video

# Quinoa & Grilled Veg Salad...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**can't find quinoa?** – use brown rice cooked according to the packet directions.

**bland** – season with a little salt and possible more lemon juice

**dry** – drizzle in a little more olive oil.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

A wonderful lunchbox salad. OR for a healthier option serve over a handful of baby spinach leaves.



Egg Fried Quinoa

# Egg Fried Quinoa



Egg fried rice used to be one of my Irishman's favourite meals. And then I made this version with quinoa. Now he keeps asking me when we can have egg fried quinoa again. Definitely a keeper!

enough for 2

250g (9oz) cooked quinoa ([recipe here](#))

3 eggs, lightly beaten

1-2 small red chillies, finely sliced

2 tablespoons soy sauce

small handful sliced green onions

(shallots / scallions / spring onions)

1. Heat a little oil in a wok or frying pan. Add quinoa, eggs and chilli.

2. Cook, stirring often over a medium heat until there is no more runny (snotty) egg visible. Remove from the heat. Stir in soy and green onions.

## VARIATIONS

**carnivore** – brown some sliced chicken breast in the pan before adding quinoa and egg.

**vegan / egg-free** – replace egg with crumbled tofu (about 200g / 7oz) and 1 teaspoon ground turmeric for colour.

**soy-free** – replace the soy sauce with fish sauce or just season generously with salt instead.

**can't find quinoa?** – replace with cooked brown or jasmine rice.



video

# Egg Fried Quinoa..

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too dry** – it's meant to be a fairly dry dish. Drizzle with a little oil or chilli oil if it's too dry for you. And make sure you don't overcook your eggs.

**rubbery** – a sign of overcooked eggs. Add in a little butter to moisten and next time remove from the heat earlier.

**bland** – add in a little more soy and chilli.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Serve in small bowls 'rice' bowls with chopsticks.



Quinoa 'Biryani'

# Quinoa 'Biryani'



Biryani is a fragrant Indian rice-based dish. Here we've given it a bit of a twist by using our cooked quinoa instead of rice. If you come across a 'biryani' spice blend, by all means use that. But regular curry powder is pretty tasty!

enough for 2

300g (11oz) cooked quinoa ([recipe here](#))

2-3 teaspoons curry powder

1 bunch mint, leaves picked

4-6 tablespoons natural yoghurt

large handful brazil nuts or almonds, chopped

1. Heat a little oil in a large frying pan. Add quinoa and curry powder and cook over a medium high heat until the quinoa is hot.
2. Remove from the heat. Taste and season with salt. You may like to add a little more curry powder too.
3. Stir through mint. Drizzle over yoghurt and scatter over nuts.

## VARIATIONS

**dairy-free / vegan** – replace the yoghurt with a mixture of equal parts tahini, lemon juice and water.

**no quinoa?** – replace with cooked brown or basmati rice.

**nut-free** – replace the nuts with diced red capsicum (bell pepper).

**different herbs** – parsley or cilantro (coriander) could be used instead of the mint.

**carnivore** – serve as a side to a meaty curry.

**more substantial** – serve with hard boiled or poached eggs



video

# Quinoa 'Biryani'...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too dry** – serve with extra yoghurt.

**bland** – add more curry powder and be more generous with the seasonings. Next time you might like to try a different brand of curry powder.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Great! Will keep in the fridge for a week or longer. The mint will wilt but it will still be tasty.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Lovely on it's own. Or as part of an Indian banquet.



Sautéed Greens

# Sauteed Greens



Cooked greens will keep in the fridge twice as long as fresh. And they take up much less space!

per person:

*1-2 cloves garlic*

*2 large handfuls of greens, washed & sliced*  
*squeeze of lemon, optional*

1. Heat olive oil in a large frying pan.
2. Add the garlic and greens and continue to cook stirring for a few minutes until they are just wilted.
3. Remove from the heat. Taste and season with salt, pepper and a little lemon juice, if you like.

## VARIATIONS

**different greens** – I've used beet tops in the photo. Other options include cavolo nero, or black Tuscan cabbage, silverbeet (chard) or rainbow chard, spinach, or curly kale. I've read that radish or turnip tops can also be used but haven't ever tried.

**different flavourings** – **finely sliced garlic, chilli, ginger, sliced preserved lemons,**

**add protein** – A fried or poached egg can be a lovely accompaniment. Or serve as a side to roast meats. Or toss in a can of drained beans or lentils to heat through at the end.

**change the cooking method** – Simmer the greens in boiling water until tender. Drain and toss in some extra virgin olive oil.

**summer greens** – skip the whole cooking part and just slice the greens as finely as possible and dress with lemon juice and olive oil.



video

# Sauteed Greens...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**burning / crispy greens** – reduce the heat asap and add in a few splashes of water to generate some steam which will help the cooking process.

**bitter flavours** – this is probably the greens themselves, although be careful not to burn your flavourings as garlic and ginger will go bitter if burnt.

**bland** – don't forget to season!

**too acidic** – I've ruined a few batches of greens by overdoing the lemon juice, A little goes a long way. Extra olive oil can help calm the situation.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Brilliant!. Will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or so.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great as a side dish to stews or roast meats. Also lovely as a simple supper with a little added protein like a fried or poached egg or some cheese – parmesan is a favourite.



Pasta with *Greens* & Almonds

# Pasta with Greens & Almonds



Fresh pasta can be a big life saver when you're in a hurry as it only takes a couple of minutes to cook. Of course you could substitute in dried pasta if you prefer.

I love to make this dish when I'm feeling like I want the comfort of pasta combined with the healthiness of a vegan dish that focuses on greens. Cavalo nero, or Tuscan cabbage is one of my favourites, but it can be a little tricky to track down. Feel free to use whatever greens you like. Spinach, like I've used here would be lovely or even some curly kale or silver beet (swiss chard).

enough for 2

*2 cloves garlic, finely sliced*

*1 large bunch spinach, well washed and chopped crosswise into thick ribbons*

*200g fresh pasta*

*2 handfuls whole almonds*

*squeeze of lemon*

1. Bring a medium saucepan of salted water to the boil.
2. Meanwhile, heat a few tablespoons olive oil in a large frying pan.
3. Cook garlic for about 30 seconds or until starting to brown.
4. Add greens and allow to wilt. Season and remove from the heat.
5. Cook pasta for 2 minutes or according to the packet directions. Drain.
6. Toss pasta through cavalo nero and add almonds. Season with salt, pepper and a drizzle of lemon.

## VARIATIONS

**vegan** – Be sure to use pasta that doesn't contain eggs. Most fresh pasta is egg based so you may have to go for dried.

**nut allergies** – Replace almonds with 2 small handfuls of breadcrumbs that have been toasted in oil. You could do this at step 3 with the garlic and remove and keep on paper towel while you continue to cook the spinach and then add back at step 6.

**carnivores** – Replace almonds with about 4 rashers of bacon or chopped spec. Fry these until brown at step 3. Alternatively, some finely sliced and torn prosciutto tossed in at the end would be another delicious injection of pork products.



video

# Pasta with Greens & Almonds...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland** – Add more salt & pepper and possibly more lemon. A grating of parmesan cheese may help the situation as well but I do love this without cheese.

**too watery** – Your greens either haven't cooked enough or there was too much water left on after washing. Stir fry for a few minutes extra to evaporate the excess moisture.

**pasta breaking apart** – Sounds like it's overcooked. Fresh pasta takes hardly any time. Not much we can do now, but next time cook pasta less.

**pasta sticking together** – I often do this – if you forget to stir the pasta during the early stages of cooking it tends to stick. The other problem is from draining and allowing to sit around for too long before you combine the cooked pasta with the sauce.



Rice & Greens

# Rice & Greens



There's a classic Cuban dish of rice and beans which was everywhere when I visited. This is a 'fresher' healthier take. If you can get spinach frozen into little 'bricks' rather than one big block, it's much better because it defrosts much more quickly. If you're stuck with a big frozen chunk of spinach, it may need a little spin in the microwave to speed up the defrosting process.

enough for 2

2 cloves garlic, finely sliced

1 can coconut milk (400mL / 1.5 cups)

1 packet frozen spinach (250g / 9oz), defrosted

1 packet par-cooked brown rice (250g / 9oz)

1. Heat a little oil in a medium saucepan. Cook garlic on a medium heat for about 30 seconds or until starting to brown.
2. Add coconut milk, spinach and rice. Bring to a simmer and cook for about 2 minutes or until everything is hot.
3. Taste. Season.

## VARIATIONS

**sautéed greens** – just replace frozen spinach with your own sautéed greens (recipe here)

**no coconut milk?** – replace with almond or soy milk – they'll be a little more watery so be prepared to simmer longer to thicken up.

**can't find par-cooked brown rice?** – most supermarkets now have 'pouches' of cooked rice but feel free to cook your own brown rice, just boil in water until just tender. Drain and use as per the recipe.

**rice alternatives** – risoni (rice shaped pasta), cooked short pasta, canned beans, canned chickpeas + see below.

**lower GI / slow carb** – replace rice with cooked lentils, canned chickpeas, cooked split peas or quinoa.

**higher protein** – add in a drained can of black beans.

**carnivore** - stir fry some sliced chicken breast or thigh fillets in the pan before adding the other ingredients and proceeding from step 1.

**fresh greens** – replace frozen spinach with sliced kale, cavolo nero spinach, chard or silverbeet. Add with the garlic and cook until wilted before adding the other ingredients.



video

# Rice & Greens...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too watery?** – simmer for a little longer to reduce down.

**rice too crunchy** – simmer for a little longer to soften.

**bland** – it needs salt.

**too rich** – Next time use less coconut milk. A splash of lemon juice will help freshen things up for now.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

OK. Will keep in the fridge for 1-2 weeks. The rice will absorb the liquid over time so it may dry out. Just add a splash of water as you reheat to moisten.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Lovely in big nourishing bowls on its own.



Green *Spinach* Lentils

# Green Spinach Lentils



If I had to pick a favourite lentil it would be 'Puy' also known as 'French-Style Green Lentils'. For me, they're the 'rolls royce' of the lentil world. I just adore the deep, earthy flavour and the fact that if you over cook them they still keep their shape. If you can get spinach frozen into little 'bricks' rather than one big block, it's much better because it defrosts much more quickly. If you're stuck with a big frozen chunk of spinach, it may need a little spin in the microwave to speed up the defrosting process.

enough for 2 to 3

200g (7oz) French-style green lentils

250g (9oz) frozen spinach, defrosted

2 tablespoons soy sauce

2 tablespoons rice or white wine vinegar

parmesan cheese, to serve

1. Bring a saucepan of unsalted water to the boil.
2. Simmer lentils for 11-15 minutes, or until just tender. Drain.
3. Add a little oil to the pan and pop it back on a medium heat. Add spinach and stir to break up the chunks.
4. Return drained lentils to the pan. Add soy, vinegar and 2-3 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil. Taste and add more soy or vinegar if needed.
5. Serve with Parmesan shavings on top.

## VARIATIONS

**sauteed greens** – just replace frozen spinach with your own sauteed greens ([recipe here](#))

**dairy-free / vegan** – replace parmesan with sliced almonds.

**can't find 'French-style' lentils** – replace with regular green or brown lentils or split peas. You'll need to adjust the simmering time – use the packet directions as a guide. Brown rice will also work.

**different veg?** – replace with frozen peas or broccoli. Cook the veg in the oil until just defrosted before adding the lentils back to the pot.

**carnivore** – fry some bacon or chorizo in the pot before adding the spinach. Or toss in a few handfuls of shredded BBQ chicken from the shop. Or serve layered with prosciutto or jamon instead of the parmesan.

**as a side** – serve along side grilled sausages or a roast or BBQ chicken.

**super quick** – replace lentils with 2 cans of lentils, drained and proceed from step 4.

**soy-free** – skip the soy sauce and season with fish sauce OR just use salt.



video

# Green Spinach Lentils...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**lentils too crunchy** – make sure you use unsalted water to cook the lentils as salt may cause their skins to toughen. And keep simmering (or boiling) until you're happy.

**mushy** – this just means the lentils were over cooked. Next time keep a closer eye on them. Not much can be done at this stage.

**spinach still frozen** – you may need to give it a zap in the microwave to speed things up. Or just add to the pot and stir to break up the chunks as best you can.

**bland** – add more soy and vinegar.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Great! Will keep in the fridge for 1-2 weeks. Will freeze OK.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

In big bowls with loads of parmesan. Or see above for suggestions as a side.



poached chicken breast

# Poached Chicken Breasts



I'm not a huge fan of poached meat as I find lots of the flavour can be lost to the poaching liquid. Chicken, though is an exception because it prevents the dryness often associated with cooked chicken breasts. And the poaching liquid can be used as a light chicken stock

*2 or more chicken breasts*

1. Bring 4 cups water to the boil in a medium saucepan.
2. Add chicken. Cover with a lid and simmer very gently for 5 minutes.
3. Turn heat off and allow chicken to stand for 20 minutes.
4. Either cool in the liquid or slice and serve warm.

## VARIATIONS

**vegetarian** - try boiled or poached eggs instead.

**vegan** – you could poach tofu in this manner, but the poaching liquid would need to add lots of flavour.

**flavoured poaching liquid** – try some fresh chilli, thyme leaves, bay leaves or rosemary.

**short on time?** – leave the heat on and simmer the chicken breasts until just cooked through. About 10 minutes. Be careful not to overcook.

**chicken thighs** – a better choice for more flavour. Since they're smaller, just simmer for 2 minutes then stand for 15-20 minutes.

**whole chicken** - can be cooked in this way as well. Double the water and use a large pot, make sure there's enough water to completely submerge the chicken. Simmer very gently for 10 minutes then stand, covered for 1 hour.



video

# Poached Chicken Breasts...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**chicken dry / tough** – A sign of overcooking. Next time watch that the simmering for the first 5 minutes is VERY gentle. For now, finely slice the chicken across the 'grain' (or muscle fibers) and serve with lots of sauce!

**too bland?** That can be a problem with chicken. Next time try a better quality, preferably free range chicken. For now, serve with flavoursome accompaniments. And remember that we haven't yet seasoned the chicken so a little salt may help the situation.

**chicken undercooked or pink** – It's a good idea to test your chicken. If when you cut into it it's still pink add back to the pot and bring back to a simmer. Stand for another 5 minutes or until the chicken is cooked to your liking.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep for 5 days in the fridge. Store in the poaching liquid to keep moister.

Freezes well.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

**salads** – the obvious choice – slice or tear and toss in your favourite salad.

**canned fish replacer** – use anywhere you'd normally use canned tuna or salmon.

**sandwiches** – an all time favourite – with lashings of good quality mayo and rocket (arugula) leaves.

**soups** – finely slice and add to soups just before serving. Like this Thai chicken soup with lime.



Thai Chicken Soup with Lime

# Thai Chicken Soup with Lime



This soup is equally delicious on a chilly winter evening or a hot summers day. I think the coconut creaminess makes it so warming in winter. But the fragrance of the coriander and lime leaves make it refreshing enough to serve when the weather is warmer. If you can't find kaffir lime leaves, use the zest of a lime. It won't be the same but since you won't know any different it will still be wonderful.

enough for 2

1 can coconut milk (400mL / 14oz)

2 tablespoon thai green curry paste

3-4 chicken thigh fillets

6 kaffir lime leaves,

1 bunch coriander leaves

1. Soup: Place a large saucepan over a high heat.
2. Scoop a tablespoon of the coconut cream from the top of the can and add it to the saucepan with the curry paste.
3. Cook curry paste for about 15 seconds and then add 2 cups water and the remaining coconut milk.
4. While the water is coming to the boil, chop chicken into bight sized pieces and add to the pot along with the lime leaves.
5. Simmer gently for 3-4 minutes or until the chicken is just cooked through.
6. Serve with coriander leaves.

## VARIATIONS

**vegan / vegetarian** – replace the chicken with tofu or button mushrooms.

**basil** – for a different fragrance replace the fresh coriander with fresh basil or better yet, fresh Thai basil.

**noodles** – for a more substantial soup, soften some rice noodles by covering in boiling water and standing while the chicken cooks. Then drain and add to the soup before bringing back to the boil.

**red soup** – replace green curry paste with red curry paste.



video

# Thai Chicken Soup with Lime...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**no curry paste?** – If you can't find green Thai curry paste, you can make your own using the recipe over [HERE](#).

**chicken tough** – it's important not to simmer to rapidly otherwise the chicken will over cook and end up too tough. Next time cook more gently. The other cause of tough chicken is the quality of the chicken you are using. Making sure the chicken is sliced across the grain (muscle fibres) helps with tenderness as well.

**no lime leaves?** – Replace with the zest of 1-2 fresh limes and serve with lime wedges.

**chicken tough** – it's important not to simmer to rapidly otherwise the chicken will over cook and end up too tough. Next time cook more gently. The other cause of tough chicken is the quality of the chicken you are using. Making sure the chicken is sliced across the grain (muscle fibres) helps with tenderness as well.

**chicken not cooked** – if you're nervous about your chicken, pick out a piece and chop it in half. If you can see any pink or bits that look translucent rather than white, leave for another few minutes before testing again.

**too hot** – curry pastes vary in intensity. Diluting with a little more coconut milk will help. Yoghurt or milk can help cool your tongue between sips of soup.

**bland** – different curry pastes vary in their intensity. If you're not happy with the flavour add a little more curry paste. And remember to be generous with the seasoning. A splash of fish sauce can help liven things up too.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Great. Will keep in the fridge for a week or so.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

I prefer to serve this as a meal on its own with the coriander (cilantro) on the side.

I like to leave the kaffir lime leaves in and eat them, but they can require a bit of chewing! If you'd prefer, you could use the leaves whole and fish them out before serving – the fragrance won't be as strong

Asian Slaw with BBQ Chicken



# Asian 'Slaw with BBQ Chicken



Commercial BBQ chicken can be a brilliant solution for a quick meal. All it takes is to pull together a quick salad on the side for something healthy and delicious rather. This Asian inspired slaw ticks all the boxes. It's quick, fresh, crunchy and packed with zesty flavour from the lime & soy dressing.

enough for 2

2 tablespoons lime juice

1 tablespoon soy sauce

1/4 cabbage, shredded on a mandoline

1 carrot, grated

1/2 BBQ chook, to serve

1. Combine lime juice, soy & 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil in a medium bowl. Taste. Season.
2. Toss carrot and cabbage in the dressing.
3. Serve salad with chicken chopped into quarters.

## VARIATIONS

**carnivore** – feel free to shred the chicken into bite sized pieces and toss it through your salad.

**vegetarian / vegan** – serve the slaw as part of an asian meal OR replace the chicken with a few generous handfuls of roasted cashew nuts and shaved coconut flakes.

**italian 'slaw** – replace the lime juice with sherry vinegar and serve sprinkled very generously with finely grated parmesan cheese.

**herby** – serve sprinkled with fresh herbs such as coriander (cilantro), parsley, mint or basil.

**duck** – serve with a BBQ Chinese duck instead of the chicken.

**soy-free** – skip the soy and season with salt or fish sauce instead. OR try bragg liquid aminos.

**different cabbage** – pretty much all cabbage works here. Try Chinese or savouy or even a red cabbage. Tiny brussels spouts in season would also be delish.



video

# Asian 'Slaw with BBQ Chicken...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too dry** – splash in some more lime juice and oil to make the dressing go further. Next time use a smaller cabbage or make a larger batch of dressing.

**can't find BBQ chicken?** – roast your own. 1 hour in the oven at 200C (400F) usually does the trick.

**too bland** – season with a little more salt or soy or try upping the lime. Adding in the zest from the lime will also help.

**not spicy enough** – serve with some chilli oil or dried chilli flakes so you can adjust the chilli heat level to suit your taste.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep in the fridge for a week or so but the texture will lose its crunch. I actually like it after a few days when it's a little soggy. If you're a crunchy-salad-only type of person, best to eat it fresh,

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great as a super quick lunch or dinner on its own. Also great for picnics. Just wait until you're ready to serve before tossing the cabbage and carrot in the dressing.



Poached Chicken & Broccolini Salad

# Poached Chicken & Broccolini Salad



enough for 2

2 chicken breasts

1 bunch broccolini, halved crosswise

1 lemon

2 handfuls baby spinach leaves, washed

handful roasted almonds

1. Bring 4 cups water to the boil in a medium saucepan.
2. Add chicken and place broccolini in a strainer over the chicken so the broccolini will steam. Cover with a lid and simmer gently for 5 minutes.
3. Turn heat off and allow chicken and broccolini to stand for 20 minutes.
4. Meanwhile whisk 1 tablespoon lemon juice, zest of the lemon and 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil in a large bowl.
5. Pat broccolini dry with paper towel and toss in the dressing. Slice or shred chicken and add to the dressing along with spinach. Toss and serve with almonds scattered over.

## VARIATIONS

**vegetarian** – skip the chicken poaching. Steam the broccolini for about 8 minutes or until tender. Serve salad with generous spoonfuls of soft goats cheese or ricotta.

**vegan** – replace chicken with a drained can of butter beans OR some pan fried tofu cubes – season very generously.

**nut-free** – replace the almonds with finely diced red onion for colour and crunch.



video

# Poached Chicken & Broccolini Salad..

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**can't find broccolini?** - just replace with a head of regular broccoli chopped into florettes.

**chicken tough or dry?** – this means the chicken has been cooked at too high a temperature. Next time keep an eye on it in the initial simmering phase to make sure it's at a gentle simmer.

**broccolini too crunchy** – I like a little crunch but if it's difficult to eat, the broccolini hasn't been cooked enough. Could be that your steamer setup is allowing too much heat to escape. Next time try adding the broccolini in with the chicken and simmering it rather than steaming.

**broccolini brown / lifeless** – either the broccolini wasn't the freshest to start with or you've over cooked it. Next time check the broccolini during the poaching process and remove and toss in the salad when it's no longer crunchy.

**salad too dry** – sounds like not enough dressing. Either drizzle over a little more olive oil and vinegar or mix up another batch of dressing in a small bowl and toss that over.

**too bland?** don't forget to season generously. And possibly sharpen things up with a little more vinegar.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

If you don't mind soggy salad leaves, will keep in the fridge for a few days.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

A wonderful light, fresh meal on its own.

Module 6.

The Art of  
Adaptation





# Module 6 Video & Audio

Video

[CLICK HERE](#) to view video for Module 6.



# 8 Tips for Using Templates

8 tips for mastering the art of cooking with adaptable 'template' recipes.

## 1. Trust your instincts

The one thing I wish I realized earlier in my cooking career is that even if you don't have much experience as a cook, all those years of eating three or so meals a day mean that we all have an amazing natural catalog of food knowledge in our heads.

So please don't underestimate your natural food instincts. After all, you've been eating for a long time. If you think something is going to be delicious, trust yourself, it probably will be.

I can honestly say, there aren't many times that I think of trying something and it ends up not working. 90% of the time it ends up even better than I could imagine.

## 2. Pay attention to the classic flavour combinations.

There's a whole wealth of food knowledge out there. So there's no need to go reinventing the 'flavour' wheel each time you step into the kitchen. Some examples include bacon and eggs, tomato and basil, goats cheese and beetroot, fish and lemon, chocolate and hazelnuts, honey and almond, apple and cinnamon... You get the idea.

Whenever you're eating and come across a good flavour combo, make a mental note.

## 8 tips for mastering the art of cooking with adaptable 'template' recipes.

### 3. Start with less.

Remember in cooking it's always easy to add more than it is to take away. By focusing on starting with less ingredients or less courses you give yourself a chance to get it right and then build on your success.

### 4. Read the whole recipe before you start, including the variations.

In the kitchen it's super important to know where you're heading and how you're going to get there. With template recipes this is even more important because you're in charge. You're not blindly following the recipe. So take control and make some decisions.

### 5. Develop a 'vision' or picture of the end dish in your mind before you start cooking.

You need to know where you're going to get there with the least amount of hassle and fuss. So after you read the template recipe it's important to decide which variation or path you want to follow.

### 6. Be prepared to taste and season.

I'm convinced that the ability to taste and season – to add whatever needs adding – is THE most important skill. It's the key difference between a great cook and an OK or mediocre cook. So every time you step into the kitchen be prepared to have a little taste and ask yourself... 'Could this taste better? What does it need or what is it lacking?'

### 7. Take mistakes as a 'learning experience'.

Cooking is a natural process and no one can or should expect to get it right every time.

I recently went to a talk by Rene Redzepi, chef at Noma in Copenhagen currently the best restaurant in the world. One of the biggest messages he tells his chefs is that 'failure IS an option'. So if the best chef in the world expects things to go wrong from time to time then surely we home cooks should expect the same.



8 tips for mastering the art of  
cooking with adaptable 'template'  
recipes.

### **8. Have faith in 'Clancy's Law of Cooking'.**

You've probably heard of the great Irish philosopher Murphy and his favourite law, 'if anything can possibly go wrong, it will go wrong'. When I was little, my Dad used to tell us that 'Clancy's Law' was that 'Murphy was an optimist'.

Fortunately, I seem to have inherited more of my Mum's outlook on life and philosophy. So I've invented 'Clancy's Law of Cooking'. It runs along these lines...

"If you think something is going to taste delicious,  
it probably will."





# The What's in the Fridge Game

The secret to playing the what's in the fridge game and why this 'game' can help you master the art of adaptation.

The art of adaptation is a skill I believe that anyone can learn. It's something that with a little practice, and a willingness to risk the odd failure, all cooks can master. And the good news is that you can take baby steps.

One of the things that really helped me move from being a 'follow-the-recipe' cook to being more 'free-style' in the kitchen is a game I like to play. I call it the 'what's-in-the-fridge game' and you've probably guess what it involves. Yes, it's all about just cooking with what you have in the house.

## **The rules of the game**

1. You can't duck out to the shops to pick up an ingredient. It all has to be things you already have in the house and garden.
2. There is no need to eat a failure. If it doesn't work out, be nice to yourself, order in some Thai food, or make something else to eat.

The secret to playing the what's in the fridge game and why this 'game' can help you master the art of adaptation.

### **Begin with the end in mind**

For me this is the most important step in inventing a new dish. I always take the time to survey the ingredients on hand and then imagine what I'm going to cook. Until I have a picture in my mind, I don't start cooking. Sure the picture can change, but it's really important to know where you're heading before you start.

### **Learn the classic flavour combinations**

I recently saw a demonstration by the pastry chef from cutting edge New York restaurant, wd~50. And one of the things that surprised me the most was his comments that he tends to avoid 'out-there' flavour combinations. His logic was that you didn't need to reinvent the wheel and that there's a reason that the classics are classic. Wise words.

Here are a few of my favourite combos to get you thinking: § tomato & basil § bread & cheese § beans & dill § lamb & mint § peanut butter & jelly (or honey!) § lime & chilli & coriander § fennel & fish § zucchini & mint § chicken & tarragon § salmon & dill § fish & lemon § apple & cinnamon § strawberries & balsamic vinegar § chocolate & mint § chocolate & orange

### **Remember to keep it simple**

Apart from burning things, I find my biggest kitchen failures occur when I get carried away and add too many elements to a dish. And end up with a muddled mess. Since I started cooking with 5 ingredients, this isn't such a big problem for me but it's where I see beginners making mistakes. So keep reminding yourself that 'less is more'.





# 5 Easy Tricks

## 5 easy tricks for adapting to changes in your schedule.

5 easy tricks for adapting to changes in your schedule.

They say there are only two certainties in life. Death and taxes. But I would argue in the modern world we should include a third. Change.

Whether you're someone who thrives on change or a self-professed 'change phobic' we need to face the fact that there will be changes to our schedule. This means we can set ourselves up for success so that when plans change we are able to adapt with the minimum of effort and stress.

Here are 5 tips for adapting to schedule change...

### **1. Anticipate the change.**

Take it as a given that there will be change. Then try and gauge how much volatility you need to accommodate on a regular basis. Over time you'll notice patterns that will help you plan for the most common disruptions.

For example, in our house there are two things that commonly happen at the last minute. The most common is my Irishman having to travel at the last minute and he away for one or two nights.

The next most common occurrence is having last minute guests for dinner.

## 5 easy tricks for adapting to changes in your schedule.

### **2. Build a backup plan for the most common changes.**

Once you know the most common occurrences, you can think about backup plans that will allow you to adapt. This doesn't need to be specific. Just a general idea of what you'll do.

Back to my examples. Given my Irishman often needs to travel, I make sure at least one or two of my protein types each week have a long shelf life. So if he does go away, we can leave them for the next week. A couple of steaks in the freezer, some cryovaccated meat in the fridge, dried lentils or unopened packages of halloumi or tofu. I do the same with veg. Some are short shelf life like bags of baby spinach and salad leaves. The others are long shelf life like carrots, cabbage and celery so if we don't need them they will last until the following week.

In the case of unexpected visitors, I usually get at least 24 hours notice so I know there will be enough time for someone to drop by the supermarket or go to the butcher to get whatever we need. So it usually works out fine.

### **3. Don't choose all perishable or short shelf life foods.**

By including some produce which will last for longer than a week like cabbage, cauliflower, zucchini, cucumber, carrots, celery, broccoli etc it maximizes your flexibility because it doesn't matter if you leave them for the next week. Same goes for protein. Look out for cryovaccated meat, tofu, halloumi, or frozen protein sources. Canned and dry legumes and lentils also add a comfortable margin of safety.

### **4. When unexpected changes do happen, perform a little 'home food preservation'.**

When your plans change, have a quick look in the fridge to see if there is anything that is going to go bad before you'll have a chance to eat it. It only takes a few minutes but can make a massive difference to your waste levels.

Think about whether you can freeze the ingredient for later. Or whether partially cooking, or doing a little 'mise en place' will help prolong its life.

### **5. Have some fun with it.**

Sometimes the best cooking discoveries happen when you're under pressure :)





# Your Actions!

## Your Action Steps

Remember, insight without action is worthless. So it's super important to take the first step now while everything is fresh in your mind.

1. Complete Step 6. from Module 1. for developing your habits (STEP 6. If you fail, keep trying.)
2. Set aside one meal in the next week to play the 'What's in the fridge' game.
3. When it's time to cook, have a good look in your pantry, fridge and freezer.
4. Browse through the template recipes in this module. Choose one and take it from there!
5. Report back and let me know what you came up with. Share your experiments in the comments below or share with the SVCS community on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#).



Warm Dinner Salad

# Warm Dinner Salad



When the weather is cooler – and even when it isn't – I love a warm salad like this. It's light and fresh but the warm ingredients ensure it feels substantial enough for dinner.

per person

*1 large handful main ingredient, sliced*

*1/2 tablespoon acid*

*1/2 teaspoon soy sauce, optional*

*1-2 handfuls salad leaves, washed and dried*

*small handful highlight ingredient*

1. Heat a little oil in a pan and cook highlight ingredient over a medium heat until cooked to your liking.
2. Meanwhile, combine acid, soy and 1 1/2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil in a medium bowl. Taste and season.
2. Toss leaves gently in the dressing. Place leaves on a serving plate.
3. Top dressed leaves with the warm main ingredient and scatter over the highlight ingredient.

## VARIATIONS

**main ingredient** – mushrooms, chicken breasts, chicken thighs, steak, lamb fillet, roast veg, eggplant (aubergine), halloumi, tofu, cooked or canned lentils, cooked quinoa, canned chickpeas, canned beans.

**acid** – Sherry vinegar, rice wine vinegar, lemon juice, lime juice, red/white wine vinegar, champagne vinegar, balsamic.

**soy-free** – skip the soy sauce and be more generous with the salt. Or try a dash of fish sauce instead.

**leaves** – pretty much anything you like. Watercress, baby spinach, all lettuce, rocket (arugula), basil, parsley, mint, lovage, baby kale, baby cavolo nero, brussels sprouts leaves.

**highlight ingredient** – shaved parmesan, goats cheese, marinated feta, ricotta, finely sliced ripe grapes, shaved pear, roast almonds or other nuts, seeds, toasted breadcrumbs.



video

# Warm Dinner Salad...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**dressing not sticking to the leaves** – Usually this is a sign the leaves weren't completely dry after they were washed. Next time spin dry in a salad spinner or pat really well with paper towel.

**too oily** – You've got too much dressing. Toss in some more leaves if you have them or transfer to a clean bowl and toss again so some of the excess dressing comes off onto the sides of the bowl.

**too dry** – Not enough dressing for the amount of leaves. Mix up a little more dressing and add to the leaves a little at a time. Keep the remainder of the dressing in the fridge.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Not the greatest. Will go a little soggy in the fridge, although I do know people who like their salad after it has been 'marinated' for a while. Go figure.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Wonderful as a light dinner on its own.



quick stir fry

# Quick Stir Fry



The Chinese sure know a thing or two about quick cooking. If you're new to stir frying, checkout [`How to Stir Fry`](#) on Stonesoup .

per person

*150g-200g (5-6oz) protein, finely sliced*

*1/2-1 tablespoon aromatics*

*250-300g (7-10oz) vegetables, chopped*

*1-3 tablespoons sauce*

*small handful garnish / highlight*

1. Heat a wok on a fierce heat.
2. Add a little oil and stir fry the protein and aromatics until no longer pink. Remove from the heat and place in a clean bowl.
3. Add the vegetables and stir fry until they are wilted or tender – a few minutes for leafy veg like bok choy, 5 minutes or more for crunchy veg like carrots.
4. Return the aromatics and protein to the pan. Add the sauce. Stir fry for another few seconds or until everything is hot. Taste. Season.
5. Remove from the heat. Serve sprinkled with the garnish / highlight.

## VARIATIONS

**protein** -minced (ground) meat – beef, chicken, lamb, turkey, pork, veal, buffalo.

**tender cuts of meat, finely sliced across the grain** – steak, eye fillet of beef (fillet mignon), lamb fillet or backstraps, pork fillet, pork shoulder, chicken breast, chicken thighs.

**veggie protein** – tofu, cashews, almonds, setian, eggs (cook as an omelette in the base of the wok then slice and stir through at the end), cooked or canned lentils, cooked or canned beans.

**aromatics** – use one or a combo of finely chopped fresh red chilli, garlic and/or ginger. Deseed the chilli if you're sensitive to heat. OR double it if you like it hot!

**fresh veg** – use one or a combo of zucchini, carrots, red capsicum (red bell peppers), bok choy, choy sum, other asian greens, spinach leaves, green beans, snow peas (mange tout), shaved cabbage, broccoli, broccolini, cauliflower, sugar snap peas, fennel, witlof (belgian endive), asparagus.

**cooked veg** – root veg are best pre-cooked – either simmered or roasted in bight sized chunks. Try beets, parsnip, swedes, sweet potato, pumpkin.



video

# Quick Stir Fry...

## VARIATIONS

**saucers (asian)** – My go-to stir fry sauce is just soy or tamari (a gluten-free soy). Other times I use oyster sauce, fish sauce, hoisin sauce or sriracha (chillili sauce).

**saucers (non-asian)** – don't feel like your stir fry has to have an asian vibe. Try worcestershire sauce, ketchup, mustard, BBQ sauce or pesto.

**herby garnish / highlight** – try fresh coriander (cilantro), basil, mint, parsley, oregano, chives, green onions or even thyme.

**crunchy garnish / highlight** – nuts especially cashews or almonds, super finely sliced red onion, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds

**other garnish / highlight** – sesame oil, pesto, extra chilli.

**serve** – straight up in little bowls with chopsticks. Or with steamed rice or cauliflower 'rice'.

**fiery** – serve a side dish of chilli sauce or chilli oil.

**more substantial** – toss in some cooked noodles, lentils, chickpeas or steamed rice. And cook until hot.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**tough protein** – it's super important to use a tender cut of meat, or ground meat with stir frying. Cutting the meat as thinly as possible across the 'grain' (or muscle fibres) makes a big difference too. Over cooked meat will be tough and dry so make sure you only cook it for long enough to change the colour. Unfortunately there isn't really anything you can do to 'fix' tough meat. Another cause is if the heat isn't hot enough or if you add too much food to the wok and it 'stews' or simmers rather than being seared. If you find this happening, stop and remove the food from the wok. Start again and cook the food in batches.

**burning** – you're not stirring fast enough! Adding the sauce too early can cause it to burn as well.

**veg too crunchy** – it's important to finely slice your veg so they cook as quickly as possible.

**too bland** – season with more sauce or salt & pepper.

**to dry** – try adding a litte more oil or sauce or both.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

OK. But best when hot from the wok. Just keep in the fridge for up to a week or two and reheat in the wok or frying pan. You could freeze but it's not going to help the texture.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Best served HOT straight from the wok in bowls with chopsticks.



Grilled Kebabs + *Sauce* + Salad

# Grilled Kebabs + Sauce + Salad



Cooking food on skewers is a brilliant way to make smaller 'bits and pieces' feel like something more substantial. The dish in the picture is pork with a satay sauce.

per person

200g (7oz) protein or veg

1 teaspoon to 1 tablespoon marinade ingredient  
sauce, to serve

salad leaves, to serve

1. Cut protein or veg into bight sized cubes and place in a small bowl with the marinade. Or for ground meat mix with the marinade ingredient.
2. Heat an overhead grill (broiler) on a very high heat.
3. Thread protein or veg onto 2 bamboo skewers. If using ground meat form into 'sausages' with your hands first.
4. Cook for 3-4 minutes on the first side, until browned. Turn then cook for another 3-5 minutes or until just cooked.
5. Serve skewers with sauce drizzled over. And salad on the side.

## VARIATIONS

**protein** – tender cuts of meat like pork fillet, lamb fillet, pork neck, beef fillet, steak, chicken breasts or thighs. Fish fillets. Tofu. Setian. Chorizo, squid, prawns (shrimp). Ground meat can also be used – just form into 'sausages' with your hands and thread onto the skewers.

**veg** - looking for veg which will cook in a relatively short amount of time AND hold its shape on the skewer. Zucchini, red capsicum ( bell peppers), mushrooms, Or used cooked veg such as sweet potato, pumpkin, potatoes, parsnips, celeriac, fennel.

**marinade ingredient** – soy sauce, lemon juice, lime juice, sherry or rice vinegar. Spices can also work here (1/2 – 1 teaspoon per person + 1 tablespoon oil) smoked paprika, ground cumin, ground coriander seed, curry powder, garam marsala.

**sauces** – hummus, pesto, herb & nut sauce, hoisin sauce or sriracha (chillli sauce). Even ketchup or BBQ sauce. For more sauce ideas see [10 delicious 5 minute sauces](#).

**salad** – pretty much any washed salad leaves including baby spinach, rocket (arugula), radicchio or mixed leaves. Also try leafy herbs like parsley, mint, coriander (cilantro) and basil.



video

# Grilled Kebabs + Sauce + Salad...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**protein dry** – it's important not to overcook the protein as it easily dries out. Best to err on the side of slightly undercooked.

**bland** – be generous with the seasoning. Next time try a different sauce.

**short on time?** – skip the threading onto the skewers and just stir fry the cubes of meat until just cooked and serve drizzled with the sauce.

**skewers burning** – bamboo skewers will burn unless soaked in water first. I tend not to worry about it. You could remove the skewers before serving or invest in a set of metal skewers.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

OK. Most kebabs work best when fresh but can be served cold wrapped in fresh flat bread with the sauce. Will keep in the fridge for a week or so.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Serve the skewers and sauce with the salad on the side. For a more substantial meal, serve with fresh pita bread..

## 10 Delicious 5 Minute Sauces.

### Hummus

In a food processor whizz 1 can chickpeas with 1 clove garlic and 3 tablespoons each of lemon juice, tahini and chickpea canning liquid.

#### VARIATIONS

**white bean hummus** – replace chickpeas with canned white beans.

**lentil hummus** – replace chickpeas with 1 can lentils or home cooked lentils (250g / 9oz).

**vegetable hummus** – replace chickpeas with 250g / 9oz cooked vegetables. Great with roast pumpkin, roast sweet potato, carrots or even steamed broccoli or cauliflower.

**no tahini?** – replace with extra virgin olive oil or other nut butter such as cashew or almond butter.

### Natural Yoghurt

This is seriously the easiest sauce ever. Take a good quality full fat yoghurt and season generously with salt and pepper.

#### VARIATIONS

**lemon / lime yoghurt** – add in the zest of a lemon or lime.

**vegan** – use a good quality coconut yoghurt (recipe on Stonesoup).

**chilli** – add in 1-2 finely diced fresh chillies or some dried chilli powder.

**herby** – stir in a handful of chopped herbs such as basil, coriander (cilantro), thyme, mint or parsley.



## 10 Delicious 5 Minute Sauces.

### Cheat's Aioli

Finely chop or crush a clove garlic. Stir through 6-8 tablespoons good quality commercial mayo (or make your own – recipe here)

#### VARIATIONS

**lemon / lime yoghurt** – add in the zest of a lemon or lime.

**vegan** – use a good quality commercial vegan mayonnaise.

**chilli** – add in 1-2 finely diced fresh chillies or some dried chilli powder.

**herby** – stir in a handful of chopped herbs such as basil, coriander (cilantro), thyme, mint or parsley.

### Pesto

In a food processor whizz a large bunch basil leaves with 1-2 cloves garlic, large handful pinenuts, large handful grated parmesan, and 3-4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil. Taste and season, adding more parmesan or oil as needed. Sometimes I add a splash of lemon juice for freshness.

#### VARIATIONS

**winter pesto** – replace basil with flat leaf parsley and replace pinenuts with roasted almonds.

**vegan** – replace the parmesan with extra nuts such as brazil or almonds.

**asian pesto** - replace basil with coriander (cilantro), replace pinenuts and cheese with 2 large handfuls roasted cashews. Consider adding in a splash of lime juice as well.

### Smoky BBQ Sauce

Add 1-2 teaspoons smoked paprika to 1/2 cup commercial BBQ sauce. Taste and add more if needed.

#### VARIATIONS

**hot smoky BBQ sauce** – add in a little dried chilli powder or flakes.

**home made BBQ sauce** – make a big batch and keep in the pantry (recipe here)



## 10 Delicious 5 Minute Sauces.

### Cashew Nut Sauce

In a food processor whizz 200g (7oz) cashew nuts with 1-2 cloves garlic, 1/2 cup water and 2 tablespoons sherry vinegar or white wine vinegar. When you have a smooth creamy sauce stop and taste. Season as needed.

#### VARIATIONS

**budget** – swap some or all of the nuts for torn chunks of rustic bread. Sourdough is great.

**nut-free** – replace nuts with cooked or canned legumes such as cannellini beans, butter beans or chickpeas. You might need a little more or less vinegar.

**no sherry vinegar?** – no problem. Use lemon juice or other wine vinegars. Rice vinegar is great.

**different nuts** – pine nuts, almonds, walnuts, pecans, peanuts (or use peanut butter with less water). So many options.

### Tahini Lemon Sauce

A great sauce to have up your sleeve when you're looking for something creamy and dairy-free. Combine 2 tablespoons each of lemon juice, water and tahini. Taste and season.

#### VARIATIONS

**almond sauce** – replace tahini with almond butter

**thicker sauce** – halve the water.

**thinner sauce** – double the water.

### Quick Satay Sauce

For each person, mix 3 tablespoons peanut butter, 1 teaspoon thai red curry paste, 1-2 teaspoons soy sauce and 2 teaspoons oil per person.

#### VARIATIONS

**no thai curry paste?** – replace with 1-2 small red chillies, finely chopped and deseeded if you prefer a milder sauce.

### GrownUp Ketchup

Add 1 teaspoon dried chilli and 1 teaspoon soy sauce to 1/2 cup commercial ketchup. Taste and add more if needed.

### Mustard Buttermilk Sauce

Whisk 1 tablespoon dijon mustard & 6 tablespoons buttermilk together until smooth. Taste & season.

#### VARIATIONS

**thicker sauce** – increase the mustard to 2 tablespoons. Serve with roast or BBQ chicken or drizzled over roast eggplant (aubergine).

**dairy-free / vegan** – replace the buttermilk with 1 tablespoon sherry vinegar or lemon juice and 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil.



Pan Fried Protein + Sauce



# Pan Fried Protein + Sauce



You may recognize this image from our Chilli Chicken with Hummus from an earlier module. This is a great example of how you can take a specific recipe and translate it into a general template. Feel free to do this with any of your favourite recipes.

Per person

*approx 150-250g (5-9oz) protein*

*1/2 teaspoon flavouring, optional*

*3-4 tablespoons sauce*

*2 large handfuls washed salad leaves*

*1/2 lemon*

1. Heat a frying pan or skillet on a very high heat.
2. Trim fat from the protein and bash with your fist to even out the thickness, if needed. Rub with a little olive oil and sprinkle with flavouring, if using. Season.
3. Sear with the oiled side down for 2-4 minutes. Turn and cook for another 2-3 minutes or until protein is cooked through.
4. Smear sauce over the base of 2 plates. Top with chicken and serve with leaves and salad on the side.

## VARIATIONS

**veggie 'protein'** - I've used halloumi in the picture. Tofu or setian would also work well here. Or think about pan frying some precooked beans or lentils until they are just cooked and serving with the sauce and salad. Field or portabello mushrooms are great here too.

**carnivore protein** – for pan frying tender cuts are best. And preferably not too thick as it can be difficult to get the middle cooked without completely burning the outsides. Steak, lamb cutlets or lamb chops, pork cutlets or pork chops, chicken breasts, chicken thigh fillets.

**flavouring** – crushed garlic, chilli powder, dried chilli flakes, fresh chilli, smoked paprika, curry powder, ground coriander, ground cumin, fennel seeds, pepper, rosemary, thyme, lemon zest, bay leaves.

**sauces** – hummus, pesto, natural yoghurt, ricotta, ketchup, BBQ sauce, mayo, aioli, [cashew nut sauce](#) (stonesoup) for recipes check out my 10 delicious 5 Minute sauces.



video

# Pan Fried Protein + Sauce...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland** – Season with salt & pepper. Try some more chilli.

**too dry** – Add a little more olive oil or serve with more sauce. If the protein is very dry it means it's been overcooked. Next time get it out of the pan earlier.

**protein pink** – Means it's not cooked properly. Just pop back in the pan and cook for another few minutes. Next time consider being a bit more aggressive with your bashing to make sure the protein is thinner and will cook more quickly.

**flavouring burning** – this can happen with this method – I like to think of it as adding a 'charred' flavour. If it tastes bitter though, you've gone too far. Next time try adding the flavouring after the protein is cooked or add it half way through cooking.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Pretty good. Can be eaten cold or the protein reheated. Will keep in the fridge for 4-5 days.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Either serve protein on a bed of sauce or serve sauce on top.



ketchup 'baked' legumes

# ketchup 'baked' legumes



I've never been a fan of baked beans out of a can. These ketchup beans are a whole other story. The onion, the paprika & the sweet sweet ketchup combine to make a dish you'd swear had been 'baking' for hours.

per person

1 tablespoon butter, optional

1/2 aromatic vegetable, chopped

1/2 can legumes, drained

2 tablespoons ketchup

1 teaspoon spice, optional

1. Heat a medium fry pan on a medium heat. Add butter and aromatic veg and cook for 5-10 minutes until the veg is soft and lightly golden.
2. Add legumes, ketchup and spice.
3. Stir and simmer for a couple of minutes to make sure everything is hot. Taste & season.

## VARIATIONS

**butter alternative** – any oil you normally cook with.

**aromatic veg** – onions are my favourite but celery or carrots would be good instead..

**legumes** – I've used cannellini beans in the photo but any canned or cooked legume will work. Try butter beans, borlotti beans, black beans, chickpeas or lentils.

**no ketchup?** – I really recommend getting a small bottle to try with this dish. I'm not really a big ketchup fan but I adore these legumes..Otherwise try tomato paste and a big pinch or three of brown sugar. A good BBQ sauce will also work.

**spice** - first choice smoked paprika. Next choice other paprika, dried chilli (you may like to reduce the quantity if really hot). Coriander seed or cumin would be interesting. And curry powder would work if you're in the mood for a cury.

**higher protein** – Preheat the oven to 180C (350F) while the onion cooks. When the legumes are done, make a small well in the middle and crack and egg into it. Bake for about 10 minutes or until egg whites are set and yolks still runny.



video

# ketchup 'baked' legumes...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland** – Season with salt & pepper. A little more smoked paprika or ketchup may help.

**too dry** – Add a little water or a little more ketchup.

**too sweet** – Next time try a different brand of ketchup, for now add a little more salt or some soy sauce to season.

**legumes falling apart** – sounds like they were overcooked to begin with. Make sure you only heat for long enough to warm everything through once the legumes go in.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Brilliant! Reheats really well. Also freezes well. Should keep in the fridge for about 2 weeks.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Lovely straight up or with a side of shredded kale or baby spinach. Also good with hot buttered toast.

mild & creamy indian curry



# Mild & Creamy Indian Curry



This is one of my all time favourite curries.

per person

200g (7oz) protein / veg

1 tablespoon garam marsala

pinch aromatics

1/2 can tomatoes (200g / 7oz)

2-3 tablespoons creamy agent

1. Heat a few tablespoons olive oil in a large frying pan (skillet) over a medium high heat.
2. Brown protein if using raw meat for few minutes each side. Otherwise move on to the next step.
3. Add garam marsala and aromatics. Stir for a few seconds.
4. Add tomatoes and their juices and veg, if using. Simmer for about 5 minutes. Until thickened. Or longer until the veg are tender.
5. Stir in cream and bring back to a simmer. Return or add protein to the pan and simmer until heated through.
6. Taste and season with salt, pepper and a little sugar if you like it sweet.

## VARIATIONS

**protein** – chicken thigh fillets, steak, pork fillet, chickpeas, butter beans, cannellini beans, borlotti beans, lentils, ricotta, paneer (indian fresh cheese similar to ricotta), cashews, almonds, hard boiled eggs.

**vegetables** – fennel, zucchini, cabbage, carrots, beets, asparagus, broccoli, cauliflower, red capsicum (bell peppers). Leafy veg such as spinach, kale or collard greens can be finely sliced into ribbons with a knife. Baby spinach.

**can't find garam marsala?** – replace with a mild curry powder or make your own using equal parts ground cumin and coriander.

**aromatics** – dried or fresh red chilli is my preference. You could also add garlic or ginger.

**creamy agent** – whipping cream is my favourite. Or try coconut cream or butter. Natural yoghurt is also lovely but best to serve it on the side so the yoghurt doesn't curdle with the heat of the curry. You can stabilise yoghurt so it can be heated but it's a pain to do.

**no tomatoes?** – allergic or don't have any. Just replace with 1/2 cup chicken or vegetable stock and expect a less thick curry. You might find it needs a squeeze of lemon or lime to make up for the acidity in the tomatoes.



video

# Mild & Creamy Indian Curry...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too hot** – Next time use less chilli, but for now, increase the cream to tame the heat. Or serve with natural yoghurt and cucumber.

**grainy sauce texture** – I suspect it's to do with the quality of the garam marsala spice blend and how fine it is ground. Simmering the sauce for longer could help soften the texture. The best solution is to find a good source of spices or to grind your grainy garam marsala in a coffee grinder.

**tough meat** – With currys and other sauce based dishes, there are 2 approaches to getting tender meat:

1. Use higher quality cuts such as breast. Chop them into small pieces, cook them quickly over a high heat until just cooked through, add the sauce and only cook at a gentle simmer so the sauce cooks but the meat doesn't overcook.
2. Go for the long slow simmer for an hour or so to cook the meat until it is almost falling apart. This is better suited to cheaper cuts like chuck steak or lamb shanks

**too bland** – Spices lose their flavour intensity as they age. Time to buy some fresh garam marsala for next time. But for now you could add a little more spice.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Great! I find curry improves with age. Freezes well also. Just be careful to reheat gently as excess heat will cause the cream to curdle.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Wonderful with classic steamed rice or cauliflower rice. Or serve on a bed of wilted greens, fresh baby spinach, or shaved cabbage.



Big Ass Salad

# Big Ass Salad



The most frequent thing I make for dinner when the weather is warmer is what I like to call a 'big-ass salad' - a name I stole from Leo Babauta of Zen Habits fame. I love having something light and quick up my sleeve. There are literally thousands of variations of this salad so it's something you won't get bored with either.

per person

*1/2 tablespoon acid*

*1-2 handfuls salad leaves, washed and dried*

*large handful main ingredient*

*small handful highlight ingredient*

1. Combine acid and 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil in a medium bowl. Season.
2. Toss leaves gently in the dressing using clean hands.
3. Top salad with your main and highlight ingredients.

## VARIATIONS

**acid** - Sherry vinegar, rice wine vinegar, lemon juice, lime juice, red/white wine vinegar, champagne vinegar, balsamic.

**leaves** - pretty much anything you like. Watercress, baby spinach, all lettuce, rocket (arugula), basil, parsley, mint, lovage, baby kale, baby cavolo nero, brussels sprouts leaves.

**main ingredient** - avocado, smoked chicken, tuna, salmon, cottage cheese, ricotta, sardines, smoked salmon, prosciutto, cooked bacon, boiled eggs, parmesan, goats cheese.

**highlight ingredient** - roast almonds, brazil nuts, pinenuts, diced red onion, halved cherry tomatoes, finely sliced ripe grapes, shaved pear, other nuts, seeds.



video

# Big Ass Salad...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**dressing not sticking to the leaves** – Usually this is a sign the leaves weren't completely dry after they were washed. Next time spin dry in a salad spinner or pat really well with paper towel.

**too oily** – You've got too much dressing. Toss in some more leaves if you have them or transfer to a clean bowl and toss again so some of the excess dressing comes off onto the sides of the bowl.

**too dry** – Not enough dressing for the amount of leaves. Mix up a little more dressing and add to the leaves a little at a time. Keep the remainder of the dressing in the fridge.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Not the greatest. Will go a little soggy in the fridge, although I do know people who like their salad after it has been 'marinated' for a while. Go figure.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Pretty much works with anything savoury.



'Smooth' Veggie Soup

# 'Smooth' Veggie Soup



One of the tricks to a great veggie soups is to resist the urge to use stock or bullion. The key is letting the vegetables speak for themselves. I hate to admit it but I picked up this trick from Gordon Ramsay. I know, people always surprise you.

Per person

250g / 1/2lb vegetables (500g / 1lb)

1 1/2 cups water

2-3 tablespoons butter

squeeze lemon juice, optional

1. Pop your kettle on to boil.
2. Chop vegetables into bight sized pieces.
3. Place veg and boiling water in a medium saucepan. Bring to the boil. Cover.
4. Simmer for about 10-15 minutes or until veg are tender.. Hard veg like pumpkin, carrots or pasnip will take more like 30-45 minutes depending on how small you chop them.
5. Add butter. Puree with a stick blender until you have a lovely smooth soup.
6. Taste and season with salt, pepper and a generous squeeze of lemon if you think it needs freshening up.

## VARIATIONS

**broccoli soup** – use 1 head broccoli per person and just simmer in the water. Serve straight up OR top with fresh goats cheese.

**cauliflower** – replace the broccoli with frozen peas or finely sliced fresh veg. Snow peas, sugarsnap peas, celery & carrots are all good.

**mushroom** – roast mushies (200C/400F) until brown and soft, about 30 minutes. Simmer as per the recipe.

**other veg** – carrots, peas (frozen or podded), pumpkin, sweet potato, parsnip, .

**zucchini** – use zucchini as the veg. Great with pesto on top.

**tomato & basil** – replace the veg with a can of tomatoes reduce the water to 3/4cup per person. Leave in the butter, it's softens the acidity of the soup. Serve with a handful or torn basil leaves on top.

**dairy-free** – replace the butter with tahini, coconut milk, avocado or almond meal.

**butter alternatives** – a dollup of pesto, or serve with a drizzle of cream or yoghurt, curry paste, coconut milk, ground almonds, parmesan cheese, goats cheese.



video

# 'Smooth' Veggie Soup...

## VARIATIONS

**herby** – add fresh herbs as you puree or sprinkle on top before serving. Basil, mint, parsley & thyme are all great with veg.

**richer** – add more butter OR add in some cream, sour cream or yoghurt after you've pureed the soup.

**thicker soup** – add a handful of couscous to simmer with the veg.

**higher protein / more substantial** – halve the amount of veg and add 1/2 can lentils or beans. Or used your own home cooked legumes. OR when the soup is pureed, bring back to a simmer then remove from the heat and stir in a lightly whisked egg. Stand for a few minutes for the egg to cook.

**carnivore** – use chicken stock instead of the water and add a handful or shredded cooked chicken meat after pureeing. Bring back to a simmer before serving.

**fiery** – add 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon dried chilli flakes.

**curry veg soup** - add 1-2 teaspoons curry powder per person to simmer from the beginning.

**dairy-free** – replace the butter with tahini, coconut milk, avocado or almond meal.

**water alternatives** – vegetable or chicken stock. Canned or pureed tomatoes.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too watery** – next time either use more veg or less water. For now you can simmer for another 10-15minutes with the lid off to help reduce the soup. OR try stirring in a few tablespoons of almond meal or some canned beans or lentils Or some couscous to thicken up.

**too thick** – next time use a smaller saucepan so you get less avaporation. The good news is this is easy to fix – just add more water!

**lumpy** – it's important to wait until the veg are cooked and tender before trying to puree as hard veg will not puree properly. You can keep simmering for another 5-10 minutes and having another go at pureeing. OR just change the name to 'chunky veggie soup'.

**too bland** – season with a little more salt & pepper.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Brilliant!. Will keep in the fridge for a week or so. Warm up in the microwave or in a small saucepan on the stove top. Also freezes well.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Best served HOT. Bread and butter on the side can be lovely.

Chunky Veg Soup



# Chunky Veg Soup



A good veggie soup is an indispensable recipe to have in your repertoire. Feel free to expand it beyond veggies though. A little protein in the form of legumes or meat can take it to a new level.

per person

*1 aromatic vegetable, chopped*

*1 1/2 cups liquid*

*200g (7oz) vegetables, chopped*

*1-2 teaspoons flavouring, optional*

*small handful highlight ingredient*

1. Heat a little oil in a medium saucepan. Add aromatic vegetable and cook, covered for 5-10 minutes until soft and golden.

2. Add liquid and veggies and flavouring, if using. Simmer for 15-20 minutes or until the veggies are cooked. Longer for root veg and less for leafy greens.

3. Taste. Season and serve with highlight ingredient on top.

## VARIATIONS

**aromatic veg** – onions are my favourite but celery or carrots would be good instead..

**liquid** – chicken stock, vegetable stock, fish stock, white wine, red wine, tomato puree, canned tomatoes, water.

**vegetables** – I used zucchini in the photo. parsnips, sweet potato, pumpkin, brussels sprouts, fennel, peas, sugar snap peas, snow peas, cabbage, beets, asparagus, jerusalem artichokes, broccoli, cauliflower, red capsicum (bell peppers), bok choy, asian greens, spinach, silverbeet or any combination of these. Legumes are also great here.

**flavouring** – I skipped this because I was using the pesto which packs a big flavour punch.

**highlight ingredient** – I used pesto. Hummus is good too or other sauces. Yoghurt, sour cream, guacamole. Goats cheese, parmesan, ricotta. Croutons or small slices of bread with melted cheese. Crispy bacon pieces, finely sliced salami or prosciutto.



video

# Chunky Veg Soup...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland** – Season with salt & pepper. A little soy sauce may help. Next time use a liquid with more flavour.

**too watery** – Simmer uncovered so the soup can concentrate down. Adding in some cooked quinoa or canned legumes will help thicken it up. Or a handful of fresh breadcrumbs. Next time use more veg or use less liquid.

**veggies too crunchy** – Next time cut the veg into smaller pieces so they cook quicker. Or just simmer longer.

**veg mushy** – oh no! overcooked veg!. You could puree it and turn it into a smooth soup if you like.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Brilliant! Reheats really well. One of those things that improves with age.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great as a light meal on its own. Or serve with crusty bread & butter.

# about the author



I'm Jules Clancy and am first and foremost a food lover who adores her veggies. The type of girl who plans her holidays around restaurant reservations.

Before I quit my corporate job I had an hour commute each way. When I got home it would be late and I'd be starving. And even though I love to cook, I'd often find myself just settling for the quickest thing, like cheese on toast.

Not exactly healthy.

Around that time I discovered the wonderful blog, Zen Habits and the concept of minimalism. As I simplified my life, I applied the same process to my shopping and cooking and I started sharing my quicker and easier meals on Stonesoup.

Over time my blog readership has grown to over 250,000 unique visitors per month. But the best part is the emails and comments I get from Stonesoup readers saying how it is making a difference to their cooking and their lives.

Which is why I opened the doors to my first online cooking class back in 2010. Since then I've helped over 1000 people like you to simplify their cooking without sacrificing health or taste.

One of the things that makes the SVCS special is that its a chef-free zone. You see I'm a home cook, just like you. AND I have a degree in food science, which means I understand to science behind what works in the kitchen. So I know which corners you can cut without sacrificing flavour or nutrition. Everything at the SVCS is about real life home cooking.

When I'm not cooking, writing about food or taking photographs [of food], I can be found indulging my passions for long boozy lunches, travel, running, cookbooks, growing my own veggies, cheese, red shoes and Irishmen, [OK one Irish man in particular].

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