



**MASTER  
MEAL PLAN** *Your*

video edition

**JULES CLANCY**

For my dearest friend, Missy Helgs  
My favourite living example of a non-planner becoming a 'systems queen'  
with love xx

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# INTRODUCTION

When I was first getting in to cooking, I spent hours pouring through magazines and cookbooks choosing what we'd be eating for the next week. It took a lot of time. And the thing is, our plans would always change and I'd end up throwing things away. Such a waste.

When I moved to the Barossa Valley, I changed my planning ways. Each week, I'd go to the farmers markets and just buy what looked good. There was still some waste but in general I was spending a fraction of the time and getting better results.

These days, my meal planning system has naturally evolved to a 'happy' medium between the two extremes. It gives the flexibility needed to cope with the variability of modern life, while providing some structure so you don't end up wasting food. And best of all it hardly takes any time at all.

After thinking about my natural planning technique, I've been able to condense it into a simple 'method' that anyone can take and adapt to their own life.

If you can count, you too will be able to master this hassle-free system to help save you time and take the stress out of planning, shopping and cooking.

I'm really excited about being able to share my planning method with you!

Enjoy!  
Jules x



# WHAT IS 'THE 2-MINUTE' PLANNING METHOD'?

**1. IT'S A SUPER SIMPLE 'FORMULA'** to help you figure out how much food you'll need. It quickly tells you how many types of protein (or main events) and vegetables to buy.

**2. IT'S A COLLECTION OF 'MASTER PLAN' TEMPLATE RECIPES.**

I'll share the blue prints for my favourite go-to general recipes. These 'master plan' recipes are the general templates for how to make different classic dishes. For example a great stir fry, a quick soup or a fragrant curry. Each template comes with suggestions for variations so you'll be able to adapt them to the ingredients on hand.

**3. REAL LIVE EXAMPLES SO YOU CAN WATCH AND LEARN.**

I'll show you EXACTLY how to put the method into practice by letting you 'watch over my shoulder' as I plan, shop and cook over 4 different weeks. I'll guide you through my decision making processes to train you how to implement the system in a way that works for your lifestyle and cooking ability.

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VIDEO

\* Module 1.

THE 2-MINUTE  
PLANNING  
FORMULA

# THE 3-STEP PLANNING 'SYSTEM'

*IMPORTANT NOTE BEFORE WE START: This is my meal planning system. It's certainly not the only way you can have a quick and easy meal planning system. I want you to use this as a starting point to develop your own 'system'. Everyone is different so it's super important that you tweak your system until you have something that works for you and your situation.*

It's going to be an evolving process. As things change in your life, you'll need to make adjustments. Think of it as part of the fun!

## **STEP 1. KEEP AN 'ONGOING LIST' FOR PANTRY ITEMS & NON-FOOD STUFF**

All you need is somewhere to record when you're running out of things as you think of them. Doing this as you go takes hardly any time or effort. And makes your shopping list writing much more streamlined!

Options include:

### **1. An app on your phone.**

I've recently started using a 'shopping list' app. It's brilliant. I just add things in as I think of them and then check them off as I shop.

### **2. A notepad**

Old school but still effective! My Mum used to swear by her magnetic notepad on the fridge.

### **3. Chalkboard / whiteboard**

Can make a nice decorative feature in your kitchen. The downside is you need to copy it over to your 'take with you list'. Although I have a friend who uses this system and she takes a photo of her chalkboard on her phone so she instantly has it with her.

# THE 3-STEP PLANNING 'SYSTEM'

## STEP 2. WORK OUT WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO NEED

### DINNERS

This is where the 2-Minute Planning Formula comes into play. I've included it on a separate tab to make it as clear as possible. Warning: there are numbers involved!

**+ add in breakfast items** For me this means a carton of eggs, 1-2 serves veg, an avocado or 2, yoghurt, berries and possibly some lentils or quinoa.

**+ add in lunches, if needed.** For lunches I tend to add in few extra serves of veg and double one of the proteins (eg getting a whole chicken so we'll have leftovers) and make sure the pantry is well stocked with canned fish & legumes.

**+ add in snacks and 'treats', if needed** I just keep some roasted almonds, brazil nuts or other nuts on hand.

## STEP 3. REVIEW WHAT YOU ALREADY HAVE & SUBTRACT THIS FROM YOUR LIST

This is uber-important! In the last few months, the only time I've bought way too much food was the week I went shopping on the way home from Sydney without being able to check my fridge and freezer first.

**- Leftover veg / protein ingredients.** It's a good idea to have a few things in the freezer as a 'buffer'. Generally at least a packet of frozen peas and a few types of protein – steak or sausages or a whole chicken.

**- Leftover meals or 1/2 meals.** I usually earmark leftovers for turning into lunches so they don't impact my dinner calculations.

**- veg from the garden.** If you're lucky enough to have one!

Then... **You're ready to go shopping!**

# THE 2-MINUTE PLANNING FORMULA

## THE SIMPLE PLANNING FORMULA

**STEP 1.** Count the number of dinners you need to shop for.

**STEP 2.** Work out the number of types of protein (or 'main events') and veg you'll need...

Protein is the same as the number of dinners counted in step 1.  
Veg is TWICE the number of dinners counted in step 2.

Or in Trudy's (much more eloquent) words,  
*"At dinner, each person will have one protein and two types of vegetables"*

## WHAT IS A SERVE OF PROTEIN OR 'MAIN EVENT'?

This will vary for person to person so be prepared to adjust according to what works for you and your family. Take these as a starting point to guide you, although if you're feeding a lumberjack or my not-so-little brother, I'd double my quantities ...

I usually work on the following for 1 serve:

:: 200-250g (7-9oz) meat, fish, poultry etc

:: 200-250g (7-9oz) tofu, seitan etc

:: 1 medium eggplant

:: 2 field or portabello mushrooms

:: 125g (4oz) halloumi

:: 2-3 eggs

:: 125-150g (4-5oz) cooked lentils, beans, chickpeas, quinoa etc  
(about 1/2-3/4 can)

:: 75-100g (3-4oz) dry pasta / noodles

# THE 2-MINUTE PLANNING FORMULA

*[continued]*

## WHAT IS A SERVE OF VEG?

I like to think of this in terms of 'handfuls' or 'bunches'. Some examples of 1 serve veg:

- :: 1 large handful washed salad leaves
- :: 1 handful shelled peas
- :: 1 handful snow peas or sugar snaps
- :: 1/2 head broccoli
- :: 1/2 bunch asparagus
- :: 1/4 head of cauliflower
- :: 1/2 bunch beetroot
- :: 1 medium potato
- :: 1 medium zucchini (courgette)
- :: 1 medium carrot or 1/2 bunch baby carrots
- :: 1 medium eggplant (aubergine)
- :: 1/8 whole cabbage
- :: 1/2 bunch leafy herbs such as parsley, basil or mint.

## AN EXAMPLE

A normal week in our house would look like this..

dinner Saturday – 2 people

dinner Sunday – 2 people

dinner Monday – 2 people

dinner Tuesday – 2 people

dinner Wednesday – 2 people

dinner Thursday – 2 people

dinner Friday – out = 0 people

**So...** Number dinners = 6

## Our shopping list becomes...

Protein = 6 types (2 serves each)

Veg = 12 types (2 serves each)

**Then..** Follow the '2-Minute Planning System' and look at the food you have in the fridge / freezer and adjust your shopping list accordingly.

# 8 TIPS TO SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS

I recently 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.

Anyway it got me thinking that meal planning is really a ‘habit’ in itself. There’s the habit of keeping an ongoing shopping list, as well as the ‘habit’ of doing a weekly, fortnightly, or every few days shop – and planning for that.

So it makes sense that we can apply the principles of forming a new habit to help us succeed with our meal planning.

## **1. Make a commitment to start**

One of the first steps is to promise to yourself that you’re going to develop a new habit. In the meditation class, we put our names into a spreadsheet as a form of public accountability. I found this really helpful in sticking to my new habit.

I really encourage you to pop your name in the comments below to make your own ‘public commitment’ to developing your new meal planning habit.

## **2. Start small – make it as EASY as possible**

For meditation, we were encouraged to start by doing just 5 minutes a day. And if that didn’t work, or felt too intimidating to back it down to 1 minute or even 30 seconds. The most important thing was to make it as easy as possible.

Let’s face it. Forming or changing habits is HARD WORK to begin with. So the best way to set yourself up for success is to make it as small, manageable and easy as possible.

Then once you feel confident you’ve ‘adopted’ your new habit, it’s time to start getting better at the habit. No rush though.

# 8 TIPS TO SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS

*[continued]*

## **3. Allow a 'takeaway' or 'wild card' night – or two**

You'll have an idea how much volatility your schedule usually has. Since I moved to the country, there aren't many nights we have a 'better offer'. So for my situation a wild card night isn't really necessary. But if you think it's likely you'll need a takeaway night or two, be realistic and add them to your plan.

Another thing is if you know you have a tendency to get excited at the markets and 'over buy' like I do. Allowing a 'wild card' night where you just plan to use up the excess can work really well.

## **4. Allow a 'buffer' in your freezer**

Your freezer can be invaluable for allowing a 'safety net' of a few serves of protein and a veg or two. This takes the pressure off getting everything right in your planning and shopping system.

## **5. Grow some herbs**

If you have brown thumbs and no interest...ignore this tip!

Otherwise, think about starting small. Buying herbs tends to be expensive AND they have a habit of going bad quickly. We'll cover tips to making them last as long as possible in week 3, but growing your own makes herb-keeping a lot easier.

I'd suggest a pot of rosemary or thyme as these are pretty forgiving. And a little bit goes a long way in your cooking.

If you have more space and enthusiasm, parsley, mint and basil (in the Summer) would be my next steps.

# 8 TIPS TO SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS

*[continued]*

## **6. Plan some time for a pantry 'spring clean'**

We'll cover pantry management in great detail next week. So no need to do anything with this yet.

Just start making some 'mental notes' that it will be really helpful if you have a pantry 'spring clean' some time in the not-to-distant-future.

## **7. Don't expect to be 'perfect' from the first week**

Perfection can be scary. And the thing is, we don't need to have a 'perfect' meal plan every week. Or even a 'perfect' system.

I prefer to aim for 'mostly' to keep it realistic AND make it much more likely that I'll keep going, rather than giving up because it's 'all too hard'.

## **8. Take the first step! Decide on your preferred ongoing shopping list method**

Having an ongoing shopping list that you add to as you think of things is the best first habit to develop.

Just this one simple thing will make a massive difference to how much time you need to spend 'planning'. It also really helps you feel 'on top' of things.

# # Module 1.

# 'TEMPLATE' RECIPES

- :: ['Smooth' Veggie Soup]
- :: [Shaved Vegetable Side Salad]
- :: [Quick Stir Fry]
- :: [Thai-style Curry]
- :: [A Classic Omelette]
- :: [The Ultimate Roast Potatoes]
- :: [Full Irish Breakfast]
- :: [Cooked Quinoa]
- :: [Roast Root Veg]
- :: [Wilted Greens]
- :: [Slow Cooked Meat Ragu]

- :: [Green Pea Salad]
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- :: [Roast Chilli Harissa]
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- :: [Simple Butter Cake]
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smooth *veggie* soup



# 'SMOOTH' VEGGIE SOUP

One of the tricks to a great veggie soup 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 parsnip 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 and reduce the water to 3/4 cup per person. Leave in the butter, it softens the acidity of the soup. Serve with a handful of 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.



# 'SMOOTH' VEGGIE SOUP..

## VARIATIONS *[continued]*

**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 of 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.

## 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.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too watery** - next time either use more veg or less water. For now you can simmer for another 10-15 minutes 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 cooked couscous to thicken it up.

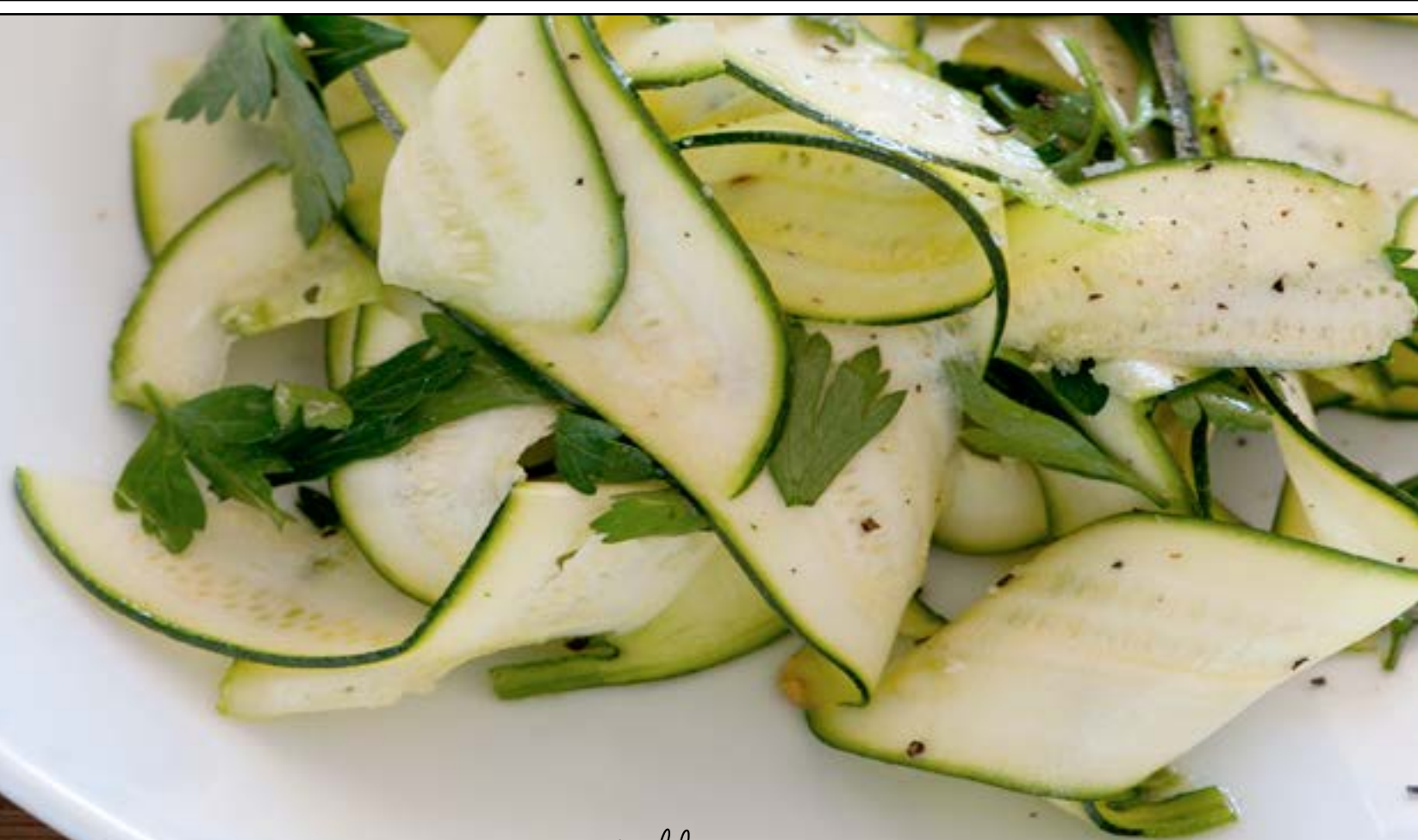
**too thick** - next time use a smaller saucepan so you get less evaporation. The good news is this is easy to fix - just add more water!

**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 have another go at pureeing. OR just change the name to 'chunky veggie soup'.

**too bland** - season with a little more salt & pepper.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Best served HOT. Bread and butter on the side can be lovely.



shaved *vegetable* side salad

# SHAVED VEGETABLE SIDE SALAD

Shaved vegetable salads are a life saver when you're out of salad leaves. These days I pretty much always have 1/2 or 1/4 cabbage floating around in the fridge in case I need a side salad. They also make great main course salads.

per person

*150g / 5oz vegetables*

*1/2 - 1 tablespoon acid*

*1-2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil*

*small handful garnish / highlight, optional*

1. Combine acid and extra virgin olive oil in medium bowl. Season.
2. Using a vegetable peeler or a mandoline or a sharp knife and a steady hand, shave the vegetables into very fine ribbons.
3. Toss veg in the dressing. Either toss in the garnish / colour highlight or sprinkle it on top.

## VARIATIONS

**vegetables** - fennel, zucchini, cabbage, carrots, beets, asparagus, broccoli (grate rather than 'shave'), cauliflower (grate rather than 'shave'), mushrooms, tomatoes (just finely slice with a knife), snow peas, sugarsnap peas, celery, red capsicum (bell peppers), parsnip. Leafy veg such as spinach, kale or collard greens can be finely sliced into ribbons with a knife.

**acid**- lemon juice is my favourite. Sherry vinegar, rice wine vinegar, lime juice, red/white wine vinegar, champagne vinegar. Vinegar tends to be stronger than citrus juice so you may need to decrease the acid or add more oil.

**dressing additions** - try adding a teaspoon of soy sauce, miso paste, ketchup, a pinch of finely chopped garlic, spices such as caraway seeds, fennel seeds, cumin seeds or mustard.

**garnish - herbs** - try fresh coriander (cilantro), basil, mint, parsley, oregano, chives, green onions or even thyme.



# SHAVED VEGETABLE SIDE SALAD...

## VARIATIONS *[continued]*

**crunchy garnish / highlight** - nuts especially cashews or almonds, super finely sliced red onion, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, fried noodles.

**other garnish / highlight** - pesto, chilli, spices, goats cheese, shaved or grated parmesan, feta, fresh mozzarella, blue cheese.

**higher protein / more substantial** - Toss in some cooked shredded meat such as BBQ chicken, pulled pork, roast lamb, canned tuna, sardines, canned beans, cooked lentils, chickpeas, chunks of crusty sourdough bread, cooked noodles, cooked brown rice, or cooked quinoa.

**creamy** - replace the olive oil with mayonnaise or yoghurt.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Much better than a leafy salad. But nicer when super fresh. Not something you should freeze.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**difficult to eat** - next time slice the veg finer or chop them into smaller ribbons. Also, make sure you're not pushing down too hard on the veg if you're using a mandoline. It took me a while to discover that the less pressure you apply the finer your shaved veg.

**too much dressing** - for now just transfer the whole salad to a clean bowl, leaving behind as much dressing as you can. Toss again to rub off dressing. Next time mix the dressing up in a small jar and gradually add to the salad.

**too dry** - either mix up some more dressing and drizzle over OR just drizzle over some more oil and acid separately as the italians do.

**too bland** - season with a little more salt & pepper.

**don't have a mandoline?** - They are pretty inexpensive from most kitchenware shops - well worth the investment - even in a super minimalist kitchen. I have my eye on a new microplane one.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Best served asap after dressing. Although no need to stress about it, as the veg are less likely to wilt than salad leaves.



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, seitan, 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 bite sized chunks. Try beets, parsnip, swedes, sweet potato, pumpkin.

# QUICK STIR FRY...

## VARIATIONS *[continued]*

**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 (chilli 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 [raw veg '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.

## 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.

## 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 little more oil or sauce or both.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Best served HOT straight from the wok in bowls with chopsticks.

thai style curry



# THAI STYLE CURRY

I still remember the first time I had a thai green chicken curry. It really blew my mind with the fragrance and flavour, the lightness and the rich creaminess all in one. Instantly hooked!

per person

200g (7oz) protein &/or veg, finely sliced

2-3 tablespoons thai curry paste

1/2 can coconut milk (200g / 7oz)

1 tablespoon fish sauce

small handful garnish / highlight

1. Heat a few tablespoons peanut oil in a large frying pan and stir-fry the protein for a few minutes or until starting to brown. Remove from the pan and keep warm.
2. Add the spice paste to the pan and cook, stirring for about a minute or until the spice paste smells fragrant.
3. Add the coconut milk and fish sauce and bring to a simmer. If using veg, add them here. Cook gently for about 5 minutes or until the sauce has thickened slightly and any veg are tender.
4. Return the chicken and any juices to the pan and bring back to a simmer. Taste, season and serve hot.

## VARIATIONS

### tender cuts of protein, finely sliced across the grain

- steak, eye fillet of beef (fillet mignon), lamb fillet or backstraps, pork fillet, pork shoulder, chicken breast, chicken thighs.

**tougher cuts of protein, on the bone** - beef shin (osso buco), oxtail, lamb shanks, lamb neck chops, chicken wings or drumsticks. These will need to be simmered in the sauce, covered for 1-2 hours or until super tender and falling off the bone. Shred meat and return to the saucepan. Add more water if starting to dry out.

**veggie protein** - tofu, cashews, peanuts, almonds, seitan, boiled eggs (just add at the end), cooked or canned lentils, cooked or canned beans.

**vegetables** - fennel, zucchini, cabbage, carrots, asparagus, broccoli, cauliflower, mushrooms, snow peas, sugarsnap peas, red capsicum (bell peppers). Leafy veg such as spinach, kale or collard greens can be added at the end and just simmered until wilted.

**curry paste** - red, green, yellow, massaman. Indian curry pastes will also work well but you may need to use more or less of them.

**VIDEO**

# THAI STYLE CURRY...

## VARIATIONS *[continued]*

**no coconut milk?** - try regular cream stirred in at the end. Don't boil again after the cream has been added to avoid it curdling.

**herby garnish / highlight** - try fresh coriander (cilantro), basil, mint, parsley.

**crunchy garnish / highlight** - nuts especially cashews, peanuts or almonds, super finely sliced red onion, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, shredded or flaked toasted coconut.

**vegetarian / vegan** - replace the fish sauce with soy sauce or just season with salt instead.

**soup** - add an extra 1/2 - 1 cup water per person.

**more substantial** - toss in some cooked noodles, lentils, chickpeas or steamed rice. And cook until hot.

## 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.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too watery** - Simmer for another 10-15 minutes with the lid off.

**too thick** - easy to fix - just add more water!

**tough protein** - it's super important to use a tender cut of meat, or cook tougher cuts for a long time. Over cooked meat will be tough and dry so make sure you only cook it for long enough to change the colour.

**veg too crunchy** - it's important to finely slice your veg so they cook as quickly as possible.

**too bland** - add more curry paste. Season with a little more salt & pepper.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Serve straight up in little bowls with chopsticks and a spoon. Or with steamed rice or [raw veg rice]. I also like it on a big bed of baby spinach leaves.

a classic omelette



# A CLASSIC 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.

per person

3 eggs

small handful flavourings, optional

large handful accompaniments, 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 flavourings, if using. When the egg is mostly cooked and set (about 1 minute or a little longer), slide the omelette onto your plate, folding in half as you go.
6. Serve with accompaniments on the side.

## VARIATIONS

**flavourings - cheesy** - finely grated parmesan, cheddar, ricotta, cottage cheese, crumbled goats cheese (great with basil), crumbled feta, blue cheese.

**flavourings - veg** - halved cherry tomatoes, sun dried tomatoes, cooked mushrooms, artichoke hearts in oil, finely shaved asparagus, shaved fennel, cooked zucchini, leftover roast potatoes.

**flavourings - carnivore** - prosciutto, finely sliced salami, diced cooked bacon, shredded cooked chicken.

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

**flavourings - herby** - lemony sorrel, thyme, basil, parsley.

**flavourings - spicy** - preserved lemon, smoked paprika, curry powder, fennel seeds, coriander seeds.



# A CLASSIC OMELETTE...

## VARIATIONS *[continued]*

**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.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

OK. Best when hot from the pan but you could keep in the fridge if needed. Gently reheat in the oven or in a pan.

## 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 and get more creative with the flavourings. Also make sure you're using the best quality free range eggs you can afford.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

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



ultimate *roast* spuds

# ULTIMATE ROAST SPUDS

We spend a lot of time in our house thinking, talking about and eating potatoes. We love them. Although to be fair, I have a ways to go in my potato adoration apprenticeship compared to my Irishman.

per person

*2-3 medium potatoes*

*2-3 tablespoons oil or fat*

*small handful flavourings, optional*

1. Scrub your spuds and halve or quarter so they are around golf ball size.
2. Place in a medium saucepan and cover with cold water. Add salt and bring to a simmer.
3. Simmer for 20-30 minutes or until the potatoes are tender when tested with a knife.
4. Drain and allow to sit for a few minutes to evaporate some of the steam.
5. Preheat oven to 250C (480F). Approximately 5 minutes before you are ready to roast, pop your roasting tray in the oven with the oil or fat to preheat.
6. Add the drained spuds to the hot oil and toss to coat. Season generously with sea salt flakes and pepper.
7. Roast for about 30 minutes. Stir. Add flavourings, if using.
8. Continue to cook until lovely and crisp (45 mins – 1 hour total roasting time).

## VARIATIONS

**different varieties** - floury potato varieties such as king edward, maris piper or sebago give the lightest, crispest, fluffiest spuds. Waxy spuds like dutch cream, pink fir apple, kipfler, or desiree have lovely flavour but the texture isn't as good for roasting - better than no spuds though!

**peeled potatoes** - you can peel but the skins actually add lots of potato flavour, so we tend to leave them on in our house.

**oil or fat** - duck fat is the ultimate potato roasting vehicle. Beef tallow or lard is also good. Saturated fat phobes should choose an oil that will withstand the high temperatures. Macadamia or peanut oil would be my pick. Butter tends to burn unless you clarify it by melting and removing the butter oil from the top.

**flavourings** - our favourite is fresh rosemary leaves. Sometimes we also pop in a handful of unpeeled garlic cloves. Occasionally we might use fresh chillies or thyme instead of the garlic, but not very often.

**crushed spuds** - sometimes we crush the spuds with a fork when we add them to the hot oil. This gives greater surface area and more bits to go lovely and crispy.



# ULTIMATE ROAST SPUDS...

## VARIATIONS *[continued]*

**More spud roasting tips:** Go to:

[<http://thestonesoup.com/blog/2009/09/the-perfect-spud-how-to-roast-potatoes/>]

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

OK. Better when hot from the oven. Will keep for a few weeks in the fridge. Leftover spuds are great to have on hand to toss in things like omelettes or warm salads.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**burning** - you've left them in the oven for too long! Next time check sooner and remember to turn after the first 30 minutes.

**oily** - either too much oil / fat OR not preheating the oil will cause this problem. For now, drain the spuds on paper towel to get rid of the excess oil.

**not crispy enough** - if the spuds aren't first boiled for long enough, the surface won't be rough enough to crisp up in the oven. Your variety of potato will also make a massive difference here. Waxy spuds don't crisp up so try and track down some floury potatoes. If you're not sure ask your veggie man or make a trip to the farmers market and ask a potato farmer! Another cause could be crowding in your roasting pan so try cooking less spuds at once.

**too bland** - be more generous with the salt. Next time leave the skins on. And try a different variety of potato.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Best served HOT.

'full' irish breakfast



# FULL IRISH BREAKFAST

There's nothing like a 'full irish' to set you up for the day ahead. Or help recover from a big night at the pub. The side salad is my addition and certainly not traditional!

per person

*2-4 rashers bacon, trimmed*

*1 small black pudding, sliced*

*2 eggs*

*green salad to serve, optional*

1. Preheat the oven on low. Place bacon in a frying pan and cook over a medium high heat. Turning after a few minutes until crisp on both sides.
2. Place bacon on paper towel and keep warm in the oven.
3. Fry the black pudding in the bacon fat on medium high heat for a few minutes on each side. You want it crispy.
4. Move to one side and fry the eggs for 2-3 minutes or until the whites are just set.
5. Return bacon to the pan and serve everything in the middle of the table for everyone to help themselves.

## VARIATIONS

**white pudding** - use instead of or as well as black pudding. Slice and fry on both sides until crisp just like the black pudding.

**sausages** - simmer pure pork sausages in water for 15-20 minutes. Drain and cook in the bacon fat until well browned on the outsides.

**mushrooms** - pan fry sliced mushrooms in the bacon fat instead of or as well as the black pudding. Or use butter if you're cooking for vegetarians.

**toast** - serve with hot buttered toast on the side.

**vegetarian** - skip the pork products and cook mushrooms in butter. Then cook the eggs in the same pan.

**vegan** - You'll have to make do with avocado on toast and black tea. And maybe a little salad on the side if you're lucky. ;)



# FULL IRISH BREAKFAST...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Not so good. Although leftover bacon and pudding can be handy for lunch salads during the week. There aren't usually any leftovers.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland** - remember to be generous with the salt & pepper. And maybe next time look at using better quality eggs.

**eggs burning** - the trick with cooking eggs 'sunny side up' is to get the bottoms lightly browned (but not too dark) and getting the whites cooked through. Spooning a little hot cooking oil over the whites can help speed up the process. And make sure you aren't using too high a heat.

**eggs rubbery** - when egg whites are over cooked the protein goes rubbery. Next time use a more gentle heat and be ready to stop cooking as soon as the whites are just 'set'.

**yolks too runny** - if you prefer your yolks cooked all the way through, best to go for eggs 'over-easy' and flip the eggs after about 2 minutes and cook on the second side for about 30 seconds or until the white is just set.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Best served in the middle of the table for everyone to help themselves with lashings of milky Irish breakfast tea on the side.



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.



# COOKED QUINOA...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Brilliant. Will keep in the fridge for a few weeks.

## 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.

## 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.



roast root veg

# ROAST ROOT VEG

Beets are my favourite root veg for roasting. Great to do on a Sunday afternoon so you have roast veg at your disposal for super quick lunches and dinners.

serves 6-8

4-6 root vegetables

1-2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar, optional

2-3 tablespoons olive oil

1. Preheat oven to 200C.
2. Remove any stalks from the veg and scrub them well. Chop into bite sized wedges – either quarters, sixths or eighths. The smaller you chop, the faster they will cook.
3. Splash with balsamic vinegar, if using and the olive oil.
4. Cover tightly with foil and roast for 45mins to 1 hour or until the veg are tender. Season.

## VARIATIONS

**different root veg** - beets, carrots, sweet potato, pumpkin (not strictly a root vegetable), parsnips, swedes (rutabagas). You could also use a mixture of the above. Potatoes can be cooked this way but the texture is better if you boil them first and roast uncovered.

**different vinegar** - balsamic is brilliant with beets but feel free to use other vinegar such as sherry vinegar, rice wine vinegar or red wine vinegar.

**carnivore** - sprinkle a little chopped pancetta over the veg before covering and roasting.

**to peel or not to peel?** - I pretty much never peel any root veg, just give them a good scrub. There's heaps of flavour and nutrients in the skins so much better, and not to mention easier to leave the skins on. Even pumpkin skins are delicious when roasted in this way.

**uncovered** - I find that covering helps keep the veg moist and tender and you still get enough browning deliciousness. Feel free to uncover for some or all of the baking if you like. Just be careful your beets don't dry out too much and go woody.



# ROAST ROOT VEG...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Brilliant. Cooked root veg will keep in the fridge for a few weeks, so I often roast a massive batch if I'm going to the trouble.

## 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.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

In salads, with lentils or legumes, as a side to roast or BBQ meats.

wilted greens



# WILTED GREENS

Cooked greens will keep in the fridge twice as long as fresh. And they take up much less space!

per person

*1-2 tablespoons olive oil*

*1 teaspoon - 1 tablespoon flavouring*

*2 large handfuls of greens, washed & sliced  
squeeze of lemon, optional*

1. Heat olive oil in a large frying pan.
2. Add the flavouring and the greens and continue to cook stirring for a few minutes until they are just wilted.
4. 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.



# WILTED GREENS...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Brilliant. Will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or so.

## 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.

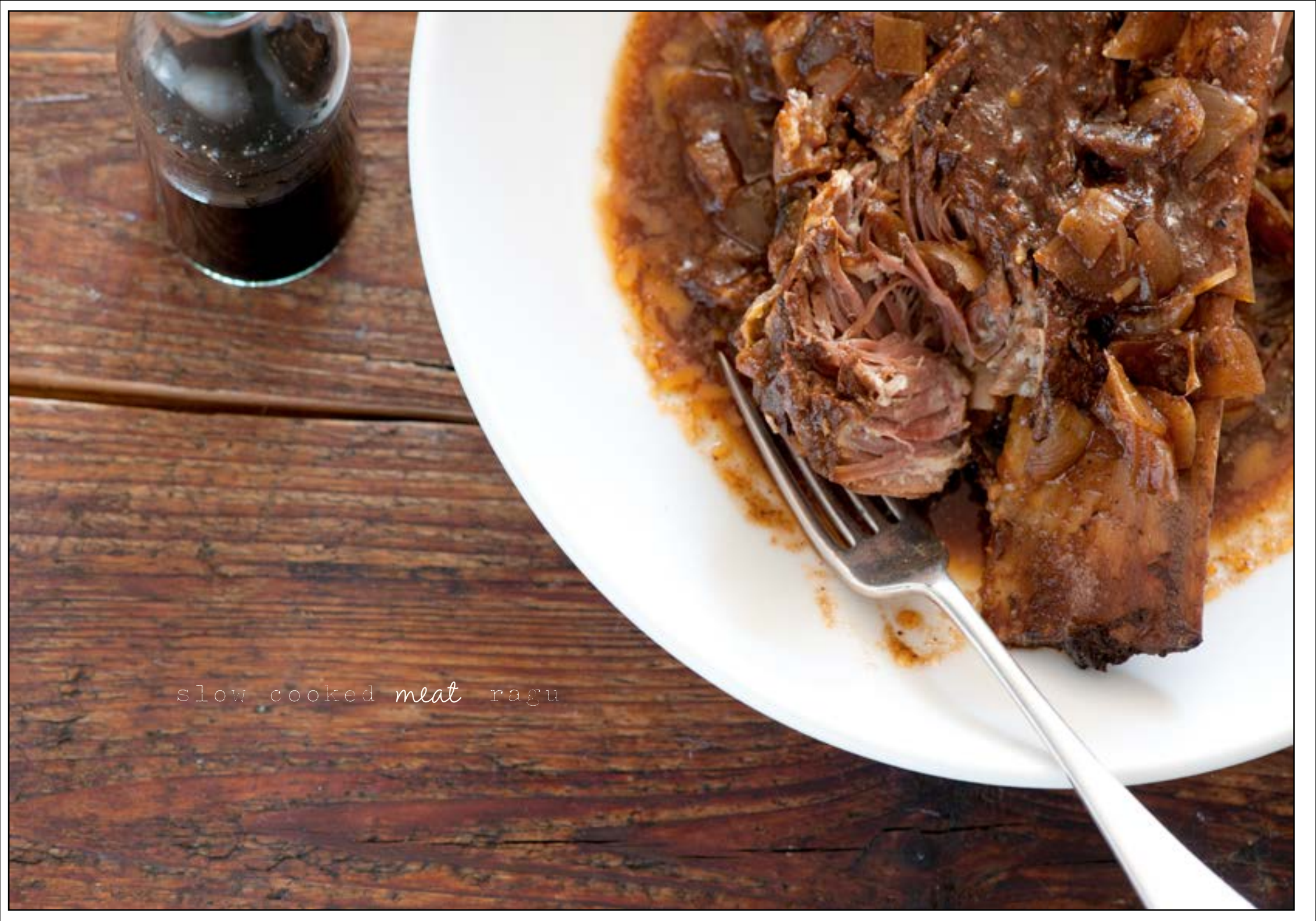
**bitter flavours** - this is probably the greens themselves, although be careful not to burn your flavourings as garlic and ginger will go bitter if burnt.

**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.

## 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.



slow cooked *meat* ragu

# SLOW COOKED MEAT RAGU

For slow cooking I find that meat on the bone tends to stay moister and end up much nicer than diced meat. Plus the bones are there to help flavour the sauce. Win win!

per person

300-400g (11-14oz) meat on the bone

1-2 pieces aromatic veg, diced

1 cup liquid

1/2 - 1 tablespoon flavouring

1. Place meat, aromatic veg, liquid and flavouring in a slow cooker or oven proof dish.
2. For the slow cooker, cover and cook on auto for 10-11 hours or until meat is meltingly tender.
3. For the oven, add in 1/2 cup of water per person, cover and bake at 120C (250F) for 6-8 hours or until meat is meltingly tender. Add in a little water if it starts to dry out.
4. Taste, season and serve hot.

## VARIATIONS

**meat** - beef short ribs, osso buco, lamb shanks, lamb neck chops, pork ribs, chicken wings, chicken drumsticks, chicken marylands, beef shin.

**aromatic veg** - onions are my first choice, but carrots or celery could also be used.

**liquid** - canned tomatoes, tomato puree, wine, water, balsamic vinegar, stock, tomato paste or a combination of these.

**flavouring** - bay leaves, chilli, rosemary, thyme, preserved lemon, spices such as coriander seed, cumin seed, fennel seed.

**other possible inclusions** - dried apricots, prunes, carrots, parsnip, potatoes, mushrooms, sliced fennel.

**vegan / vegetarian** - use 2 largish field or portabello mushrooms instead of the meat or 1 medium eggplant per person sliced into rounds.



# SLOW COOKED MEAT RAGU...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Brilliant. Will keep in the fridge for a week or so. Like most stews it will improve with age.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too dry** - top up with a little water if it's drying out. And if you're using the oven make sure you add in the extra 1/2 cup water in the beginning.

**too oily** - next time trim the meat to remove excess fat before cooking. Now you can refrigerate the ragu until cold and the fat solidifies. Remove fat and reheat.

**watery** - this is more likely in the slow cooker as they have hardly any evaporation. Cook uncovered for 1/2 hour or longer to help reduce the sauce.

**meat tough** - this means it hasn't been cooked for long enough. Keep cooking until you're happy with the texture.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Either serve on the bone on top of a bed of greens or cooked legumes or mashed potato. OR shred the meat from the bone, discard the bones and serve as a sauce for pasta.

green pea salad



# GREEN PEA SALAD

It took me years to overcome my childhood fear of frozen peas. I've found the secret is to make sure you don't overcook them. All they need is a quick soak in boiling water to defrost them. Such a great pantry staple!

per person

2 handfuls frozen peas

squeeze lemon / acid

sm handful leafy ingredient, optional

handful protein, optional

1-2 tablespoons highlight ingredient

1. Pop the kettle on to boil. Place peas in a heatproof bowl.
2. Cover with boiling water and stand for 2-3 minutes or until peas are defrosted and bright green.
3. Drain peas and pat dry with paper towel. Drizzle with a little extra virgin olive oil. Squeeze over lemon. Season.
4. Toss in highlight ingredient 1 and the protein.
5. Serve with highlight ingredient 2 drizzled or sprinkled over.

## VARIATIONS

**acid alternatives** - I think zesty lemon juice works best with peas but sherry vinegar or rice wine vinegar will also work. A little goes a long way.

**leafy ingredient** - herbs such as mint, parsley, basil or oregano. Or salad leaves such as baby spinach, rocket (arugula), cos, radicchio any leaves, really. Shaved fennel or zucchini would also be lovely.

**protein** - I've used whole almonds in the photo. Other nuts such as cashews or pecans would also work here. Or try cooked torn chicken, beef or lamb. Cheese will also be lovely. Crumbled salty feta, creamy ricotta, chunks or parmesan. Not strictly protein, but half an avocado could be used here to make the salad substantial.

**highlight ingredient - sauce** - I've used tahini in the photo. Natural yoghurt, hummus, pesto, chilli oil would all work.

**highlight ingredient - crunch** - if you haven't used nuts as your protein, a small sprinkling of toasted pinenuts, pistachios, almonds or cashews would be great. OR toasted bread crumbs, or seeds such as sunflower or sesame seeds.

**VIDEO**

# GREEN PEA SALAD...

## VARIATIONS *[continued]*

**cold salad** - allow peas to defrost for 15 minutes or so before using them in the salad. Skip the boiling water step.

**side salad** - skip the protein and highlight ingredient.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Great as far as salads go. Will keep in the fridge for a week or so. A good lunch salad as it will keep in the fridge until you're ready to eat.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too watery / bland** - sounds like you haven't drained the peas well enough. Next time make sure you get rid of the excess water before dressing the salad.

**hard, cold peas** - = still frozen peas! Next time stand for longer in the boiling water.

**'icky' flavour** - I find if frozen peas have been opened and hanging around the freezer for months they can pick up a metallic or 'freezer' flavour. Because this salad is so simple the icky pea flavour can come through. Next time make sure you use good quality frozen peas.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Lovely on its own or as a side salad to roast lamb, chicken or fish.

pan fried *protein* + raw veg salad



# PAN FRIED 'PROTEIN' WITH RAW VEG SALAD

The dish in the picture is actually pan fried halloumi with chilli oil and a raw broccolini salad. Which sounds much more appetising than 'pan fried protein'. But please bear with me. I'm trying to teach how to think about recipes in general terms because it makes it much much easier to adapt and improvise.

per person

*1 tablespoon lemon juice  
2 handfuls finely sliced raw veg  
approx 150-250g (5-9oz) protein  
lemon half, optional  
flavoured oil or sauce, to serve*

1. Combine lemon juice with 1-2 tablespoons olive oil. Season. Toss in finely sliced veg.
2. Heat a frying pan on medium high heat. Add a little oil to the pan and pan fry the protein until browned on both sides and cooked to your liking. Anywhere from 2-5 minutes each side. Add the lemon, if using, cut side down to blacken while you cook the protein.
3. Serve protein on a bed of the salad with lemon halves on the side and flavoured oil or sauce drizzled over.



## VARIATIONS

**veggie 'protein'** - I've used halloumi in the picture. Tofu or seitan would also work well here. Or think about pan frying some precooked beans or lentils until they are just cooked and serving with the raw veg 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.

**raw veg** - I've used broccolini here. Broccoli, asparagus, cabbage, snow peas or zucchini are all great. Pretty much any veg that will work in a shaved salad is good here.

**veg combo** - feel free to use a combination of veg. I toyed with the idea of tossing in a few handfuls of baby spinach leaves but decided against it today. On another day the salad may go in.

**flavoured oil** - chilli oil is my favourite for dishes like this but a garlic, basil or lemon flavoured oil would also work.

# PAN FRIED 'PROTEIN' WITH RAW VEG SALAD...

## VARIATIONS *[continued]*

**sauce** - if flavoured oils aren't your thing, a good sauce will work here as well. Some ideas:

[pesto or 'herb & nut sauce']

[chimichurri or 'fresh herb sauce']

commercial chilli sauce such as Srircha

good quality ketchup

[hummus or 'legume & tahini sauce']

**warm veg** - if you'd prefer a warmer meal. Steam the veg instead before dressing in the lemon juice mixture.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

OK. Will keep in the fridge for a week or so but best when hot from the pan. Especially if you're using halloumi.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**protein dry** - It could be the quality of the meat or it could be overcooked. Next time err on the side of undercooking. You can always add it back to the pan but you can't undo overcooked meat.

**salad difficult to eat** - with raw veg it's super important to chop them as finely as possible to make it pleasant to eat rather than a chore. If it's hard on the jaws, it needs more prep work.

**salad dry** - drizzle with a little more oil and lemon juice.

**bland** - don't forget to be generous with the seasoning and add more sauce or try a different sauce.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Serve protein on top of a bed of the salad with oil / sauce drizzled over.

raw veg lunch salad



# RAW VEG LUNCH SALAD

We pretty much have a raw vegetable salad once or twice a week for lunch. Broccoli is a favourite.

per person:

*1/2 - 1 tablespoon acid*

*1 tablespoon mustard, optional*

*150g / 5oz vegetables*

*small handful garnish / highlight, optional*

*small handful protein*

1. Combine acid, mustard if using and extra virgin olive oil in medium bowl. Season.
2. Finely slice or chop the veg and toss in the dressing.
3. Either toss in the garnish / colour highlight or sprinkle it on top.
4. Sprinkle over the protein. Serve.

## VARIATIONS

**vegetables** - fennel, zucchini, cabbage, carrots, beets, asparagus, broccoli, cauliflower, mushrooms, tomatoes (just finely slice with a knife), snow peas, sugarsnap peas, celery, red capsicum (bell peppers), parsnip. Leafy veg such as spinach, kale or collard greens can be finely sliced into ribbons with a knife.

**acid** - lemon juice is my favourite. Sherry vinegar, rice wine vinegar, lime juice, red/white wine vinegar, champagne vinegar. Vinegar tends to be stronger than citrus juice so you may need to decrease the acid or add more oil.

**mustard** - I love dijon. Seeded mustard is also good. Or try adding a teaspoon of soy sauce, miso paste, ketchup, a pinch of finely chopped garlic, spices such as caraway seeds, fennel seeds, cumin seeds or mustard.

**garnish - herbs** - try fresh coriander (cilantro), basil, mint, parsley, oregano, chives, green onions or even thyme.



# RAW VEG LUNCH SALAD...

## VARIATIONS *[continued]*

**crunchy garnish / highlight** - nuts especially cashews or almonds, super finely sliced red onion, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, fried noodles.

**other garnish / highlight** - avocado, pesto, chilli, spices, goats cheese, shaved or grated parmesan, feta, fresh mozzarella, blue cheese.

**protein** - Toss in some cooked shredded meat such as BBQ chicken, pulled pork, roast lamb, canned tuna, sardines, canned beans, sliced hard boiled eggs, cooked lentils, chickpeas, chunks of crusty sourdough bread, cooked noodles, cooked brown rice, or cooked quinoa, leftover curry, leftover chilli.

**creamy** - replace the olive oil with mayonnaise or yoghurt.

**semi-warm** - heat the protein before adding to the salad.

**warm** - cover the veg with boiling water and stand for a few minutes before draining and tossing in the dressing. Warm the protein as well, if appropriate.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Brilliant as far as salads go. Will keep in the fridge for a week or so.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**difficult to eat** - next time slice the veg finer or chop them into smaller pieces / ribbons.

**too much dressing** - for now just transfer the whole salad to a clean bowl, leaving behind as much dressing as you can. Toss again to rub off dressing. Next time mix the dressing up in a small jar and gradually add to the salad.

**too dry** - either mix up some more dressing and drizzle over OR just drizzle over some more oil and acid separately as the italians do.

**too bland** - season with a little more salt & pepper.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Best served asap after dressing. Although no need to stress about it, as the veg are less likely to wilt than salad leaves.

*green smoothie*



# GREEN SMOOTHIE

Feel free to play around with your smoothie ingredients. If the whole green thing freaks you out, you might like to ease yourself into it by including some fruit as well. Pears, apples, peaches, banana or even berries.

per person

*handful green veg*

*2-3 tablespoons something creamy*

*1-2 tablespoons protein powder, optional*

*1 tablespoon fibre, optional*

1. Place veg in a blender or food processor. Whizz until the veg are finely chopped.
2. Add remaining ingredients and 1/2 to 1 cup cold water & whizz again until smooth.
3. Taste and adjust if needed.

## VARIATIONS

**veg** - broccoli, broccolini, kale, cavalo nero, spinach, baby spinach, carrots, celery, parsley, mint, cauliflower. Green peas from the freezer as especially good because they add sweetness and chill everything down. The only veg I've tried and didn't like was bok choy.

**something creamy** - natural yoghurt is my favourite. Coconut milk or coconut yoghurt is also lovely. Also consider replacing the water with milk, soy milk or rice milk or almond milk

**protein** - I'm using a commercial vanilla flavoured protein powder just because it's convenient. I also have some powdered egg whites for when I want more of a 'pure protein' hit.

**additional flavourings** - honey, vanilla extract, cinnamon, cardamom, brown sugar.

**fibre** - I use either psyllium husks or oat bran which help thicken the smoothie and add to the texture. You could also try other brans or even your favourite high fibre cereal.

**VIDEO**

# GREEN SMOOTHIE...

## VARIATIONS *[continued]*

**fruit** - feel free to replace some or all of the veg with fruit. Bananas, pears, apples, blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, peaches, nectarines are all great.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

OK. Will keep in the fridge for a few days - it may be good to give them another whizz to recombine everything. But I like them best when freshly made.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bitter / icky flavour** - increase your creamy ingredients and try adding a little sugar in the form of fruit, vanilla extract or actual sugar or stevia. There have been heaps of times I haven't really loved the first sip but after a little 'seasoning' it's turned out really well.

**too thick** - it can take a little bit of juggling to get the texture how you like it. Add more water if too thick.

**too runny** - add in some more veg and fibre to help thicken things up.

**don't have a blender or food processor?** - then finely chop or grate your veg and mix everything together by hand. You may need to change the name to a 'green chunky' instead.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Serve in a tall glass.

roast chilli harissa



# ROAST CHILLI HARISSA

Harissa is a Moroccan chilli based sauce that is usually served as a condiment for everyone to add as little or as much as they like. It can be made completely with chillies and brutally hot or made with a mixture of chillies and red capsicum (bell peppers) which ends up more mellow.

makes about a cup

2 red capsicum (bell peppers)

12 long red chillies

2 teaspoons caraway seeds

2 teaspoons smoked paprika

1 tablespoon acid

1. Preheat your oven or overhead grill on its highest setting.
2. Place capsicum (peppers) and chilli in a baking tray and grill or roast, turning every now and then until blackened and charred all over.
3. Cover with foil and allow to cool.
4. Remove the skins and seeds from the capsicum (chilli) and do the same with the chilli. Leave some or all chilli seeds in if you like it hot!
5. Whizz capsicum & chilli flesh with the caraway seeds, paprika and vinegar.
6. Stir in 3-4 tablespoons olive oil. Taste. Season and add more oil if it's too hot.

## VARIATIONS

**super hot** - replace the bell peppers with about 24 long red chillies.

**fresh sauce** - skip the roasting and just puree the flesh of the bell peppers and chillies.

**mexican vibe** - skip the paprika and caraway seeds and stir in some fresh chopped tomato at the end.

**different spices** - regular paprika can be used instead of smoked. And if you don't have caraway seeds, cumin seeds can be used instead. Or just skip the spice all together.

**acid** - sherry vinegar is my favourite. Lemon juice, rice vinegar or white wine vinegar can also be used.



# ROAST CHILLI HARISSA...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Great! Will keep in the fridge for a few months. If you want it to last longer put in sterilised jars and cover with extra olive oil.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**peppers / chilli difficult to peel** - if the veg aren't charred enough they can be difficult to peel. They're also tough to peel if burnt to a cinder so it's important to find the right balance. You'll know which end of the spectrum yours falls at. Covering with foil to steam and cool is also really helpful in easing the peeling process.

**bland** - next time leave more of the seeds in or use more chillies. Don't forget to season with salt.

**too hot** - next time use less chilli or be more diligent with fishing out the seeds.

**don't have a blender or food processor?** - then finely chop everything and stir together for a chunkier sauce.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Brilliant with roast or BBQ meats or vegetables. Particularly good with grilled halloumi. Also lovely as a side to stews. Use pretty much anywhere you'd use a chilli sauce. Lovely on sandwiches.

roast or BBQ chicken



# ROAST OR BBQ CHICKEN

Brining the chicken takes it to a whole new level of tenderness and juiciness. So even though it's a bit of a hassle, I tend to make the effort if I have time.

serves 4

80g (2.5oz) salt

1 medium chicken

1. Combine salt with 4 cups cold water (1L). Stir until dissolved.
2. Butterfly chicken by chopping down the backbone to open the bird out like a book.
3. Place chicken and salty water in a large ziplock bag and pop in the fridge for 6-12 hours.
4. Remove the chicken from the fridge an hour before you're ready to cook.
5. Preheat your BBQ or oven to 220C (450F). Remove chicken from the brine. Pat dry and rub with a little oil. Don't season.
6. Cook chicken on a preheated BBQ plate for about 15 minutes each side, or until cooked through. OR roast breast side up for about 30 minutes or until cooked through. Rest before serving.

## VARIATIONS

**no brine** - if you're short on time just skip the brining process.

**not up for 'butterflying'** - if the thought of 'butterflying' the chicken is a bit scary, or your knife just isn't just up for cutting through bone, don't stress. You can cook the chicken whole, it will just take a lot longer because there is less surface area for the heat to penetrate. If roasting I usually preheat a cast iron pan in the oven so it's super hot then add the whole chicken breast side up and just leaves it for 50 minutes to an hour. On the BBQ, it's a similar approach, leave the chicken breast side up for the whole time and keep the lid of the BBQ closed as much as possible. Expect it to take around an hour.

**flavoured brine** - flavours added to the brine tend to really be absorbed by the flesh, a little like a 'super charged marinade'. Slices of lime or lemon are good. As are dried or fresh chilli, kaffir lime leaves, thyme leaves, sage leaves, garlic. Pretty much anything that works with roast chicken.

**short on time?** - either cut the chicken into quarters or use drumsticks instead of the whole chicken. Should take the cooking time down to about 20 minutes. And if you're brining pieces, they'll only need about 3 hours.



VIDEO

# ROAST OR BBQ CHICKEN...

## VARIATIONS *[continued]*

**different birds** - chicken is a family favourite but you could also use spatchcocks (baby chickens) or jumbo quail. Adjust the cooking and brining time accordingly.

**vegetarian / vegan** - roast or BBQ a couple of portabello or field mushrooms along with the chicken, using a separate pan. Roast or BBQ mushies will be delicious with any accompaniments you'd normally serve with chicken.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Brilliant! Use in salads, sandwiches or as a base for the best and easiest chicken soup ever: <http://thestonesoup.com/blog/2012/02/are-you-making-the-biggest-meal-planning-mistake/>

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great on its own with a salad on the side. Also good with mayo or a roast chilli sauce. To carve, I usually just chop the bird into quarters - 2 breasts and 2 legs.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too 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 salt and pepper.

**chicken not browning** - If you don't dry thoroughly enough the chicken will steam rather than brown. Next time make sure you dry carefully. The other problem may be your BBQ / oven isn't hot enough. Use the fan assisted setting or if your oven doesn't have a fan, increase the temperatures in the recipe by 20C (50F).

**chicken too pink inside** - Either it wasn't cooked for long enough or the chicken was too cold before you started cooking. 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. It could also mean your chicken is over cooked.

**not sure if the chicken is cooked?** - don't stress. When the chicken looks cooked and the the legs wiggle freely, just chop in half lengthwise and make sure there are no pink bits. If it looks fine, rest before finishing your carving. If the flesh is still pink, return to the oven for another 10 minutes or so. If there is a little red in the actual bone that's fine, it's the flesh that needs to be well cooked.

roast veg salad



# ROAST VEG SALAD

I've used cauliflower and chickpeas in the picture. Two of my all time favourite things!

per person

*handful veg, chopped into bite sized pieces*

*1 teaspoon spices, optional*

*1/4 - 1/2 can chickpeas, drained, optional*

*2 tablespoons mayonnaise*

*2-3 tablespoons ground almonds*

1. Preheat oven to 180C (350F). Place veg in a roasting tray. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with the spices, if using.
2. Roast for 20-30 minutes or until veg are well browned and tender. Add chickpeas, if using, and return to the oven for a few minutes until chickpeas are warm.
3. Combine mayonnaise, almonds and 1 tablespoon water. Taste and season. Add more water if the cream looks too thick.

## VARIATIONS

**veg** - cauliflower, pumpkin, sweet potato, carrots, celeriac (celery root), beets (may take longer to cook), zucchini, eggplant (aubergine).

**spices** - smoked paprika, cumin, coriander seed, fennel seeds or a combination of any of these. Curry powder.

**nut-free** - skip the almond meal and just serve the salad with mayonnaise instead. OR make a dressing of 1 tablespoon lemon juice and 2 tablespoons olive oil and sprinkle this over the salad instead of the almond cream.

**chickpea alternatives** - Any canned or cooked beans or lentils, torn chunks of sourdough bread or try whole nuts such as almonds, pine nuts or cashews. For a lighter side salad skip the chickpeas.

**vegan / no almond cream** - Make a dressing of 1 tablespoon lemon juice and 2 tablespoons olive oil and sprinkle this over the salad instead of the almond cream.



# ROAST VEG SALAD...

## VARIATIONS *[continued]*

**almond cream alternatives** - serve on a bed of hummus. OR make a tahini sauce by combining equal amounts of tahini, lemon juice and water. Or serve scattered with crumbled soft cheese such as goats cheese or ricotta.

**leafy** - scatter over parsley or mint leaves.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Good as far as salads go. Will keep in the fridge for a week or so, depending on how fresh your mayo was to begin with.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**burning** - reduce the heat and turn the veg more frequently. A splash of water can retard the burning process.

**hard / dry veg** - not cooked for long enough OR cooked at too high a temperature.

**almond cream gritty** - it's all about the almond meal, coarse almond meal = gritty almond cream unfortunately.

**almond cream bland** - remember to season with salt. You may have too much water which can be fixed by a little more almond meal. A splash of lemon juice may help. Try a different brand of mayo next time.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Either smear a big puddle of almond cream over the base of your plate and top with the roast veg mixture. OR pop roast veg on the plate and drizzle over the almond cream.

simple *butter* cake



# SIMPLE BUTTER CAKE

This cake is based on the classic cake recipe using equal amounts of butter, sugar & flour. It began life as a lemon delicious cake but has become my go to cake when I'm looking for a simple loaf.

serves 6-8:

250g (9oz) butter, softened

250g (9oz) sugar

3 eggs

flavourings (see side variations), optional

250g (9oz) plain (all purpose) flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

1. Preheat oven to 180C (350F). Line a loaf pan with baking paper.
2. Beat butter and sugar together until light and creamy coloured.
3. Add eggs and beat until well combined. Add flavourings, if using.
4. Gently fold in the flour. Transfer to the prepared tin.
5. Bake for 45 minutes without opening the door.
6. Test and cook a little longer if needed.
7. Cool before serving.



## VARIATIONS

**gluten-free** - replace SR flour with almond meal. Don't use baking powder as it will cause the almond meal cake to sink in the middle.

**dairy-free** - replace butter with margarine or vegetable oil. If using oil you won't be able to 'cream' it with the sugar so just stir until well combined and know that your cake won't rise quite as much.

**vegan** - see above for butter replacement and replace the 3 eggs with 2 ripe mashed bananas. I haven't tried this on this exact recipe but am pretty confident it will work.

**vanilla** - add 2 teaspoons vanilla extract when you add the eggs.

**lemon delicious** - add the zest of 2 lemons with the eggs. When the cake comes out of the oven pierce with a skewer and pour over 1/2 cup lemon juice. Allow the juice to soak into the cake as it cools.

**orange & poppy seed** - add the zest of 2 oranges and 3 tablespoons poppy seeds with the eggs. When the cake comes out of the oven pierce with a skewer and pour over 1/2 cup orange juice. Allow the juice to soak into the cake as it cools.

# SIMPLE BUTTER CAKE...

## VARIATIONS *[continued]*

**berry cake** - stir in 2 handfuls of frozen berries after the eggs.

**apricot** - cover a few handfuls of dried apricots with boiling water and stand for 5 minutes. Then drain and fold into the cake mixture after you add the eggs.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Great. Keep in the fridge. This is one cake that is better cool because it can be quite soft and rich when warm out of the oven.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**cake sinking in the middle** - see the photo on the previous page for an example! If the oven door gets opened before the cake is cooked, the loss in temperature can cause the middle to sink because the protein isn't set enough to hold the structure. Not much you can do now, but next time be careful.

**too dry** - if the cake is overcooked, it will end up on the dry side. Best to serve with something super moist like cream or yoghurt.

**don't have a stand mixer ?** - you can cream the butter and sugar in a food processor. Or try whisking it by hand. Just make sure the butter is very soft before you start.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

This cake is quite moist but I like to still serve it with double cream, whipped cream, ice cream or natural yoghurt.

chocolate *peanut butter* tart



# CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTER TART

serves 6-8

250g / 7oz cookies

75g (3oz) butter, melted

200g (7oz) whipping cream 35% milk fat

350g milk chocolate (30% cocoa solids min)

200g crunchy peanut butter

1. Whizz cookies in a food processor until you have fine crumbs. Combine with melted butter.
2. Moisten a sheet of baking paper and line a rectangular tart tin (12 x 34 cm (4 1/2in x 13in) or a 22cm (8in) round tart tin.
3. Spread the cookie mixture over the base and sides of the tart tin. Freeze for 30 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, bring cream to the boil. Break chocolate into chunks and place in a heatproof jug or bowl. Pour hot cream over the chocolate.
5. Stand 5 mins to allow chocolate to melt then stir until smooth.
6. Spread peanut butter over the base of the tart. Sprinkle with sea salt flakes. Top with chocolate mixture.
7. Leave to set for 1-2 hours or chill in the fridge for 30 minutes. Serve tiny slices.

## VARIATIONS

**cookies** - use plain sweet cookies like graham cookies, digestive biscuits or shortbread. I've used butternut snaps in the photo.

**chocolate** - milk chocolate is my preferred option because it has a lovely caramel flavour that compliments the salty peanut butter. Try dark chocolate (70% cocoa solids) for a more intense adult chocolate experience.

**nut-free** - skip the peanut butter and increase the chocolate and cream by 100g (3.5oz) each.

**pastry** - feel free to make your own pastry instead of using the cookies and butter.

**dairy-free** - use dark chocolate, coconut milk instead of the cream and use coconut oil instead of the butter.

**gluten-free** - use GF cookies such as sweet rice cookies.



VIDEO

# CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTER TART...

## VARIATIONS *[continued]*

**super crunchy** - roast some whole peanuts and pop them on top of the peanut butter before covering with the chocolate.

**individual tartlets** - make in muffin trays lined with muffin papers. Should make 6-8.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Brilliant. Will keep in the fridge for a week or so. Can be frozen as well.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too sweet** - use a peanut butter without any added sugar and be generous with the sea salt flakes. Dark chocolate will be much less sweet as well.

**chocolate lumpy** - next time chop into smaller pieces so it melts evenly. For now warm gently in the microwave for a few seconds to melt.

**chocolate grainy or curdling** - milk chocolate shouldn't have this happen but dark chocolate can 'split' if the temperature of the cream is too hot. Quickly stir in some more cold cream or milk to reverse the situation.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Serve tiny slices as it is super rich. Lovely with some double cream or whipped cream on the side.

# # Module 1. DAILY UPDATES

PLANNING & SHOPPING

**VIDEO**

DAY 1. SATURDAY – ENTERTAINING TONIGHT!

DAY 2. A LAZY SUNDAY.

DAY 3. MEAT-FREE MONDAY.

DAY 4. STIR-FRY TUESDAY.

DAY 5. MICHAEL'S 40TH.

# WEEK 1. PLANNING & SHOPPING

## STEP 1. KEEP AN 'ONGOING LIST' FOR PANTRY ITEMS & NON-FOOD STUFF

Done! I've been using a shopping list on my phone to write my shopping list as I think of things. Then I just have a quick look in the pantry to check that there's nothing that needs topping up.

## STEP 2. WORK OUT WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO NEED

This week, here's what we have planned:

dinner Saturday – 4 people

dinner Sunday – 2 people

dinner Monday – 2 people

dinner Tuesday – 2 people

dinner Wednesday – 2 people

dinner Thursday – out in Melbourne = 0 people

dinner Friday – out in Melbourne = 0 people

### so following the 'simple planning formula'...

Number dinners = 'z' = 5

Number people = 'y' = 4 (1 night) and 2 (4 nights)

### Our shopping list becomes...

protein OR mains = 5 types [1type (800g - 1kg) + 4 types (400-500g)]

number of veg = 10 types

### + add in breakfast items

We've got berries and yoghurt and bacon in the freezer. I'll cook some quinoa on Sunday to have during the week.

So I'm just adding eggs and 'smoothie veg' to the list + some black pudding for a special 'full Irish brunch' on Sunday

### + add in lunches, if needed.

I'll just add a couple of veg to take the total up to 12 types.



# WEEK 1. PLANNING & SHOPPING

*[continued]*

## + add in snacks and 'treats', if needed

Almond and cashew positive so nothing to add.

## Then our shopping list becomes...

protein OR mains = 5 types + eggs + black pudding

number of veg = 12 types + 'smoothie veg'

## STEP 3. REVIEW WHAT YOU ALREADY HAVE & SUBTRACT THIS FROM YOUR LIST

### - Leftover veg / protein ingredients

Protein in fridge / freezer:

- brisket (2 kg so perfect for Sat night when we have 4 people)
- ground beef
- beef short ribs
- smoked tofu

TOTAL: 4 types

### - Veg in fridge:

- carrots

TOTAL: 1 type

### - Leftover meals or 1/2 meals

Nothing leftover this week, as I made a big effort to 'eat up the leftovers' last week.

### - Veg from the garden

This week we have the following:

- 1 x rocket (arugula)
- 2 x zucchini (heaps! so counting this as 2 types)
- 1 x beets
- 1 x warrigal greens (similar to spinach)

TOTAL: 5 types

# WEEK 1. PLANNING & SHOPPING

*[continued]*

## FINAL SHOPPING LIST

protein OR mains = 5-4 = 1 type + eggs + black pudding  
veg = 12-5-1 = 6 types + 'smoothie veg'

## WHAT DID I BUY?

### Protein – 1 type:

1. chicken thigh fillets (500g / 1lb)

### Veg – 6 types + 'smoothie veg'

1. dutch cream potatoes (2kg/4lb bag)
2. broccoli (2 heads)
3. savoy cabbage (1/2)
4. cauliflower (whole)
5. cos lettuce (2 small)
6. bok choy (bunch)
7. baby spinach (1 bag)
8. broccolini (bunch)

# WEEK 1. DAY 1. SATURDAY ENTERTAINING TONIGHT!

Welcome to our first full day of recipes for the planning class!

It's Saturday and we're having some friends over for dinner so the menu is looking a lot more fancy than I would usually be cooking.

Don't worry, we'll be going back to more simple meals during the week.

## **SATURDAY BRUNCH**

:: [a classic omelette] with baby spinach\*

## **SATURDAY DINNER**

:: [salt roast almonds]

—

:: [slow roast beef brisket]

:: [BBQ sauce]

:: [cheat's hollandaise]

:: [baby cos salad with buttermilk dressing]

:: [the ultimate roast potatoes]\*

—

:: [chocolate peanut butter tart] with double cream\*

Note:

The recipes with an asterisk '\*' have been included in our 'template recipe collection'.

The other recipes have a link included for fun and interest.

slow roast brisket

**RECIPE**



# WEEK 1. DAY 2. A LAZY SUNDAY

After a really lovely and long night, Sunday is all about sleeping in. A long leisurely brunch. And then pottering in the kitchen in the afternoon.

Sundays are usually my day to prepare a few 'staples' for the week ahead. The technical, cheffy term for this is 'Mise En Place' and we'll be covering this in much more detail in a few weeks time.

Since it's been unseasonably cold and rainy here the last week, I'm making the most of the cool weather and cooking up some slow cooked beef shortribs for a Sunday dinner treat tonight.

## SUNDAY BRUNCH

:: [Full Irish Breakfast]\*

## 'MISE EN PLACE' FOR THE WEEK AHEAD

:: [Roast Root Veg]\*

:: [Wilted Greens]\*

:: [Cooked Quinoa]\*

## SUNDAY DINNER

:: [Slow Cooked Meat Ragù]\* on a bed of baby spinach.

Note:

The recipes with an asterix '\*' have been included in our 'template recipe collection'.

# WEEK 1. DAY 3. MEAT-FREE MONDAY

After raining pretty much solidly for 2 weeks, we've woken to the most perfect sunny day!

There's a slight chill in the air which reminds me that Autumn (Fall) is here.. My favourite season!

## BREAKFAST

My Irishman was in a rush this morning because he had an early start. Lucky we had some blueberries that needed eating up + the quinoa I cooked on Sunday. So I packed him up a container with quinoa, yoghurt, blueberries, oat bran and a drizzle of honey.  
(pictured next page)

## LUNCH

:: Warm Pea & Tahini Salad  
also known as...  
:: [Green Pea Salad]\*

## DINNER

:: Pan Fried Halloumi with Raw Broccolini Salad & Chilli Oil  
also known as...  
:: [Pan Fried Protein with Raw Veg Salad]\*

Note:

The recipes with an asterisk '\*' have been included in our 'template recipe collection'



A close-up photograph of a clear glass bowl filled with a healthy breakfast. At the bottom, there is a layer of cooked quinoa. Above it is a thick layer of white yogurt. The top is garnished with fresh blueberries and sliced almonds. A silver spoon is positioned above the bowl, as if about to scoop. The bowl sits on a wooden surface.

quinoa with yoghurt & berries

**RECIPE**

# WEEK 1. DAY 4. STIR-FRY TUESDAY

## BREAKFAST

I had a couple of egg whites in the fridge from making 'cheat's hollandaise' on the weekend. So decided to go for a 'semi' egg white omelette. Basically, I followed our classic omelette template recipe but used 2 whole eggs and 2 whites. I topped the omelette with a handful of chopped cauliflower, a teaspoon of my 'secret spice' blend and a handful of grated parmesan. So good.

(pictured following page)

## LUNCH

:: Raw Broccoli Salad with Mustard Dressing & Leftover Brisket  
also known as...

:: [Raw Veg Lunch Salad]\*

## DINNER

:: Stir Fry of Chicken & Cashew Nuts with Bok Choy  
(pictured following page)

also known as...

:: [Quick Stir Fry]\*

**VIDEO**

semi egg white omelette

**RECIPE**



chicken & cashew stir fry

**RECIPE**



# WEEK 1. DAY 5. MICHAEL'S 40TH

## BREAKFAST

:: [Green Smoothie]\* with broccoli

## LUNCH

My Dad came over from Canberra for lunch so we went out to a local cafe called Kettle & Seed.

## DINNER

As I mentioned yesterday, my Irishman came home and asked if it would be OK if we had his team over for dinner tonight to celebrate Michael's 40th birthday. So I got him to pickup a couple of chickens and some red capsicum and chilli. And the birthday boy's favourite cake is orange and poppy seed so I added poppy seeds and oranges to the shopping list.

Everything else we had on hand. A really fun night and a great example of how having food in the house but not a 'defined plan' works really well to fit in with modern life.

:: [BBQ chicken]\*

:: [Roast Chilli Harissa]\*

:: Roast Cauliflower & Chickpea Salad with Almond Cream  
also known as...

:: [Roast Veg Salad]\*

:: Shaved Zucchini Salad with Mint & Goats Cheese  
also known as...

:: [Shaved Veg Side Salad] \*

:: Orange & Poppy Seed Cake with Yoghurt  
also known as...

:: [Simple Butter Cake]\*

Note: The recipes with an asterisk '\*\*' have been included in our 'template recipe collection'.



\* Module 2.

VIDEO

TEMPLATE MAGIC  
THE ART OF COOKING  
WITHOUT RECIPES

# MASTERING THE ART OF COOKING WITH TEMPLATE RECIPES

Like most people, when I was learning to cook I was a slave to recipes. While it was a good way to start learning different techniques and ingredients, it did have some frustrating limitations.

Like what happens when you can't buy a particular ingredient? And what do you do with that leftover half bunch of herbs? Or jar of sauce?

Or worse still, what do you do when you need to cook something but don't have the luxury of time to pour over recipes and go shopping for exotic ingredients?

Over the years, with a lot of trial and error, I began to learn to cook more instinctively, on my own. Without other people's recipes.

In my head, without really being conscious of what I was doing, I started thinking of recipes in general terms rather than specific ingredients.

From there I developed a collection of starting point or 'template recipes'. So whenever I walked into the kitchen and looked into the fridge to figure out what to cook, I had a head start.

I knew what had worked before to make that soup or stir fry and could use that knowledge as a springboard for a new dish or meal.

## WHY USE TEMPLATE RECIPES?

Template recipes provide a stepping stone or 'training wheels' to help you take the first steps to freedom from recipes.

They're designed to give you some support and structure while also providing plenty of ideas to get you started.

At the same time they are there to encourage you to think for yourself. To try new things. To experiment and develop your own recipes and style.

# MASTERING THE ART OF COOKING WITH TEMPLATE RECIPES

*[continued]*

## 8 TIPS TO MASTERING THE ART OF COOKING WITH TEMPLATE RECIPES

### 1. Trust your instincts

The one thing I wished I realised earlier was 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 catalogue 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.

### 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.

# MASTERING THE ART OF COOKING WITH TEMPLATE RECIPES

*[continued]*

## **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. You're going to need to take control and make some decisions. To be the chef.

## **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.

# MASTERING THE ART OF COOKING WITH TEMPLATE RECIPES

*[continued]*

## **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 IT'S GOING TO TASTE DELICIOUS,  
IT PROBABLY WILL.'**

# 9 WAYS TO DECIDE WHAT TO COOK

One of the biggest challenges we face when moving from cooking with recipes to cooking with templates and creating our own dishes is that nobody is 'telling' us what ingredients to include. We have to figure that out for ourselves.

If this freedom and creativity is something that you thrive on, congratulations! That's awesome.

If you're finding that actually having to think is more of a challenge... don't worry! It's definitely a skill that you can and will develop. It's just going to take a bit of work.

But as you gain experience and your confidence starts to grow, you'll find that you're having to think less. With experience the decision making process will become more instinctive and automatic.

Think about it as being like when you're learning to drive. Remember when you had to think about every gear change and when to check your mirrors? How often do you 'think' about that now? Not very much I'd guess. You just get in the car and drive.

Trust me, with practice deciding what to cook will become 'automatic' as well. To help you get there as quickly as possible I've pulled together some tips to help you decide what to cook...

## 9 TIPS TO HELP YOU DECIDE WHAT TO COOK.

**1. Don't start to think about it until you're in the kitchen.** I can't tell you how many times I've been struggling to decide what to cook just thinking about it on my way home. Then as soon as I open the fridge and have a look inside, something jumps out at me and the decision is made.

If you're anything like me, your memory of the food you have in the house will be pretty poor. So save yourself the stress and when the 'what am I going to cook for dinner?' thought crosses your mind, tell yourself 'I'll think about it when I'm in the kitchen'. Simple but super effective.

# 9 WAYS TO DECIDE WHAT TO COOK

[continued]

**2. Figure out what needs eating up the most.** This is easily the biggest decision making driver for me. I'm hate waste so I'm always poking around the veg drawer in the fridge to help me decide what to eat. Same goes for fresh meat or poultry. So I use the 'what's the most perishable?' question to decide which ingredient to use.

And then let the ingredients, my mood and the time I have available guide me on what to do with said produce.

**3. Use Nicole's brilliant 'flow chart'.** Nicole, a fellow MYMP student mentioned that one of the things she struggles with most is having to 'think' at the end of a busy day. The whole decision making process was her biggest challenge.

I love the solution she came up with all on her own. A decision making 'flow chart'. It's brilliant. All you have to do is follow Nic's decision tree and you'll narrow down the list of which template recipes you should choose. Nic has generously agreed to share the flow chart with the class so I've included it for you to download on the 'resources' tab for this module. Thanks Nic!

Although if flow charts make you feel like you're at school, no problems. You certainly don't have to use it. It's just a tool that will help some people, but if it doesn't feel right for you, focus on the other tips here.

**4. Consider the Seasons or type of day.** If it's cold and rainy out warm or hot food is going to be the most satisfying. Think soups, slow cooked dishes or anything spicy. If it's the height of Summer and the thought of turning the stove on makes you break out in a sweat you know salad or an outside BBQ or BBQ with salad is the answer.

**5. Consider how much time you have or want to spend in the kitchen.** Obvious when you think about it but easy to overlook if you're under pressure. If you've only got 10-20 minutes choose something like a stir fry, salad or something pan fried. Stear clear of anything slow cooked or roasted.

# 9 WAYS TO DECIDE WHAT TO COOK

**6. Think about what you had last night.** I have a personal rule where I don't eat the same thing for breakfast twice in a row. But I've had the same philosophy for dinners for years. If last night was a big bowl of pasta, then that rules it out for tonight. Not ground breaking but helpful in avoiding any feeling of being 'stuck in a rut'.

**7. Build the meal around your main protein source.** Or not. Sometimes I find it helpful to focus on the protein in helping me decide. OK we're having chicken, what works with chicken. But of course at other time's I'll build a meal around the vegetables I want to cook.

**8. Try using a theme thing.** The idea of having the same rigid 'theme' every week just doesn't work for me. But I do like to have a few theme nights up my sleeve to help me decide what to cook. Examples to inspire you include 'Friday night pizza', 'Irish stir-fry Tuesday', 'meat-free Monday' 'Slow cooked Sunday' or 'Curry night'.

**9. Don't forget 'Clancy's Rule of Cooking'.** I know I'm banging on about this a bit but it's super important. The biggest difference between good cooks and not-so-good cooks is not skill or ability. It's confidence. You have to trust your own judgement.

*'If you think it's going to taste delicious, it probably will.'*

# TOP 10 MOST USEFUL TEMPLATE RECIPES

There are over 60 template recipes included in the Master Your Meal Plan program and it will probably be closer to 70 by the time we're done. If you think about it, there are at least 10 possible variations for each template, and in some cases it would be closer to 100 or more variations. We're talking 600 to OVER 6000 possible meals.

Now I'm telling you this to get you excited about the possibilities. BUT I really don't want you to feel overwhelmed by so much choice. To help you navigate the world of 'templates' I thought I'd share my 10 favourite, most commonly used template recipes. If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed, I want you to come back to this list to help you narrow your choice.

1. Baked Frittata
2. 'Smooth' Veggie Soup
3. Classic 'Slaw
4. Canned Bean Salad
5. Raw Veg Lunch Salad
6. Simple 'One Dish' Supper
7. The Perfect 'Steak'
8. Quick Stir Fry
9. Thai-Style Curry
10. Pan Fried Protein with Raw Veg Salad

Please remember this list is my top 10. It was quite difficult to narrow it down. I'm not expecting your top 10 to be the same. In fact I encourage you to come up with a list of your own top 10 as we work through the program and you try things out. It's all about finding out what works for you and your situation.

# 7 STEP TEMPLATE RECIPE PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

One of the ways I like to think about cooking without recipes is that if I'm not having a failure every now and then, I'm not trying hard enough!

Remember what we learned from Rene Redzepi, chef at the best restaurant in the world... 'Failure IS an option'. But at the same time I hate wasting food. So I always try to salvage the situation.

## HERE ARE 7 STEPS TO SOLVING ANY 'DISASTERS' YOU MAY HAVE...

**1. Diagnose the problem.** Is it burnt to a cinder? Yes then I'm afraid there's not much you can do. Throw it out and move on.

If it's not burnt. What's the problem? Does it taste bad? Or is it just bland and boring? Or is it textural? Too crunchy? Too watery or sloppy?

**2. Try some first aid.** There are often minor tweaks you can make to rescue the situation. Here are some places to start...

**Bad taste** – does it taste off or just not to your liking? If it's an off taste, best to throw it out rather than risk making people sick. If it's just a preference thing, can you disguise the problem with another strong flavour. Things like Thai curry pastes, tomato ketchup will often work well.

**Bland / Boring** – This is usually easy to fix. It's time to season! Try adding salt and pepper first. If the flavours still taste dull try adding some 'acid'. Think things like lemon juice or vinegar. Remember to take it slow and keep tweaking and tasting until you're happy. If you go too far with the salt or acid, sometimes a little sugar can bring things back into balance. But be careful!

**Too crunchy or dry** – can you serve with a sauce to soften things or moisten. A dollop of natural yoghurt, mayonnaise, pesto, hummus, a drizzle of cream or some melted butter can all help. Even a squeeze of lemon.

# 7 STEP TEMPLATE RECIPE PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

*[continued]*

**Too watery / sloppy.** This happened to me with a lamb curry recently. I'd served up and we ate it but I was disappointed especially because we had LOTS of leftovers. So a few days later I started simmering to reduce the water content. At the same time I added cooked chickpeas for more interesting texture, some tomato paste to add depth of flavour and lashings of curry power. The result was a completely different and delicious curry. Another option is to puree some of the solids to thicken your sauce.

**3. Store and retry.** Remember food is always changing. There are chemical and microbial activities that happen in the fridge or even the freezer. Sometimes just storing in the fridge for a few days and coming back to a dish will be all that's needed to take it from boring to delish!

**4. Break it down into individual ingredients and re-purpose them.** If you've still got a problem, and you can break the dish down to individual ingredients, go for it. Often the 'repurposed' ingredients will work surprisingly well in a new incarnation.

**5. Make a soup or stew.** Adding some stock and canned tomatoes to turn a disaster into a soup is a favourite trick of mine. The other option is to add Thai curry paste and coconut milk to go for an Asian vibe but I find this less versatile than the good old Mediterranean tomato option.

**6. Blend it away.** In wine making when you have a batch of wine that isn't good, often winemakers will 'blend it away' by adding small amounts to good batches of wine. If you keep the additions low enough, you can reuse a surprising amount of wine without having to throw it down the drain. This can be trickier with food but worth considering.

**7. And if all that doesn't work...** Throw it out and move on. Life is too short to agonize over bad food!

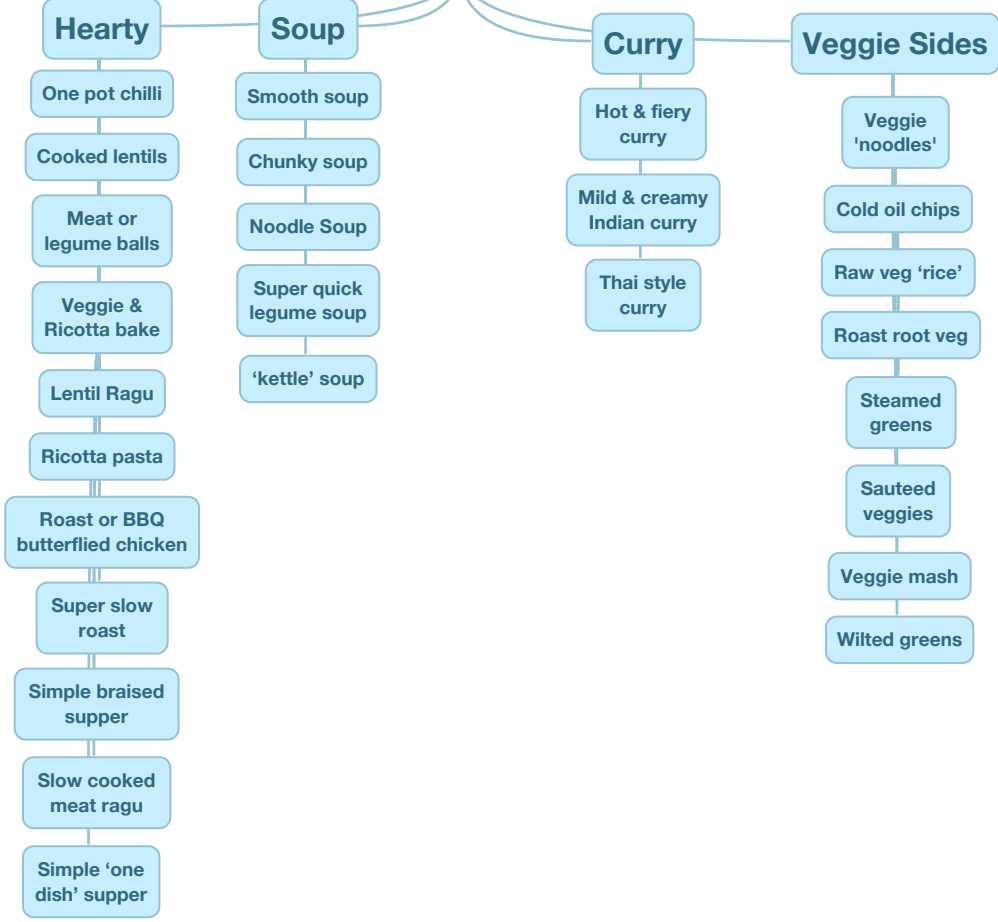
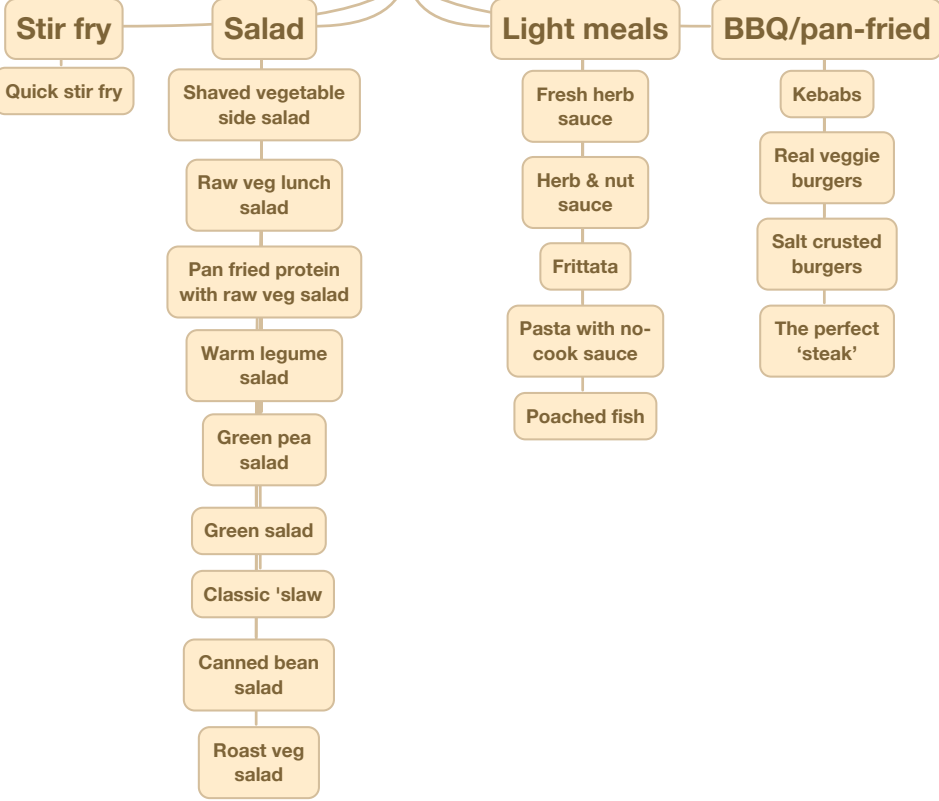
# Module 2.  
**RESOURCES**

# NICOLE'S DINNER DECISION FLOW CHART



**HOT**

**COLD**



# # Module 2.

# 'TEMPLATE' RECIPES

- :: [Poached Eggs] with Vegetables
- :: [Canned Bean Salad]
- :: [Legume Ragu]
- :: [Classic Green Salad]
- :: [Fried Eggs]
- :: [Layered Veggie & Ricotta Bake]
- :: [Mild & Creamy Indian Curry]
- :: [The Perfect 'Steak'] includes fish & veggie options
- :: [Cauli Mac & Cheese]
- :: [Machine-free Ice Cream]



poached eggs with veg

# POACHED EGGS WITH VEG

For the last few months I've been going through a massive poached egg phase. I even order them when I'm out for breakfast at my favourite local cafe.

per person:

*3-4 tablespoons white vinegar*

*2 fresh eggs*

*handful cooked or raw veg*

*1-2 tablespoons sauce, optional*

*pinch flavour highlight, optional*

1. Bring a small saucepan of water and the vinegar to the boil on a very high heat.
2. Break an egg into a small cup and slide gently into the boiling water. Repeat with the other egg.
3. Reduce the heat to keep the eggs at a gentle simmer and cook for 3 minutes or until the eggs feel firm but not hard.
4. Meanwhile slice veg and place on a plate. Warm them up if you feel like warm veg.
5. Drain eggs with a slotted spoon and pat dry with a clean tea towel. Place on top of veg.
6. Sprinkle over sauce and flavour highlight, if using.

## VARIATIONS

**raw veg** - asparagus, broccoli, broccolini, kale, cavalo nero, baby spinach, carrots, celery, parsley, mint, cauliflower, bok choy, snow peas, sugar snap peas, asian greens, cabbage, tomato.

**cooked veg** - steamed broccoli, mushrooms, wilted greens such as spinach, beet tops or kale, roasted tomatoes, roasted beets, roasted sweet potato or pumpkin, sweet corn, peas.

**sauce** - natural yoghurt, hollandaise, mayonnaise, chilli oil, pesto, roast harissa, BBQ sauce, ketchup, goats cheese, melted butter, burnt butter.

**flavour highlight** - mostly I love lashings of black pepper, chilli flakes, fresh chilli, parsley, basil, thyme, grated parmesan, curry powder, ground cumin, smoked paprika, ground coriander.

**different eggs** - when you get bored with poached eggs, try boiled or fried or an omelette. Even scrambled.

**no vinegar?** - you could substitute lemon juice or just skip it. It helps keep the egg shape but isn't the end of the world if you don't have any.



# POACHED EGGS WITH VEG...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep in the fridge for a few days. But really they're best when freshly poached.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bitter / icky flavour - too bland?** - Be generous with the seasoning. And make sure you're using the best eggs.

**eggs messy** - the fresher your eggs are, the firmer the whites and the better they keep together. The vinegar helps keep the protein tight. If your whites are going everywhere, it means your eggs weren't fresh enough. They'll still taste delicious though.

**vinegary flavour or watery** - sometimes the egg white can trap quite a bit of water so it's important to pat the eggs dry with a tea towel or kitchen paper otherwise you end up with watery vinegar on your plate.

**rubbery eggs** - this is a sign you've cooked the eggs at too high a temperature. Next time be more vigilant in making sure you're only using a gentle simmer once you've added the eggs.

**eggs too runny** - if your eggs were cold from the fridge, they'll take longer than 3 minutes to cook. With practice you'll be able to tell from touching the egg when they are firm enough. For a firm yolk, you'll need to allow up to 5 minutes of poaching.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great on its own. Or with hot buttered toast.

canned *bean* salad



# CANNED BEAN SALAD

One of the best things about this salad, apart from how fresh and tasty it is, is that it keeps well for a few days. The salad in the picture is using sherry vinegar, butter beans, tuna in chilli oil, and shaved cabbage.

per person

1 tablespoon acid

1/2 can legumes, drained

handful vegetables or salad leaves

handful cooked protein

small handful highlight ingredient, optional

1. Combine acid with 1-2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil in a salad bowl. Season.
2. Add drained legumes and finely sliced veg or leaves to the dressing. Toss.
3. Sprinkle protein over the salad and top with highlight ingredient, if using.



## VARIATIONS

**acid** - Sherry vinegar, rice wine vinegar, lemon juice, lime juice, red/white wine vinegar, champagne vinegar.

**legumes** - butter beans, cannellini beans, borlotti beans, chickpeas, lentils, red kidney beans. Pretty much any canned legume or home cooked ones.

**vegetables** - fennel, zucchini, cabbage, carrots, beets, asparagus, broccoli (grate rather than 'shave'), cauliflower (grate rather than 'shave'), snow peas, sugarsnap peas, celery, red capsicum (bell peppers). Leafy veg such as spinach, kale or collard greens can be finely sliced into ribbons with a knife.

**salad leaves** - pretty much any washed salad leaves, torn into bite sized pieces if large.

**cooked protein** - canned tuna, salmon, sardines, nuts, cooked chicken, smoked chicken, salami, prosciutto, cold roast meats, avocado (not strictly protein but good), boiled eggs, smoked salmon, goats cheese, ricotta, cheddar, parmesan, cottage cheese.

**simple protein** - just increase the amount of canned legumes.

# CANNED BEAN SALAD...

## VARIATIONS *[continued]*

**highlight - crunch** - nuts or finely sliced red onion.

**highlight - spice** - chopped chilli, curry powder, smoked paprika, tabasco sauce, ground cumin, fennel seeds, coriander seeds.

**highlight - herbs** - try fresh coriander (cilantro), basil, mint, parsley, oregano, chives, green onions or even thyme.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

OK but nicer when super fresh. Not something you should freeze.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**difficult to eat** - next time slice the veg finer or chop them into smaller ribbons. Also, make sure you're not pushing down too hard on the veg if you're using a mandoline. It took me a while to discover that the less pressure you apply the finer your shaved veg.

**too much dressing** - for now just transfer the whole salad to a clean bowl, leaving behind as much dressing as you can. Toss again to rub off dressing. Next time mix the dressing up in a small jar and gradually add to the salad.

**too dry** - either mix up some more dressing and drizzle over OR just drizzle over some more oil and acid separately as the italians do.

**too bland** - season with a little more salt & pepper.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

We tend to go for bowls.

legume ragu



# LEGUME RAGU

The 'ragu' in the picture is using green 'French-style' or Puy lentils. It's easily my favourite. But don't let that deter you from exploring other beans or split peas or even chickpeas.

serves 3-4

*2 onions, diced*

*3-4 tablespoons butter*

*dash of flavouring highlight, optional*

*2 cans tomatoes (400g / 14oz each)*

*500g (1lb) cooked legumes (2 cans)*

1. Cook onions, butter, a little olive oil and the flavouring highlight, if using in a large frying pan or skillet on a low to medium heat for 5-10 minutes until soft but not well browned.
2. Remove flavouring highlight, if using. Add tomatoes and simmer for 15-20 minutes on a medium heat until the sauce has thickened.
3. Add legumes and simmer for another 5 minutes or until hot. Taste and season.

## VARIATIONS

**onion-free** - just skip the onion (but not the butter!) or replace onions with celery or diced carrots or a combo of both.

**dairy-free** - replace butter with olive oil. Be generous!

**flavouring highlight** - a small star anise is great for boosting the 'meaty' flavours of the onion. Other options include chilli, rosemary leaves, thyme, bay leaves or sage.

**tomato-free** - I much prefer tomato based ragus, but if you needed to make it tomato-free for some reason I'd double the onions and replace the two cans of tomatoes with 1 1/2 cups vegetable or chicken stock.

**cooked or canned legumes** - green lentils, red lentils, brown lentils, yellow split peas, green split peas, cannellini beans, chickpeas, butter beans, lima beans, black beans, red kidney beans.



# LEGUME RAGU...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Brilliant. Will keep in the fridge for 1-2 weeks. Freezes well.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**bland** - keep simmering to reduce and concentrate the flavours. If you're short on time you may like to add a few tablespoons of tomato paste. An extra tablespoon or two of butter may also help.

**too thick** - Add water if too thick.

**too runny** - keep simmering and next time use a more shallow pan to get maximum evaporation.

**mushy legumes** - be careful not to overcook the legumes next time.

**hard legumes** - keep simmering until they are just tender. Crunchy legumes can be difficult to digest. Next time cook the legumes for longer before adding to the ragu.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Use anywhere you'd normally use a meat ragu. In lasagne, with pasta, or with carrot or zucchini 'noodles'.



classic green salad

# CLASSIC GREEN SALAD

The most frequent thing I cook is a simple green salad. It goes with pretty much anything and is a quick solution if you're like me and feel that a meal isn't complete without greens in some form.

per person

*1/2 tablespoon acid*

*1/2 teaspoon soy sauce, optional*

*1-2 handfuls salad leaves, washed and dried*

1. Combine acid, soy and 1 1/2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil in a medium bowl.
2. Toss leaves gently in the dressing using clean hands.
3. Taste and season.

## VARIATIONS

**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.

**additional flavourings** - miso, mustard.

**other potential additives** - shaved parmesan, goats cheese, finely sliced ripe grapes, shaved pear, nuts, seeds.



# CLASSIC GREEN SALAD...

## 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.

## 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.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Pretty much works with anything savoury.

fried *eggs* with lentils



# FRIED EGGS

It took me years to appreciate the simple beauty of a fried egg. It's all about finding the balance between a light crispy base, non-snotty whites and deliciously oozy yolks. A big ask but once you get it, you'll become a fried egg convert too. They're also great on sandwiches.

per person

1 handful cooked legumes or cooked or raw veg

2 eggs

1. Heat a small fry pan on a medium high heat.
2. Add the legume or veg. Cook for a few minutes just to warm up. Transfer to a plate. If using raw veg, skip this step.
3. Add a few tablespoons oil and break the egg into the pan.
3. Cook on a medium high heat for about 2 minutes or until the white is brown on the edges and no longer runny or 'snotty' in the middle.
4. Serve eggs on top of the lentils with lashings of salt and black pepper.

## VARIATIONS

**legumes** - try cooked puy or green lentils, red lentils, yellow split peas, green split peas, chickpeas. Or canned cannellini beans, borlotti beans or black beans. They might need a little seasoning with a splash or soy sauce and a little vinegar.

**cooked vegetables** - spinach, kale, beet tops, collard greens, steamed broccoli.

**raw vegetables** - avocado, fennel, zucchini, cabbage, carrots, beets, asparagus, broccoli (grate rather than 'shave'), cauliflower (grate rather than 'shave'), snow peas, sugarsnap peas, celery, red capsicum (bell peppers). Leafy veg such as spinach, kale or collard greens can be finely sliced into ribbons with a knife.

**combo** - use a combo of vegetables and legumes.

**carb lovers accompaniment** - hot buttered toast.

**optional extras** - crispy bacon, chilli oil, worcestershire sauce, fried chilli flakes, smoked paprika, curry powder. Oyster sauce and spring onions are great for a Chinese breakkie.

**VIDEO**

# FRIED EGGS...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Fried eggs don't reheat well. Best to make fresh and eat hot.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland?** - remember to be generous with the salt & pepper. And maybe next time look at using better quality eggs.

**eggs burning** - the trick with cooking eggs 'sunny side up' is to get the bottoms lightly browned (but not too dark) and getting the whites cooked through. Spooning a little hot cooking oil over the whites can help speed up the process. And make sure you aren't using too high a heat.

**eggs rubbery** - when egg whites are over cooked the protein goes rubbery. Next time use a more gentle heat and be ready to stop cooking as soon as the whites are just 'set'.

**yolks too runny** - if you prefer your yolks cooked all the way through, best to go for eggs 'over-easy' and flip the eggs after about 2 minutes and cook on the second side for about 30 seconds or until the white is just set.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

We tend to go for bowls. Don't forget a big mug of hot strong Irish breakfast tea.

layered veggie & ricotta bake



# LAYERED VEGGIE & RICOTTA BAKE

I was tempted to call this a 'lasagne' but it's really quite different with the sweet veg and cheesy top.

serves 4-6:

700g (3/4lb) vegetables  
1 quantity lentil ragu  
3 large handfuls finely grated parmesan  
500g (1lb) ricotta

1. Preheat oven to 200C (400F). Finely sliced veg into ribbons using a mandoline or sharp knife.
2. In a medium baking dish, place a thin layer of the lentil ragu. Top with vegetable slices. Layer over more ragu and repeat until everything is used up or the dish is full.
3. Sprinkle the parmesan over the top. Break ricotta into chunks and scatter over.
4. Bake for 40-50 minutes or until deeply golden brown and bubbling. And the veg are tender.



## VARIATIONS

**vegetables** - I've used zucchini in the photo above but you could use any veg that can be sliced finely such as eggplant, red capsicum (bell peppers), potatoes, sweet potato, celeriac, mushrooms. Harder veg may need a longer baking time to soften them.

**dairy-free / vegan** - replace ricotta and parmesan with mashed potato, white beans or cauliflower and drizzle very generously with extra virgin olive oil. Serve with finely grated brazil nuts.

**carnivore** - replace lentil ragu with a meat sauce made by replacing the lentils with browned ground beef or veal.

**extra cheesy** - double the parmesan and sprinkle the extra in as you layer the vegetables.

**budget** - make a bechamel sauce with butter, flour and milk to use instead of the ricotta.

**veggie lasagne** - replace some or all of the veg with fresh lasagne sheets.

# LAYERED VEGGIE & RICOTTA BAKE...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Brilliant. One of those things that improves with a little time in the fridge. Will keep for 1-2 weeks in the fridge. Freeze chopped into single serving portions.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**watery** - the veg, especially zucchini will give off liquid as they cook. Make sure the veg are really tender. You can remove excess moisture with paper towel if it bothers you. The good news is the liquid will soak back into the bake overnight in the fridge.

**burning on top** - if you're finding the top browning too quickly, just cover with foil and keep cooking. Turning the heat down to 180C (350F) may help too.

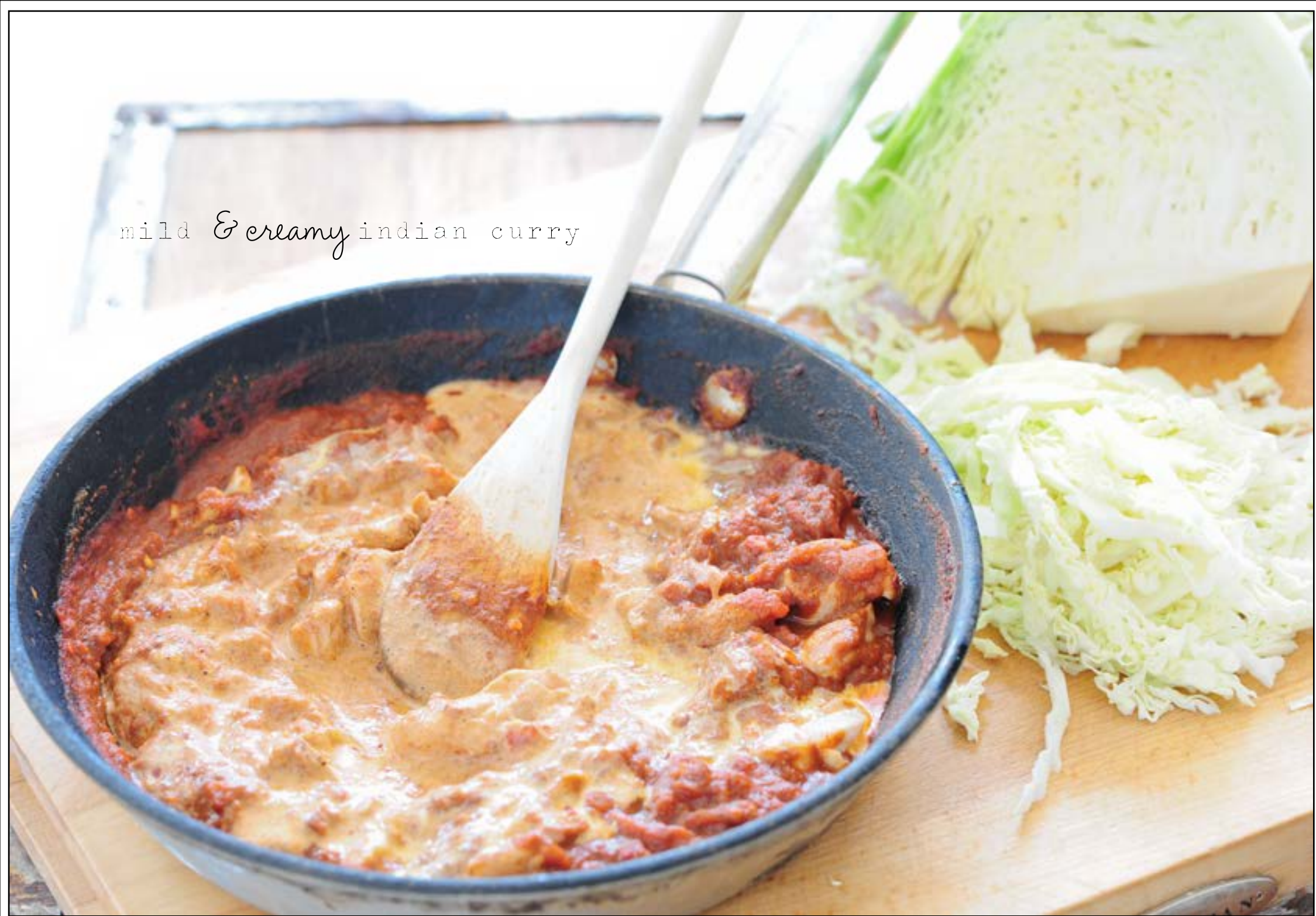
**too dry** - serve drizzled with a generous glug of your best peppery extra virgin olive oil.

**too bland** - be generous with the parmesan at the table. Next time consider using more parmesan and layering it among the veg rather than just saving it all for the topping.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

In large squares with a simple green salad on the side.

mild & creamy indian curry



# MILD & CREAMY INDIAN CURRY

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.



# MILD & CREAMY INDIAN CURRY...

## VARIATIONS *[continued]*

**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.

## 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.

## 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 curries 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.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Wonderful with classic steamed rice or cauliflower rice. Or serve on a bed of wilted greens, fresh baby spinach, or shaved cabbage.

the perfect steak



# THE PERFECT 'STEAK'

Just because there's a regular beef steak in the picture, vegetarians and pescatarians don't skip this recipe. Tuna steaks, swordfish, tofu and mushroom all make wonderful alternative 'steaks'.

per person

1 'steak', about 2cm (3/4in) thick

1/2 lemon, optional

small handful flavour highlight, optional  
sauce, to serve, optional

1. Remove your steaks from the fridge at least an hour before you want to cook them. Except if using fish steaks.
2. Heat a frying pan (skillet) just large enough to hold the steaks on a very high heat for at least 5 minutes.
3. Scatter a very fine layer of salt over the bottom of the pan and add the steaks.
4. Cook for 2 minutes each side for medium rare (or 3 minutes for medium) or until cooked to your liking. Add the lemon halves, cut side down after you turn the steaks.
5. Remove steaks and place on 2 warm plates. Drizzle over a little hot lemon juice, if using and a generous glug of olive oil. Rest for at least 5 minutes, preferably 10.
6. Scatter with thyme, if using and season with pepper.



## VARIATIONS

**mushroom steaks** - use portabello or field mushrooms. Will take about 4 minutes each side.

**fish steaks** - marlin, swordfish, salmon and tuna are all great. Any 'meaty' fish can be cooked in this way. I tend to cook them 2 minutes on the 1st side and then only 30 seconds to 1 minute on the second for rarer steaks. Sometimes if I'm in the mood for really rare tuna I don't cook on the 2nd side at all.

**tofu steaks** - slice tofu into steaks. Will take 2-3 minutes each side. Tofu is pretty bland so serve with a flavourful sauce and sides.

**beef** - scotch fillet (boneless rib eye) are my favourite. Sirloin, New York cut are also good. Rump can be tougher but more flavoursome.

**lamb or pork 'steaks'** - use lamb or pork cutlets instead.

**chicken steaks** - bash out the thick end of the chicken breast until more uniform in thickness. Be careful of overcooking as they dry out easily.

**flavour highlight** - thyme leaves, chives, parsley, oregano, chilli flakes, chopped rosemary, smoked paprika, black pepper.

# THE PERFECT 'STEAK'...

## VARIATIONS *[continued]*

**sauce** - hollandaise, bernaise, chimichurri, mayo, ketchup, BBQ sauce, hummus, goats cheese, pesto, tabasco sauce, mustard, fresh horseradish mixed with sour cream, butter, flavoured butters, chilli oil.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

OK. But steak tends to dry out when reheated.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland** - Season with extra salt & pepper. Next time try a different butcher or a different cut.

**too salty** - cooking on a salt crust like this only needs a very fine amount of salt to give you the lovely salty crust and stop your steak from sticking to the pan. Next time use less salt but for now, try rubbing off any excess salt.

**steak burning** - If your pan is too large, fat and juices that drip into the pan can easily burn (see smoke alarm below). Next time use a smaller pan. The other problem is if you're trying to cook the steak to well done it can start to get very charred on the outside. I'd really encourage you to try learning to love a medium steak. But if you're like my Dad and get freaked out at the thought of pink meat, cook the steak on a very high heat at first and then turn the heat down to medium after the first few minutes.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**smoke alarm problems** - If your pan isn't super clean before you start or the pan is too large for your steaks, the parts that aren't being covered by the steak can smoke. Next time clean your pan first and use a smaller pan (or cook more steaks). For now, get someone to wave a tea towel in front of your smoke detector, or do as my Dad does and set a fan up pointing at the smoke detector while you're cooking. Remember to turn it off after.

**steak too rare** - just pop it back in the pan for a minute or so each side. When you're learning it's a good idea to cut into one of the steaks to check for doneness before you rest them. Also it's really important to make sure your steak is at room temperature before you start cooking, otherwise it will take much longer.

**steak overdone** - If your steak isn't as thick as the recipe (2cm / 3/4in) it won't take as long to cook. Not much you can do now apart from being generous with the lemon and olive oil.

**steak too tough / chewy** - If your steak is lovely and pink but tough and chewy it's time to blame the steak! Next time try a different producer or a different cut.

**too lemony** - Cooking the lemons like this makes them really lovely and juicy. It can be easy to overdo the lemon and overpower your steak so don't be too generous. You can always add more lemon later.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great with a green salad or some steamed green veg. For a more decadent option serve with potato chips.



cauli mac & cheese

# CAULI MAC & CHEESE

The idea to use cauliflower puree as the base for the cheesy sauce came from Heston Blumenthal of all people. If you're feeding little ones who probably wouldn't like the idea of veggies in their 'mac & cheese' just keep it between you and me... oh and skip the whole cauli florettes.

per person

*1/4 small cauliflower*

*1/2 cup milk*

*75g (3oz) short pasta*

*100g (4oz) cheese, grated or crumbled*

1. Chop cauli into florettes and slice the stalks. Keep about 1/3 of the best looking florettes aside. Place the ugly-duckling florettes in a small saucepan with the milk.
2. Bring cauli to the boil and simmer on a medium low heat, partially covered for 15 minutes or until soft.
3. Meanwhile boil salted water and cook pasta until al dente. Drain. Preheat your overhead grill (broiler).
4. Puree the cauli and milk. Add most of the cheese to the sauce, keeping some aside to sprinkle over the top.
5. Add drained pasta and reserved raw cauli to the sauce and stir until well combined.
6. Transfer to a greased heatproof container. Grill for about 5 minutes or until deeply golden and bubbling.



## VARIATIONS

**veggie-free** - Use the milk to make a bechamel sauce and skip the whole cauliflower simmering thing.

**cheese** - I used a combo of blue cheese and gruyere. Melting cheeses like gruyere or cheddar are my preference. A little parmesan for flavour doesn't go astray. Taleggio is good too.

**pasta** - macaroni is traditional but any short pasta is good. I used casereccia which has a groove down the side to hold lots of sauce. Penne or rigatoni would be great as well.

**dairy/free** - tough one. Skip the cheese and double the cauliflower. Use dairy-free milk to simmer the cauliflower. Sprinkle over bread crumbs and drizzle with lots of extra virgin olive oil before grilling.

**gluten-free / slow carb** - replace cooked pasta with canned beans. About 1/2 can per person should do it. Butter beans are delish as are cannellini.

**different veg** - cauli has such an affinity for cheese, it's pretty hard to top. Broccoli would be a good alternative (although more obvious as a vegetable!) Root veg like parsnip or celeriac would also work. Skip leaving some of them raw and you'll need to simmer for longer to get them tender. Prob 30 minutes or so.

# CAULI MAC & CHEESE...

## VARIATIONS *[continued]*

**optional extras** - chilli flakes or powder, a tiny pinch of curry powder, nut such as pine nuts, seeded mustard, creamy french mustard, bread crumbs, cherry tomatoes, sun dried tomatoes, splash of guinness, worcestershire sauce.

**higher protein** - flake a small can of tuna into the sauce or serve with a fried egg on top.

**porky** - consider adding a handful of crispy chopped bacon or slices of chorizo in with the cheese. Or drape with prosciutto before grilling.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Great! Reheats well and I'm quite partial to it straight out of the fridge.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**cauli boiling over / burning** - simmering in milk does have the risk of boiling over. Keep one eye on the pot and reduce heat if it simmers too much.

**watery** - if you're finding the sauce too watery, next time simmer without the lid on or use a larger saucepan. For now more cheese will help or stir in a handful or two of soft bread crumbs.

**dry / grainy texture** - this is a sign of the cheese being overcooked. To disguise, just sprinkle with extra grated parmesan. And next time you might like to sieve the cauli puree before adding the cheese.

**too bland** - add some parmesan! And make sure the grilling gives a deep golden brown colour to enhance the cheesy flavour. Next time try different types of cheese.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Die hard cheese fans might like to serve with more cheese on the side. I like a simple green salad.



machine-free *ice* cream

# MACHINE-FREE ICE CREAM

Ice cream is by far my favourite dessert. I used to own an ice cream machine but it took up lots of space and I wasn't every 100% happy with it. It's taken me years to develop a recipe for ice cream that doesn't need a machine. But it's been time well spent.

makes about 2 cups

*1/2 cup fruit juice or puree, optional*  
*250g (9oz) icing (powdered or confectioners) sugar*  
*300mL (1+1/4 cups) whipping cream,*  
*(approx 35% milk fat)*

1. Combine juice or puree and icing sugar in a small bowl.
2. Using a whisk, whip cream until soft peaks just start to form and the cream has thickened slightly.
3. Whisk the sugar mixture in with the cream and whisk until the texture is back to the soft peaks.
4. Place in a freezer-proof container and freeze for at least 6 hours or until lovely and ice-creamy.

*note: If not using the fruit juice / puree, just combine the sugar with the cream and whip. You can reduce the sugar to 200g (7oz).*

## VARIATIONS

**juice** - lemon, lime, passionfruit (with seeds!), pomegranate. You could use orange juice but I'm not a big fan of orange with dairy.

**fruit puree** - raspberries, strawberries, blueberries, banana, peaches, nectarines, pineapple, mango, pear, rhubarb.

**other potential additives** - chocolate chunks, cookie dough, brownies, praline, sugar coated nuts, chocolate coated honeycomb, caramel chunks, vanilla, cocoa powder, malted milk powder.

**dairy-free** - use unsweetened coconut cream. Chill the can for a few hours then remove the solid cream, discarding any watery liquid. Whip as you would normal cream.

**less sugar** - you can reduce the sugar, if you like. The ice cream will be less sweet but will have a more icy texture.



VIDEO

# MACHINE-FREE ICE CREAM...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep in the freezer for months, but the texture will increase in iciness so best to eat within a few weeks.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**cream too icy** - Sounds like not enough sugar. Allow to soften in the fridge for 15 minutes or so. And next time use more sugar or check that you have used the correct amount.

**too sweet** - The secret to getting the ice cream to stay creamy is the high sugar content and the glycerine. If you find it too much, try replacing half the cream with yoghurt or adding in some lemon juice or other acid to balance out the sweetness.

**cream has rough texture** - If it's little ice crystals, see the solution above for too icy. If the cream itself seems a bit chunky it sounds like either the cream wasn't fresh to begin with OR you've over whipped it. Not much can be done at this stage, next time whip less.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Anywhere you'd use ice cream.

# # Module 2. DAILY UPDATES

PLANNING & SHOPPING **VIDEO**  
DAY 6. HOME SWEET HOME TUESDAY  
DAY 7. A GIRL'S DINNER  
DAY 8. A NORMAL THURSDAY  
DAY 9. FISH ON FRIDAY  
DAY 10. ST PATICK'S DAY

**WEEK 2.  
DAY 6.  
HOME SWEET  
HOME  
TUESDAY**

While it was brilliant to catch up with friends in Melbourne and eat a few fabulous new places, I'm always super happy to be home.

This week is a bit unusual. My Irishman is in Sydney all week for work and then has a stag weekend at the Gold Coast. So I'm home alone!

I'm on a mission to eat up the leftover bits and pieces in the fridge in preparation for a big shop at the markets in Canberra this Friday.

**BREAKFAST**

After my first run in ages, very excited to have my favourite eggs on a bed of beet greens leftover from last week. And a little decadent drizzle of mayo.

:: [Poached eggs] with vegetables\*

**LUNCH**

:: Butter bean and tuna salad with shaved cabbage  
also known as..

:: [Canned bean salad]\*

**DINNER**

Leftovers for me tonight.

Braised beet tops from last weekend's cooking teamed with a little leftover beef short rib ragu.

also known as..

:: [Wilted Greens]\*

:: [Slow Cooked Meat Ragu]\*

# WEEK 2. DAY 7. A GIRL'S DINNER

## BREAKFAST

:: Another [Green Smoothie] with broccoli. Yum!

## LUNCH

:: Shaved zucchini salad with roast beets & cottage cheese.  
(pictured on following page)

Using up roast beets [Roast Root Veg] from the weekend before last.  
a different take on..

:: [Raw Veg Lunch Salad]

## DINNER

My friend Catherine came over for dinner tonight. We had a lovely time killing snails in the garden while we were picking the salad leaves for our dinner.

I actually used my 'scary giant zucchini from the garden to make a zucchini & lentil 'lasagne'. It was a bit of an experiment. While Catherine said to tell you guys it was delicious, I wasn't 100% happy so haven't included the recipe as one of our 'template recipes'.

And now I have LOTS of leftovers of something I'm not that keen on. Watch this space to see how I use them...

:: [Zucchini & Lentil Lasagne] (see note above)

:: [Legume Ragu]

:: [Classic Green Salad]

**VIDEO**

shaved zucchini salad with beets & cottage cheese

**RECIPE**



# WEEK 2. DAY 8. A NORMAL THURSDAY

A quiet day at home for me catching up on lots of work.

## BREAKFAST

A quick fried egg breakfast before our webinar this morning. For those of you who missed it, the recording is up [OVER HERE]:

:: [Fried eggs]\*

## LUNCH

Big surprise for the day was that the layered veggie & ricotta bake from yesterday that I wasn't 100% happy with last night, turned out to be divine for lunch today. All the slightly watery textural problems seemed to have fixed themselves up in the fridge overnight.

So I've included the recipe as a reminder that food is always changing and just because something isn't wonderful one day, doesn't mean it won't improve with time.

:: [Layered Veggie & Ricotta Bake]\*

## DINNER

Using up some leftover cooked chicken from last week that I put aside before making last week's stir fry.

:: Butter chicken on a bed of shaved cabbage  
...also known as..

:: [Mild & Creamy Indian Curry]\*

**VIDEO**

**WEEK 2.  
DAY 9.  
FISH ON  
FRIDAY**

Had my car booked in for a service so made the trip to Canberra for the day.

Really made me appreciate working from home with no commute!

**BREAKFAST**

Scrambled eggs at Milk & Honey Cafe

**LUNCH**

With my Dad at Kingsley's steak house.

**DINNER**

:: Salt crusted tuna steak with mayo and a roast beet & radicchio salad.

...also known as..

:: [The perfect 'steak']

# WEEK 2. DAY 10. ST PATRICK'S DAY

Happy St Patrick's Day! Hope you get to celebrate somewhere fun. And it's also 'cheat' day in our house so I'm having a pasta comfort feast followed by my favourite dessert – ice cream!

## BREAKFAST

Simple cottage cheese with berries, cashews and oat bran for me this morning.

(pictured in following pages)

## LUNCH

St Patrick's Day Sandwich. Potato & rosemary bread with lashings of mayonnaise, zucchini 'noodles' and sardines (in lieu of Irish salmon!).

(pictured in following pages)

## DINNER

:: Cauliflower Mac & Cheese with blue cheese and gruyere + green salad  
also known as...

:: [Cauli mac & cheese]\*

Plus!

:: Passionfruit ice cream

also known as...

:: [Machine-free ice cream]\*

**VIDEO**

cottage cheese breakfast





st patricks *day* sandwich

# # Module 3.

VIDEO

# MAXIMIZING FLEXIBILITY

# 5 TIPS 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's away for one or two nights.

The next most common occurrence is having last minute guests for dinner.

### **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 cryovacced 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.

# 5 TIPS FOR ADAPTING TO CHANGES IN YOUR SCHEDULE

*[continued]*

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 maximises 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.

We'll cover the options for home 'preservation' in much more detail next week but for now think about whether you can freeze the ingredient for later. Or whether partially cooking it will help prolong its life.

### **5. Have some fun with it.**

Sometimes the best cooking discoveries happen when you're under pressure :)

# 13 WAYS TO GET THE MAXIMUM SUPPORT FROM YOUR PANTRY, FRIDGE & FREEZER

Without some sort of pantry backup, the Quick & Easy Planning System would struggle to live up to its name. The thing is, having some sort of pantry doesn't need to be difficult or scary. Or require some sort of super human organisation.

## HERE ARE 13 WAYS TO GET THE MAXIMUM SUPPORT FROM YOUR PANTRY, FRIDGE & FREEZER.

### 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.

### 3. Avoid the trap of deep shelves

There's a saying 'out 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 what it's like when you're deciding what to wear and it feels like you have nothing suitable. 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.

# 13 WAYS TO GET THE MAXIMUM SUPPORT FROM YOUR PANTRY, FRIDGE & FREEZER

*[continued]*

## **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 what's 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.

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

Let's 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. I recently adopted the policy of transferring all the older veg to the small drawer before putting new purchases away. It has made a massive difference to the amount of veg I throw away.

# 13 WAYS TO GET THE MAXIMUM SUPPORT FROM YOUR PANTRY, FRIDGE & FREEZER

## **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.

## **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.

# 'MISE EN PLACE'

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 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.

### 2. Prolong the shelf life of our produce

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.

# 'MISE EN PLACE'

*[continued]*

## EXAMPLES OF MISE EN PLACE FROM MASTER YOUR MEAL PLAN

:: [Roast Root Veg]

:: [Wilted Greens]

:: [Cooked Quinoa]

:: [Roast Chilli Harissa]

:: [Slow Cooked Meat Ragu]

:: [Legume Ragu]

# THE NUMBER 1. WAY TO ENSURE YOU'RE GETTING ENOUGH VARIETY IN YOUR DIET

Variety well may be the spice of life, but it's also a key part of a healthy diet.

The thing is, by eating a wide variety of foods we're putting our eggs in as many baskets as possible. Spreading the risk.

Variety means we're much less likely to eat too many things that aren't good for us. And at the same time it also means we're less likely to miss out on essential micro nutrients.

I like to think of variety as a nutritional 'insurance policy'.

Not only that, variety keeps food and eating fun!

## SO WHAT IS THE NUMBER 1. WAY TO ENSURE WE'RE GETTING ENOUGH VARIETY?

It's as simple as buying different types of food every week.

### THAT'S IT.

I used to think it was important to fit as much variety as possible into each day. And then I was talking to a nutritionist friend about it and her approach was to look at the longer term.

Try and eat different foods over the period of a week or fortnight rather than stressing about multiple serves of fruit and vegetables each day.

# Module 3.  
**RESOURCES**



# PANTRY

# Checklist

Please don't go out and buy everything on this list. Just start with 1-2 items from each category.

## OILS

- good quality extra virgin olive oil
- cheaper extra virgin olive oil
- peanut oil or macadamia oil

## VINEGAR

- sherry OR red wine vinegar
- balsamic
- lemons

## CANNED THINGS

- tomatoes
- chickpeas
- beans – butter beans, cannellini, red kidney, black beans, adzuki beans
- lentils
- fish – tuna in oil, sardines
- chicken
- coconut milk.

## SPICES

- dried chilli flakes or chilli powder
- curry powder
- ground cumin
- ground coriander
- garam marsala – Indian spice blend
- smoked paprika

## JARS

- curry paste – Thai or Indian
- tomato pasta sauce (marinara sauce) or tomato paste
- tahini – ground sesame seeds
- vegetables – roast red peppers, grilled eggplant (aubergines)
- pesto
- vegemite – not for everyone
- peanut butter
- honey &/or maple syrup

## SAUCES

- mustard - dijon OR wholegrain
- soy sauce Or tamari
- mayonnaise
- ketchup ( tomato sauce )
- oyster and/or fish sauce.

## DRY GOODS

- lentils – red, puy or green lentils
- dried beans
- pasta / noodles / couscous / basmati rice (for the non-slow carbers)
- quinoa

## SEASONINGS

- sea salt flakes like Maldon,
- fine sea salt or kosher salt
- black peppercorns

## BAKING (OPTIONAL)

- flour – plain flour, bread flour (or gluten free flour)
- sugar – white sugar, brown sugar, stevia
- other – cocoa powder, baking powder, dried yeast
- chocolate – 70% cocoa solids

## NUTS

- almonds, pinenuts, hazelnuts, walnuts, brazil nuts pecans, cashews

## FRIDGE

- cheese – parmesan, ricotta, goats cheese, halloumi
- other dairy – butter, yoghurt, cream
- tofu
- miso paste

## FREEZER

- vegetables – frozen peas, broad beans, spinach
- fruit – berries for last minute berry sorbet
- other – puff pastry, bread (for the non-slow carbers)

# \* Module 3.

# 'TEMPLATE' RECIPES

- :: [Warm Legume Salad]
- :: [Super Slow Roast]
- :: [Poached Fish]
- :: [Steamed Greens]
- :: [Simple 'One Dish' Supper]
- :: [Hot & Fiery Curry]
- :: [Scrambled Eggs]
- :: [Cold Oil Chips (fries)]
- :: [Salt Crusted Burgers]
- :: [Classic 'Slaw]

warm legume salad



# WARM LEGUME SALAD

When the days draw shorter, I tend to favour warm salads for lunches and light dinners. Pretty much it's all about heating up the 'star' ingredients while you make a dressing.

per person

*1/2 tablespoon acid*

*1/2 can legumes, drained*

*handful cooked protein*

*small handful highlight ingredient, optional*

*large handful salad leaves*

1. Combine acid with 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil in a salad bowl. Season.
2. Meanwhile warm lentils, protein and possibly the highlight ingredient in a small frying pan on a medium heat. You may need to add a little oil.
3. Toss leaves in the dressing then toss in the warm ingredients. Top with highlight ingredient, if it wasn't added earlier.

## VARIATIONS

**acid** - Sherry vinegar, rice wine vinegar, lemon juice, lime juice, red/white wine vinegar, champagne vinegar.

**legumes** - butter beans, cannellini beans, borlotti beans, chickpeas, lentils, red kidney beans. Pretty much any canned legume or home cooked ones.

**highlight ingredient to warm** - roast beets, roast sweet potato, roast pumpkin, cooked mushrooms, grilled peppers, grilled eggplant.

**highlight ingredient to add cold** - nuts, finely sliced red onion chopped chilli, curry powder, smoked paprika, tabasco sauce, ground cumin, fennel seeds, coriander seeds, coriander (cilantro), basil, mint, parsley, oregano, chives, green onions, spring onion, thyme, pesto, hummus.

# WARM LEGUME SALAD...

## VARIATIONS *[continued]*

**cooked protein** - bacon, canned tuna, salmon, sardines, nuts, cooked chicken, smoked chicken, salami, prosciutto, cold roast meats, smoked salmon.

**salad leaves** - pretty much any washed salad leaves, torn into bite sized pieces if large.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

OK but nicer when warm.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**difficult to eat** - next time slice the protein and highlight ingredient into smaller pieces.

**too much dressing** - for now just transfer the whole salad to a clean bowl, leaving behind as much dressing as you can. Toss again to rub off dressing. Next time mix the dressing up in a small jar and gradually add to the salad.

**too dry** - either mix up some more dressing and drizzle over OR just drizzle over some more oil and acid separately as the italians do.

**too bland** - season with a little more salt & pepper.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

We tend to go for bowls.



super *slow* roast

# SUPER SLOW ROAST

Slow roasting is my preferred roasting method because it has a much bigger window of 'doneness' than a fast roast. Making it almost fool proof. The roast in the picture is a leg of lamb but vegetarians, there are plenty of options for you in the variations!

serves 4 or more

500g (1lb) vegetables, chopped  
1 joint of meat or 'roasting' veg  
1-2 tablespoons flavouring, optional  
1/2 cup liquid

1. Preheat oven to 150C (300F).
2. Place veg in a large casserole dish. Rub meat with extra virgin olive oil then sprinkle over the flavouring, if using. Season.
3. Place meat on top of the veg and add the liquid. Cover and roast for 4-5 hours or until the roast feels soft when pushed with your finger. Check after 4 hours and if the pot is drying out and another 1/2 cup water.

## VARIATIONS

**vegetables** - carrots, baby carrots, whole head garlic, onions, parsnips, potatoes, red capsicum (bell peppers), celeriac, fennel.

**joint of meat** - leg of lamb, shoulder of lamb, pork shoulder (depending on side increase cooking time to 5-6 hours), lamb neck, pork neck, beef shin, duck, whole chicken, beef short ribs, pork belly, osso buco, pork ribs.

**'roasting veg'** - butternut pumpkin (squash) cut in half lengthwise, portabello or field mushrooms (1-2 per person), 2 eggplant cut in half lengthwise. Check veg every hour. Should only take 1-2 hours total.

**flavouring** - secret spice blend <http://stonesoupvirtualcookeryschool.com/2011/12/secret-spice-blend/>, cumin seeds, coriander seeds, fennel seeds, rosemary, thyme, sage, smoked paprika, chilli flakes or powder (decrease to 2 teaspoons or less).

**liquid** - water, stock, white wine, red wine, champagne, tomato puree.



VIDEO

# SUPER SLOW ROAST...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Brilliant. Part of the joy of roasts is having leftovers for lunches!

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**tough meat** - keep cooking until you're happy. 5 hours usually does it but if your oven was a little 'slower' it may take 6-7 hours.

**too dry / burning** - it's a good idea to check in every few hours and add more water if the roast is drying out.

**dry meat** - if the meat is soft but feels dry, it means you've used a lean cut of meat. Slightly fattier cuts work better for roasting, I find. For now, make sure you serve a sauce on the side or drizzle the meat generously with a good peppery extra virgin olive oil.

**meat not browning** - if the meat is cooked but the colour isn't brown enough for you, remove the lid and cook for another 20 minutes to 1/2 hour to colour up.

**too bland** - season with salt & pepper. Next time use a better quality piece of meat.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Slice and serve the meat or roasting veg with the accompanying veg on the side and any pan juices poured over. Lovely with some braised greens or a green salad. A sauce of some sort can also be lovely. I love hummus or simply natural yoghurt seasoned with salt & pepper.



poached fish

# POACHED FISH

This is one of my favourite ways to 'extend' the shelf life of fresh fish. I poach the fish as soon as I get home from the markets, or at the latest the next day. It then keeps in the fridge for up to a week. Sometimes I use oil for poaching and other times just water spiked with a few flavouring ingredients.

per person

1 fish fillet

liquid, to cover

1-2 handfuls flavouring ingredients

1. Place fish in a saucepan large enough to hold them in a single layer. Cover with liquid and add flavouring ingredients.
2. Place on a medium low heat and gently cook for 5-10 minutes. Keep the temperature so the liquid stays below a gentle simmer.
3. When the fish is cooked, the colour will turn opaque and the flesh will feel firm and should flake when you touch with your finger.
4. Drain fish and serve immediately or refrigerate in the liquid.
5. To reheat either gently warm in the liquid over a low-medium heat. Or drain and rub with oil before searing in a hot pan or on the BBQ.

## VARIATIONS

**fish** - pretty much all fish can be poached in this way but unless you have a very large pot, I find fillets or cutlets to be the easiest to poach. I've used swordfish in the picture.

**liquid** - I either use an inexpensive olive oil or water. But you could consider using a fish broth or vegetable broth or dry white wine.

**flavourings - western** - anything that you'd use to make stock. Things like celery, carrots, garlic thyme, chopped tomatoes, mushrooms, parsley, lemon slices, fennel seeds.

**flavourings - asian** - the holy trinity of ginger, garlic and or chilli (fresh or dried), sliced lemon, sliced lime, kaffir lime leaves, curry leaves, mint, coriander (cilantro) leaves.

**other protein** - you could use other protein such as chicken, pork or beef. But I find poaching tends to remove too much flavour so I don't bother poaching except for fish and eggs.

**vegetarian** - try poached eggs instead.



# POACHED FISH...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Brilliant! Will keep in the fridge for up to a week.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**fish dry or falling apart** - either you've cooked it too quickly (at too high a temperature) OR you've cooked it for too long. For now just serve with a creamy sauce like mayo or aioli to moisten things up. Next time use a much lower heat and make sure your fish is covered completely in the liquid.

**flavour too 'fishy'** - different fish have different flavour strengths so next time try a different type. Fishy flavours and aromas also tend to increase with age so it's a sign your fish wasn't as fresh as it could be. A strong flavoured sauce can help the situation.

**too bland** - season with a little more salt & pepper. Consider using more flavouring ingredients next time.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

You can serve in the broth or without. And either keep it super simple with a wedge of lime or lemon or dress it up with a sauce. Mayonnaise or aioli is always great with fish. Harissa also works well. Or asian sauces such as soy or oyster sauce.

Also the fish can be flaked cold and used anywhere you'd use canned tuna or salmon. Brilliant in salads.

steamed greens



# STEAMED GREENS

Steamed greens are a brilliant side to have in your repertoire. Just as versatile as a classic green salad and perfect for the cooler months when you're looking for something more warming.

per person

*1/2 bunch greens*

*1-2 tablespoons sauce*

*splash of oil, optional*

1. Bring 2cm (1in) water to the boil in a large pot. Trim greens and chop into bite sized pieces.
2. Place a strainer or colander in the saucepan making sure the base isn't touching the water. Add greens and cover with a lid.
3. Simmer for 5-10 minutes or until greens are bright green and tender.
4. Transfer to a serving plate and drizzle over the sauce and oil, if using.

## VARIATIONS

**greens** - all Asian greens such as bok choy, pak choy, Chinese broccoli, asparagus, sugar snap peas, snow peas, spinach, kale, cavolo nero, broccoli, broccolini, warrigal greens.

**sauce** - oyster sauce, lemon juice, lime juice, soy sauce, hoisin sauce, sherry vinegar.

**oil** - for an Asian vibe try sesame oil, peanut oil or macadamia oil. For a more mediterranean feel try a peppery extra virgin olive oil.

**more substantial** - serve with some protein in the form of cooked lentils or beans, chickpeas, poached or boiled eggs, cooked chicken or fish, cheese such as parmesan, ricotta or goats cheese, or nuts.

**don't have anything you can steam in?** - then just simmer the greens in boiling salted water until tender (about 5 minutes) drain and drizzle with sauce. Technically, then they're 'boiled greens' but it can be our little secret.

**VIDEO**

# STEAMED GREENS...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

OK but nicer when super fresh.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**greens too crunchy** - next time slice the veg finer or chop them into smaller ribbons. Also, make sure you're not pushing down too hard on the veg if you're using a mandoline. It took me a while to discover that the less pressure you apply the finer your shaved veg.

**greens brown and lifeless** - either your greens weren't very fresh to begin with, or you've overcooked them. Next time check them earlier in the cooking process.

**too dry** - be more generous with the sauce and oil.

**too bland** - season with a little more sauce or get busy with the salt & pepper.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great as a side pretty much anywhere you feel like having some more veg.

simple 'one dish' supper



# SIMPLE 'ONE DISH' SUPPER

This recipe began life as a Nigel Slater-inspired simple sausage supper, but I've since expanded it way beyond the humble banger. It's one of those brilliant dishes that you just pop in the oven and it practically cooks itself.

per person

*1 aromatic vegetable*

*1 handful alternate vegetable*

*1 serve protein*

*1/2 cup liquid*

*small handful highlight ingredient*

1. Preheat oven to 200C (400F). Place both veg and the protein in a medium baking dish. Drizzle with olive oil.
2. Bake for 30 minutes uncovered.
3. Add the liquid and highlight ingredient. Turn the protein over.
4. Bake for another 15-30 minutes or until the protein is cooked and the vegetables are tender. If it looks like it's drying out too much add 1/4 cup water.

## VARIATIONS

**protein** - 1-2 sausages, I've used fresh chorizo in the picture. Chicken drumsticks or thighs, canned chickpeas or beans are a great veggie option. Or try tofu. Fish fillets will also work - since they cook quite quickly add them with the liquid instead of at the beginning.

**aromatic veg** - onions are my favourite but celery or carrots would be good instead.

**alternate vegetables** - parsnips, potato, sweet potato, pumpkin, brussels sprouts, fennel, zucchini, cabbage, beets, asparagus, broccoli, cauliflower, red capsicum (bell peppers).

**liquid** - water, chicken stock, vegetable stock, fish stock, white wine, red wine, tomato puree.

**highlight ingredient** - thyme, rosemary, garlic (whole cloves unpeeled add with the aromatic veg), chilli, spices such as fennel seeds, smoked paprika, cumin seeds, coriander seed, curry powder.



# SIMPLE 'ONE DISH' SUPPER...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Brilliant! Reheats really well. Great as a bake ahead dish and then just reheat in the oven, adding more liquid as needed.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland** - Season with salt & pepper.

**too dry** - add a little water, stir well in the dish to scrape up any lovely pan pieces and cook for another 5 minutes. Or just serve with a sauce (see suggestions below).

**burning** - the only trick is to make sure the pan doesn't dry out too much during the second stage of cooking. Keep an eye on it and if you think it's starting to burn, add more water 1/4 cup at a time.

**veggies too crunchy** - next time cut the veg into smaller pieces so they cook quicker.

**shriveled protein** - when sausages overcook they tend to go all wrinkly, next time cook them less, turn more often, or start the first stage of cooking with everything covered in foil.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

I like to plonk the tray in the middle of the table for everyone to help themselves. Sometimes I might knock up a side salad or some greens to go with. Sometime it's good to serve with a sauce like ketchup, harissa, mayo or hummus.



hot & fiery curry

# HOT & FIERY CURRY

Based loosely on a classic Indian 'vindaloo', this curry can be as hot or as mild as you like it. Beef is the classic meat used in a vindaloo but the fresh intense flavours are perfect for spicing up tofu or legumes or even good old chicken.

per person:

150g (5oz) protein, finely sliced

1/2 can tomatoes

1-3 long green chillies

1/2-1 tablespoon acid

for the spice paste per person:

1 tablespoon aromatics

1/4-1/2 bunch leafy herbs, optional

2 teaspoons curry powder

2 teaspoons ground cumin

1. Whizz the spice paste ingredients with 1 tablespoons oil in a food processor until you have a chunky puree.
2. Heat a few tablespoons olive oil in a large frying pan and stir-fry protein for a few minutes or until well browned all over. Remove from the pan and keep warm.
3. Add the spice paste to the pan and cook, stirring for about a minute or until the spice paste smells fragrant.
4. Add tomato, chilli and acid. Bring to a simmer. Cook gently for about 5 minutes or until the sauce has thickened slightly.
5. Return the protein and any juices to the pan and bring back to a simmer. Taste, season and serve hot.

## VARIATIONS

**protein** - tender cuts of meat such as beef fillet, pork fillet, lamb fillet or backstrap, chicken breasts or thighs, cooked or canned legumes (skip the browning step for legumes) beans, lentils, chickpeas, tofu, seitan, nuts esp cashews & almonds.

**chillies** - long green are my favourite but small red chillies will also work or try a teaspoon of chilli powder per person (less if you want a mild curry). Green capsicum (bell pepper) could be used instead of the chilli for a really mild curry.

**acid** - red wine vinegar is traditional (the 'vin' in vindaloo) but feel free to use other wine vinegars such as white wine or sherry vinegar or even champagne vinegar. Lemon or limes will also work.

**aromatics** - garlic, ginger or both.

**leafy herbs** - coriander (cilantro) is my favourite but parsley or mint could also be used. Herbs aren't critical here.

**tomato-free** - use 2/3 cup chicken or vegetable stock instead of the tomatoes.



# HOT & FIREY CURRY...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Brilliant! Will keep covered in the refrigerator for up to a week. Also freezes well.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**bitter** - if the spice paste gets burned, before you add the tomato, you'll get bitter flavours. Be careful at this step.

**tough protein** - either you used protein that was tough to begin with, or it was overcooked. Next time use a more tender cut and make sure you don't cook it for too long.

**too hot** - chillies vary considerably in their intensity. And people vary considerably in their sensitivity. Always err on the side of adding less chilli, you can always add more if you like, but it's hard to cool a curry down once it's cooked. For now serve with yoghurt and cucumber.

**not hot enough** - see above regarding chilli variability. Serve extra green chillies on the side or serve dried chilli powder or chilli flakes so your guests can adjust the heat level themselves.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**watery** - sounds like you haven't simmered the sauce for long enough. It only takes about ten minutes but without the simmering the sauce won't be very thick.

**bland** - if your spices are old, they may not have as much flavour. Next time add a little more spice or splurge on some fresh spices. Seasoning with salt and pepper is also important to optimise curry flavour.

**not sure which curry powder to use?** - I actually love good old Keens curry powder from the supermarket but you can use whatever you like. Try and seek out a good spice provider. A madras style powder would also work well here. Or try making your own using the [recipe over here].

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Serve with steamed rice or simple lentils and some natural yoghurt on the side.

scrambled eggs



# SCRAMBLED EGGS

For me the benchmark in scrambled eggs are the ones served at Bill's cafes in Sydney. The secret? Being generous with the cream and stirring as little as possible to get big soft creamy curds. So good!

per person

2-3 eggs

2-4 tablespoons cream

1-2 tablespoons butter

1. Break eggs into a small bowl and very lightly whisk. Add cream and whisk again. Season.
2. Place a small frypan (larger if cooking for more than one) on a medium high heat and allow butter to melt. If it sizzles really quickly, turn the heat down.
3. Add eggs and leaves for 20 seconds or until starting to set around the edges.
4. Gently fold the cooked egg from the edges into the middle and allow the runny egg to run out to the edges.
5. Leave for another 20 seconds then fold in the cooked egg again. When the egg looks mostly set, transfer to a serving plate. Remembering it's going to keep cooking with the residual heat.

## VARIATIONS

**vegetarian / vegan** - try scrambled tofu instead. Completely different recipe.

**dairy-free** - use oil instead of the butter and replace the cream with a little water.

**accompaniments** - lovely with chopped chives on top. Smoked salmon, bacon, mushrooms... all the usual breakfast suspects.



# SCRAMBLED EGGS...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Not great. Difficult to reheat without overcooking the eggs. Can be eaten cold though.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**eggs watery** - if the eggs look cooked but have watery liquid coming out the bottom, it means your eggs are overcooked. The protein has started to break down which causes it to lose water. It won't hurt you. Next time take the eggs off the heat sooner and remember that they'll continue to cook as they sit on the plate.

**eggs browning** - this means the pan was too hot to begin with and your butter started to brown. Next time use a lower heat or get the eggs in the pan sooner.

**eggs sticking to the pan** - a sign of a dodgy pan and not enough butter or oil I'm afraid.

**too bland** - eggs love seasoning so don't forget your salt and pepper.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

My favourite is with a side of baby spinach and cooked mushrooms. In the picture I've served with sliced curly kale. Great on toast.

*cold oil fries*



# COLD OIL FRIES

I used to have a fear of deep frying. And then I discovered this simple technique for making the most wonderful potato chips (fries).

per person

1 potato

oil to cover

1. Scrub potato and slice into your preferred chip shape. Pat dry with paper towel and place in a large saucepan.
2. Cover with oil and place over a medium high to high heat. Bring to an energetic simmer and let them cook away without touching them.
3. After 5-10 minutes when the chips start to go a little brown, you can give them a stir to remove any stuck to the bottom of the pan.
4. Continue to simmer rapidly until they're a good chip colour. 15-25 minutes all up.
5. Scoop out with a slotted spoon and drain briefly on a rack or cake cooler above a tray of paper towel.
6. Sprinkle generously with salt and eat asap.

## VARIATIONS

**potatoes** - floury varieties such as sebago, king edward or idaho are best for giving that super crisp exterior and fluffy centre. But that being said, waxy potatoes have great flavour. There's no reason why other root veg like sweet potato or parsnip wouldn't work. I just haven't tried.

**oil** - my current favourite oil for frying is rice bran oil. Peanut oil is also good. Anything that is stable at high temperatures (also called a 'high smoke point') is ideal. Avoid olive oil unless you like weird olivey flavoured chips.

**2 step frying** - if you prefer to make your chips in advance that can easily be done. Cook until the colour is only just starting to brown. Then remove from the oil and cool on a rack. When you're ready to reheat, cook in hot oil until they go a deeper golden colour.



# COLD OIL FRIES...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

OK if you like cold chips. See the '2 step' process above if you'd like to cook ahead of time.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland** - season with salt & pepper. Next time try a different variety of potato.

**falling apart** - probably a sign that you've tried to stir them too early, before they start to form a crust. Next time resist the urge until you're sure they're starting to brown.

**burning** - the colour can go from pale golden to burnt surprisingly quickly. Make sure you keep a close watch on them.

**greasy** - if the temperature doesn't rise quickly enough the chips can go a little soggy. Next time use a more aggressive heat.

**undercooked inside** - either you've cut the chips too fat or the temperature was too high so the outsides cooked before the heat reached the middles.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

I love them with lots of sea salt and a good quality mayo on the side. Great anywhere you'd normally have chips.

salt *crusted* burgers



# SALT CRUSTED BURGERS

It's hard to go past a good burger. I like to keep it simple by just using good quality beef mince (ground beef) and cooking them on a bed of salt to give a delicious meaty crust.

per person

*200g - 225g (7-8oz) minced (ground) meat*

1. Heat a frying pan or skillet on a super high heat for at least 3 minutes. You want it smoking hot.
2. Meanwhile shape meat into burger patties.
3. Sprinkle a very 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. Once the burgers are turned, cook for another 4 minutes or until burgers are how you like them.

## VARIATIONS

**meat** - beef is of course the classic. But buffalo, lamb, pork, chicken or turkey are all good. Just make sure there's a bit of fat so they aren't too dry.

**vegetarian** - see my favourite [veggie burger recipe].

**to serve on a burger bun** - halve the amount of meat per person and make a thinner burger. Cook for just 2-3 minutes each side.



# SALT CRUSTED BURGERS...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

The burgers will keep in the fridge for a few days. Reheat gently in a pan before serving.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland** - season with salt & pepper or serve with a well flavoured sauce such as ketchup or BBQ sauce.

**too salty** - cooking burgers on a salt crust this way, you need to be careful not to add too much salt. Next time use less, for now try scraping off the salty outer crust. Also make sure you don't add salt to the meat when forming the patties – there will be enough seasoning from the crust.

**too dry** - next time try and use meat with a higher fat content.

**burgers burning** - cooking the burgers over a very high heat like this, you need to make sure they aren't too thick, otherwise the middle won't be cooked and the outside will be burned.

**burgers undercooked** - again its important to make sure you make your burger thin enough so it will cook in a few minutes. If you're unsure whether they're cooked enough or not, cut into the burgers with a knife to have a look. With practice you'll learn when they're done but for now the best way to know is to look!

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great with ketchup, fries and a green salad or 'slaw



classic 'slaw

# CLASSIC 'SLAW

It took me a while to come around to the whole 'slaw thing but now I'm a raving fan. I love how it acts as part salad and part creamy sauce. Using the lemon juice here helps lighten the salad.

per person

*2 tablespoons whole egg mayonnaise*

*1 tablespoon acid*

*1/4 white cabbage*

*1/2 carrot, grated, optional*

*1/4 bunch leafy herbs, optional*

1. Combine mayonnaise and acid in a large bowl. Season with salt & pepper.
2. Remove tough core from the cabbage then finely shave the cabbage using a sharp knife and a steady hand or a mandoline.
3. Toss cabbage in the mayonnaise mixture along with the carrot and parsley leaves, if using.



## VARIATIONS

**acid** - I like lemon juice best. But sherry vinegar, rice vinegar or other wine vinegars will also work.

**vegan / egg-free** - use vegan mayonnaise or replace with extra virgin olive oil. Add a tablespoon of dijon mustard to make the dressing creamy.

**egg-free** - see the vegan option or use natural yoghurt instead of the mayo. Coconut milk could also be used but will give a completely different vibe.

**cabbage alternatives** - other cabbage such as red, chinese, witlof (belgian endive), broccoli (then call it brocco-slaw), cauliflower, zucchini, fennel, kohlrabi.

**carrot alternatives** - zucchini, broccoli, cauliflower, red capsicum (bell pepper), raw beets, radish.

**herbs** - parsley, mint or cilantro (coriander) are my 3 favs. But it's delish without.

**more substantial** - toss in a handful of cooked protein as per the smoked chicken in the photo above.

# CLASSIC 'SLAW...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Brilliant! Will keep in the fridge for up to a week.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**mayonnaise splitting or curdling** - if you've used homemade mayo or your mayo isn't as fresh as it should be, the lemon juice may cause it to split – next time use fresher mayo.

**bland** - make sure you're generous with the salt and it may need a little more lemon juice if you like it sharp.

**too creamy** - sounds like you've got too much mayo. Get a clean bowl and scoop the salad out leaving as much excess dressing behind as you can. Transfer to the new bowl and toss. A squeeze of lemon can help overcome excess creaminess.

**hard to eat** - if the cabbage isn't cut finely enough, it can be a bit difficult to eat – next time spend a bit more time chopping.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Serve as a side salad / sauce with BBQ meat or chicken or grilled halloumi. Also lovely with fish – actually any protein is good here. The mayonnaise makes it part salad part sauce. I love it with a simple steak.

# ✝ WEEK 3. DAILY UPDATES

PLANNING & SHOPPING **VIDEO**  
DAY 11. ALMOST MEATLESS MONDAY  
DAY 12. HOW TO KEEP FISH 'FRESH'  
FOR MORE THAN A FEW DAYS  
DAY 13. A SIMPLE BAKED SUPPER  
DAY 14. I FEEL LIKE CURRY TONIGHT!  
DAY 15. JUNK FOOD FRIDAY

**WEEK 3.  
DAY 11.  
ALMOST  
MEATLESS  
MONDAY**

The thing about having meatless Monday is sometimes I forget!

Case in point today's lunch. With some lovely leftover roast lamb in the fridge from Sunday night, I didn't even think and just made us a salad for lunch with a little lamb in it. Delicious but would have been just as lovely without.

**BREAKFAST**

Natural yoghurt with blackberries, oat bran & cashews

**LUNCH**

:: Warm salad of roast beets, lentils & roast lamb\*  
also known as...

:: [Warm legume salad]\*

**DINNER**

:: Leftover [Layered veggie & ricotta bake]

:: [Classic green salad] with some shaved parmesan.



*fried eggs with avocado*

**RECIPE**



tuna & sugar snap pea salad

**RECIPE**

# WEEK 3. DAY 12. HOW TO KEEP FISH 'FRESH' FOR MORE THAN A FEW DAYS



Where I live, fresh fish is pretty hard to come by. The closest fish shop is over an hours drive away. So one of the things I struggle with is ways to include more fish in our diet.

When I do make a trip to the markets I like to pick up some fish for dinner that night. And that used to be all the fish we'd get apart from canned tuna and salmon.

And then I discovered a 'trick' for keeping fish 'fresh' for more than a few days. Basically it's just applying one of the principles we've covered this week in how to maximise the life of fresh ingredients.

When I get the fish home (or the next day at the latest), I poach it in either oil or water. It then keeps in the fridge until I'm ready to reheat gently in the poaching liquid OR give it a quick sear in a hot pan to warm it up. Et voila! 'Fresh' fish later in the week.

## BREAKFAST

:: [Fried eggs], avocado & some leftover roast chilli harissa (pictured over)

## LUNCH

:: Tuna & sugar snap pea salad with mustard dressing  
also known as...

:: [Raw veg lunch salad]\*

## DINNER

Rather than the usual 'Tuesday Stir Fry' I'm mixing things up a little tonight. Still having an Asian vibe, but with steamed Chinese broccoli and fish that I poached on Saturday.

:: Poached swordfish with chilli & lime  
also known as...

:: [Poached fish]\*

:: Steamed Chinese broccoli with oyster sauce  
also known as...

:: [Steamed greens]\*

# WEEK 3. DAY 13. A SIMPLE BAKED SUPPER

Today's dinner is one of my favourites for cooler weather. It's a simple 'one dish' baked supper where we just pop some veg and protein in a baking dish and roast everything for about 45 minutes. And that's it.

You've gotta love a dinner that practically cooks itself!

## BREAKFAST

:: [Green smoothie], with kale this time  
(pictured over)

## LUNCH

A bit of a preview into how I use up leftovers. More to come on this next week!

For me:

:: Leftover [creamy curry] on top of a green salad.  
(pictured over)

For my Irishman:

:: Leftover [Layered veggie & ricotta bake]

## DINNER

:: Baked chorizo with onion & brussels sprouts  
also known as...

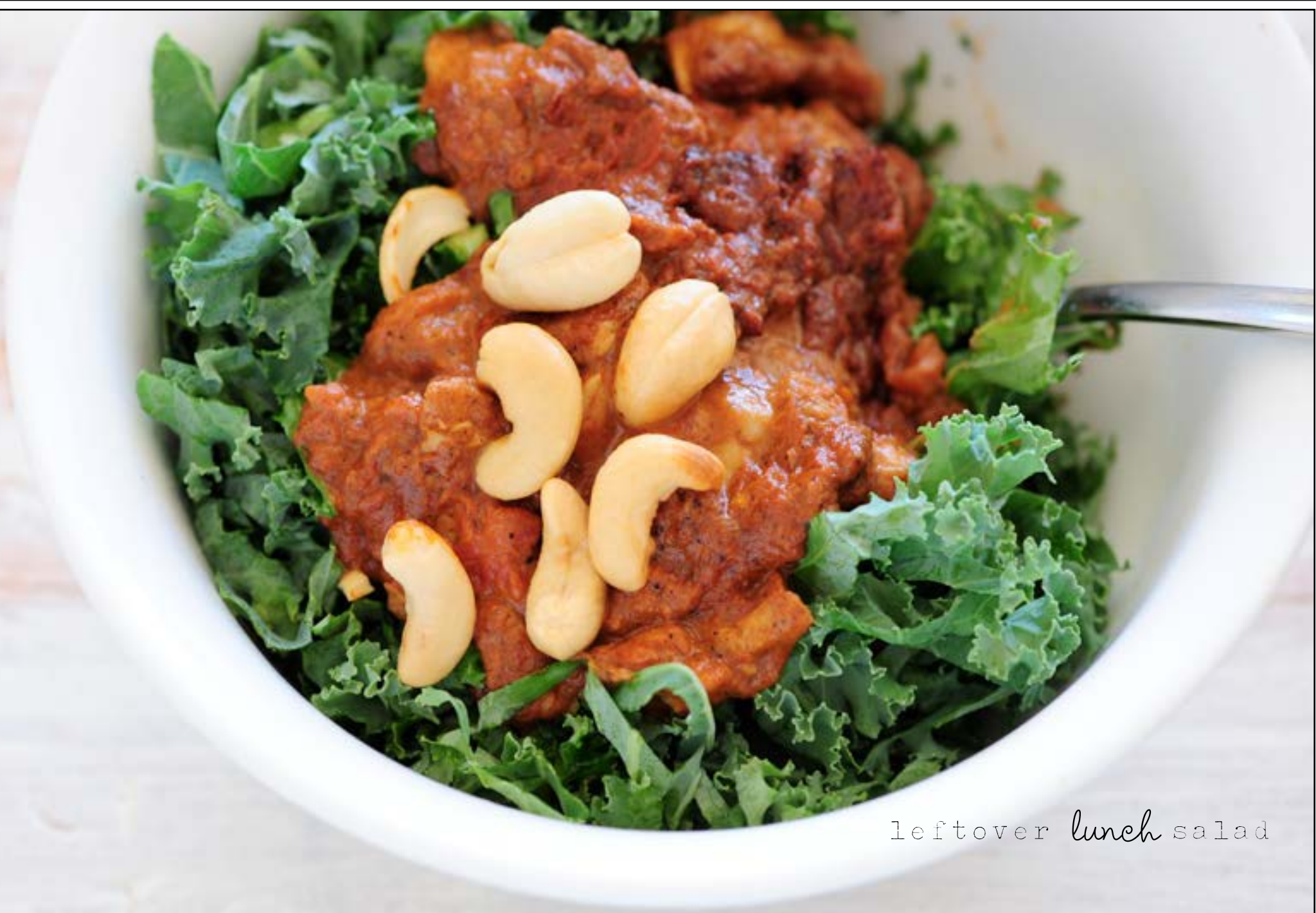
:: [Simple 'one dish' supper]





green smoothie with kale

**RECIPE**



leftover lunch salad

**WEEK 3.  
DAY 14.  
I FEEL LIKE  
CURRY  
TONIGHT!**



Another good example of how to adapt when plans change. I forgot that I'd invited my friend Paula over for dinner tonight and had already decided to cook a beef curry with some steamed bok choy on the side.

Since we're now having 3 for dinner I'm turning the bok choy into a separate stir fry with cashews, garlic and ginger and I'll cook up a batch of quinoa to serve as a 'slow carb' alternative to rice.

### **BREAKFAST**

Out for breakkie today. Had some really lovely mushrooms with poached eggs. Watch this space for a mushroom recipe!

### **LUNCH**

:: Quick broccoli soup with parmesan cheese (pictured over).  
also known as...  
:: [Smooth veggie soup]

### **DINNER**

:: Beef vindaloo curry  
also known as...  
:: [Hot & fiery curry]

:: Stir fry of bok choy & cashews (picture over).  
also known as...  
:: [A quick stir fry]

:: [Cooked quinoa] with a few cardamom pods in the cooking water.

A top-down view of a white ceramic bowl filled with a vibrant green broccoli soup. The soup is garnished with a dusting of brown, toasted breadcrumbs. To the right of the bowl, a silver spoon rests on a light-colored, textured linen napkin. The entire scene is set on a light-colored wooden surface. The text 'broccoli soup' is written in a cursive font in the upper right, and 'RECIPE' is written in bold white letters on a red brushstroke background below it.

broccoli soup

**RECIPE**

bok choy & cashew stir fry

**RECIPE**



**WEEK 3.  
DAY 15.  
'JUNK' FOOD  
FRIDAY!**

Very excited about a leisurely weekend at home. Hoping to get into the garden and pull out my dismal tomato plants and make a batch of my Gran's green tomato pickles.

We often kick off the weekend with a little 'fancy' home made junk food. Tonight it's burgers and chips (fries).

**BREAKFAST**

:: [Scrambled eggs] with shredded kale

**LUNCH**

:: Salad of shredded witlof (Belgian endive) with radicchio & leftover roast lamb (pictured over)  
also known as...

:: [Raw veg lunch salad]

**DINNER**

:: [Salt crusted burgers] with homemade ketchup [from our preserves class]

:: [Cold oil chips (fries)]

:: [Classic 'slaw]

**VIDEO**



raw veg lunch salad

**RECIPE**

\* WEEK 4.  
AVOIDING WASTE PT 2.  
LEFTOVER INGREDIENTS  
& MEALS

**VIDEO**

# Module 4.

VIDEO

# MINIMIZING WASTE

# THE NUMBER 1 TIP FOR BUYING THE BEST FRUIT & VEG

Half the battle in being a good cook is procuring great ingredients. The other half is looking after them, but that's another story. We've already covered a heap of detail on how to shop for the best fruit and veg in other classes. So if you'd like more detail... explore the links below.

## **SO WHAT'S MY NUMBER 1 TIP FOR BUYING THE BEST FRUIT & VEG?**

Easy. It's all about finding a good supplier and building a relationship with them.

That could be at your local farmers market, your local green grocer, or some sort of co-op. Supermarkets tend to be a bit more difficult to build a relationship with in the traditional sense, but if the supermarket is your only option, taking the time to pay attention to their stocking and discounting habits can still make a difference.

## **WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT?**

A good supplier takes all the guess work out of shopping for produce. If everything they stock is great quality, it removes the need for you to worry about avoiding the dodgy specimens. Simplifying your shopping and ensuring you're buying the best.

When I saw Rene Redzepi speak in Melbourne recently, he spent more than half his talk telling stories about his suppliers and how he has built relationships over the years. And that this is one of the keys to the success of his restaurant Noma, currently ranked Number 1 restaurant in the world. There are side benefits as well. It makes shopping more personal. And more fun!

## **FROM PREVIOUS CLASSES:**

- :: [10 tips for choosing the best fresh veggies]
- :: [Seasonality and vegetables]

# EASY STORAGE TECHNIQUES TO MAXIMISE THE LIFE OF FRESH PRODUCE

When it comes to healthy eating, it isn't an understatement to say that veggies and fresh produce play a super important role. But choosing, storing and preparing fresh produce can be a little daunting. And it can be quite expensive. So it's important to get it right.

Pretty much every major class here at The Stonesoup Virtual Cookery School includes a module on fresh veg.

In previous classes, I've gone into great detail about the ideal storage temperatures for each vegetable. I've also explained the role of ethylene gas in the ripening and shelf life of fresh produce. But thinking about it now, I may have been over complicating the message.

## SO HERE'S A SIMPLIFIED SYSTEM FOR VEG STORAGE.

### 1. If in doubt keep them in the fridge

Most chemical reactions slow down at cooler temperatures. Same with micro-organism growth.

So in general cooler = longer shelf life.

There are, of course, exceptions. I store the following at room temperature, in the pantry, preferable in a dark place:

- :: potatoes (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 (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.
- :: anything that is under-ripe

# EASY STORAGE TECHNIQUES TO MAXIMISE THE LIFE OF FRESH PRODUCE

*[continued]*

Interestingly, my brother gave me his big flashy fridge last year, and I've noticed my veg are lasting significantly longer in the new fridge than in our tiny old fridge.

## **2. Use the veg crisper OR store in plastic bags**

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 know yourself, if you leave a lettuce in the fridge uncovered, it will wilt pretty quickly.

The solution is to make the most of the crisper section of the fridge – and have it set to the 'veg' storage setting.

I also tend to keep my veg wrapped in plastic bags as extra protection.

## **3. Don't worry about ethylene**

As I mentioned above, in previous classes I've included a list of veg and whether they are sensitive to ethylene or not. And the thing is, in a home environment when you're storing small amount of a wide range of veg, it doesn't make that much of a difference.

And to be honest I hardly even think about it.

The only tip I have, is that bananas produce lots of ethylene gas as they ripen. And ethylene can speed up the ripening process in other produce. So if you have something like an avocado that you want to ripen quickly, just pop it in a paper bag with a ripe banana and it will happen in no time.

# THE 3 MAJOR CAUSES OF FOOD SPOILAGE

To maximise the life of our fresh produce, it can be really helpful to understand what causes food to spoil. If we're aware of the potential problems, we're much more likely to be able to prevent or delay spoilage than we are without any knowledge. So without making you take a degree in food science, here are the 3 major causes of spoilage to keep in mind.

## 1. MICRO ORGANISMS

Including bacteria, yeast, moulds & fungi. Microbes are the biggest concern from a food safety perspective because they can make us ill and in extreme cases cause death.

Heat is one of the most common methods of killing microbes. High sugar or salt environments (or low moisture) such as in jams or salted foods also prevent microbes from growing. High acid (low pH), as in pickles, is another way to control microbes.

The good news is that the growth of moulds or fungi can be used as a visual indicator that food is going bad.

## 2. ENZYMES

Enzymes are chemicals that speed up reactions. They can be naturally occurring in food or can be produced from microbes.

The benefits of some enzymes is that they can help us digest our food but they can also lead to spoilage. To deactivate enzymes and prevent spoilage, some sort of exposure to heat is the quickest and easiest solution.

## 3. OXYGEN

Oxidation is the technical term for the browning that happens when you leave the cut surface of an apple exposed to the air. It's more of a loss of quality problem, rather than a safety issue. The enzymes or chemicals which promote browning are slowed down by acid and destroyed by heat. Providing a barrier to the oxygen by sealing in a jar or covering with water also helps.

# 6 QUICK AND EASY WAYS TO 'PRESERVE' FOOD AT HOME, WITHOUT TURNING INTO A 'NANNA'

When we think of 'preserves' it tends to evoke images of busy kitchens filled with vast steaming pots and masses of jars ready to be filled.

While that may be the case for jam making, the act of preservation need not be either time consuming or involve large quantities.

## WHAT IS FOOD PRESERVATION?

It's simply any process which helps to prolong the shelf life of ingredients.

On one end there is the field of classic preserves like jam making. These have been covered in the [Preserve Like Your Nanna class]. So if you're interested in larger scale preserving I recommend having a look at the class.

For now, we're more interested in the quick techniques you can use at home to increase the life of your produce, without turning yourself into a grey haired, apron-wearing 'Nanna'.

## 6 QUICK AND EASY WAYS TO 'PRESERVE' FOOD AT HOME

### 1. 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]

# 6 QUICK AND EASY WAYS TO 'PRESERVE' FOOD AT HOME, WITHOUT TURNING INTO A 'NANNA'

*[continued]*

## 2. 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.

The most important thing to be aware of with refrigeration is that the air in your fridge is very dry. So if food is left uncovered it can dehydrate and spoil in that way. So to make the most of your fridge, ensure you keep everything covered, in containers, or wrapped in plastic bags or al foil.

A good experiment to demonstrate is to put a stalk of celery in the fridge uncovered and put another next to it wrapped in plastic or foil and watch the changes over time.

## 3. Heating

When it comes to destroying two of the biggest causes of food spoilage: microbes and enzymes, high temperatures are the most effective.

So if you have a piece of fish or meat that you aren't going to eat in time, simply exposing it to heat – pan frying or poaching say, will deactivate any enzymes and heavily reduce the microbes. This means it will last for another week or more in the fridge. Same goes for fresh veg. Once cooked, they will last much longer.

Cooked food can also benefit from a little heat treatment. If I have a soup or stew or some cooked lentils that have been hanging around the fridge for a while and getting a bit 'iffy'. I'll just bring them up to a boil for a few minutes then pop them back in the fridge. This brings the microbe population back to a low level and prolongs the life of my cooked food.

## 4. 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.

# 6 QUICK AND EASY WAYS TO 'PRESERVE' FOOD AT HOME, WITHOUT TURNING INTO A 'NANNA'

*[continued]*

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.

## **5. 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.

## **6. 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.

## **A FINAL REMINDER**

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!

It comes back to making sure you have 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. Note-to-self...a little extra 'freezer inspection' would be helpful as well.

# 6 TIPS TO MAKE LEFTOVERS LAST

When it comes to the factors that make leftovers go bad, we're dealing with 2 of the same culprits that attack our fresh ingredients. Namely microbes and oxygen.

Since leftovers have usually been 'cooked' in some way, enzymes aren't generally much of a concern.

The good news is we also have the same weapons in our arsenal to hold the microbes and oxygen at bay for as long as we need. If you need a refresher on these techniques, head back over here.

So here are 6 tips specifically targeted towards keeping leftovers as long as possible.

## **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.

## **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 TO MAKE LEFTOVERS LAST

*[continued]*

### **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, rather than thinking 'too hard'.

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, rather than whatever you get from the supermarket.

# 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!

## **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.

# 11 FUN IDEAS FOR 'REINVENTING' LEFTOVERS

*[continued]*

## **4. The leftover leafy salad.**

Make a classic green salad and turn it into a meal by scattering over your leftovers, that have been chopped into bite sized pieces, if needed. Works with either cold leftovers or warm them up for a lovely warm salad.

## **5. The 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 leftover 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 bite sized pieces). Instant divinely warming soup.

# 11 FUN IDEAS FOR 'REINVENTING' LEFTOVERS

*[continued]*

## **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.

## **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.

We'll cover more on this in Week 5 when we discuss flavour profile templates and common flavour pairings.

## **11. 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 or mashed potato and it takes on an Irish vibe.

# COMMON LEFTOVER INGREDIENTS. HOW TO KEEP THEM FRESH & CREATIVE IDEAS FOR USING THEM UP.

The easiest way to use up leftover ingredients is to remember to get them out of the pantry or fridge and just include them in your cooking.

You'll find as you move to creating your own dishes based on template recipes, you'll be more likely to reach for what you have rather than the ingredients that the recipe demands.

That shift in itself will make a massive difference to the amount of annoying leftover dribs and drabs that end up accumulating in your fridge.

## **SALAD LEAVES / MESCULUN**

Tends to be the most perishable of all veg. When it's packed in sealed bags, they often use 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.

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.

Great ways 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.

# COMMON LEFTOVER INGREDIENTS. HOW TO KEEP THEM FRESH & CREATIVE IDEAS FOR USING THEM UP.

*[continued]*

## 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'll cover classic flavour combinations for spices next week. 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

## 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.

# COMMON LEFTOVER INGREDIENTS. HOW TO KEEP THEM FRESH & CREATIVE IDEAS FOR USING THEM UP.

*[continued]*

## CELERY

Also 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. My Mum used to have a tupperware 'celery' container which did a similar job.

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 its 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.

# COMMON LEFTOVER INGREDIENTS. HOW TO KEEP THEM FRESH & CREATIVE IDEAS FOR USING THEM UP.

*[continued]*

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.

## 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.

# COMMON LEFTOVER INGREDIENTS. HOW TO KEEP THEM FRESH & CREATIVE IDEAS FOR USING THEM UP.

*[continued]*

## 'EXOTIC' INGREDIENTS

Two options for figuring out how to use up your 'orange blossom water' or pomegranate molasses. 1. Just 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.

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, as a tiny bit sprinkled or grated over just before serving can add interest without requiring a large amount of cheese.

# COMMON LEFTOVER INGREDIENTS. HOW TO KEEP THEM FRESH & CREATIVE IDEAS FOR USING THEM UP.

*[continued]*

## 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.

## 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 give 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.

# Module 4.  
**RESOURCES**

# SEASONAL PRODUCE

# Cheat Sheet

**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. Here's my list of seasonal and not-so-season-sensitive (or 'year round') veg.**

## SUMMER VEG

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

## AUTUMN (FALL) VEG

- § pumpkin [squash]
- § wild mushrooms

## WINTER VEG

- § 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

## YEAR ROUND 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]

*NOTE:*

*season in brackets denotes traditional 'season' for these veg*

# # Module 4.

# 'TEMPLATE' RECIPES

- :: ['Kettle' Soup]
- :: [Real Veggie Burgers]
- :: [Baked Frittata]
- :: [One Pot Chilli]
- :: [Sauteed Veggies]
- :: [Mashed Veggies]
- :: [Simple Braised Supper]
- :: [Ketchup 'Baked' Legumes]
- :: [Chunky Veg Soup]
- :: [Herb & Nut Sauce]
- :: [Kebabs with Sauce]



*'kettle' soup*

# 'KETTLE' SOUP

Which foods work well in 'kettle soups'? Basically anything that doesn't require much heat to cook it. Perfect for work lunches or when you're travelling and feel like making a healthy meal in your hotel room rather than eating out or having room service again. Great for using up little leftovers in the fridge.

per person

120g (4oz) bulky ingredient

handful veg 1, chopped

handful veg 2, chopped

1/2 - 1 teaspoon flavour for the liquid

small handful flavour highlight

1. Boil the kettle.
2. Place bulky ingredient, vegetables, and flavour for the liquid in a heatproof container, preferably with a lid.
3. Fill your containers with boiling water. Top with the lids and stand for 2 minutes, or longer if you prefer your veg less crunchy.
4. Scatter over flavour highlight. Taste & adjust seasoning if necessary.

## VARIATIONS

**'bulky' ingredient** - cooked quinoa, cooked or canned lentils, beans or chickpeas, cooked rice, cooked pasta, instant noodles, cooked noodles, steamed or cooked starchy veg such as sweet potato, potato, pumpkin. Couscous (use half the amount since it is dry and will absorb lots of moisture). Chopped tofu.

**veg 1 and 2** - any veg that will cook in the hot water or that you're happy to eat raw. Baby spinach, red capsicum (bell peppers), broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, snow peas, sugar snap peas, frozen peas (defrosted first), cherry tomatoes, roast pumpkin, roast sweet potato, sun dried tomatoes, asparagus, shaved brussels sprouts.

**flavour for the liquid** - soy sauce, vegetable or chicken stock cubes or bullion powder, instant dashi, ground cumin, ground coriander, curry powder.

**flavour highlight** - cheese especially parmesan or goats cheese, nuts, pesto, mayonnaise, natural yoghurt, seeds, hummus, cooked meat, or fish, salami, smoked salmon.



# 'KETTLE' SOUP..

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep in the fridge for a week or so. Warm up in the microwave or in a small saucepan on the stove top.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too watery** - next time use a smaller container. For now, you could top up the flavourings with a little more of the 'flavour for the liquid'.

**too bland** - season with a little more salt or soy sauce.

**not filling enough** - increase the amount of 'bulky' ingredient.

**not warm enough** - reheat in a microwave. Next time 'prewarm' the container by filling with boiling water and emptying before proceeding as per the recipe.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great as a super quick lunch or dinner on its own.



real *veggie* burgers

# REAL VEGGIE BURGERS

I'm super excited about these burgers! Use them anywhere you'd normally use a burger patty. OR serve on a bed of baby spinach with some natural yoghurt as in the photo above.

per person

125g (6oz) vegetables, grated

40g (1.5oz) ground almonds

1/2 an egg

1. Combine veggies, almonds and egg in a large bowl. Season and using your hands form into 2 patties and place on a large plate.
2. Heat a pan on a medium heat. Add a little oil and carefully slide the burgers into the pan.
3. Cook for 3-4 minutes on each side, being super careful when you turn because the burgers do have a tendency to fall apart. Burgers are done when they're a deep golden brown colour on both sides.

## VARIATIONS

**vegetables** - needs to be something that will cook quickly. Feel free to use a mixture of veg. Zucchini, broccoli, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, zucchini, cabbage, asparagus, red capsicum (bell peppers), corn, peas.

**nut-free** - replace the almond meal with canned chickpeas - mashed with a fork. OR use fresh breadcrumbs.

**egg-free** - the egg is really critical here, so don't be tempted to substitute egg replacers.

**higher protein** - replace half the vegetables with cooked lentils, chickpeas, beans or quinoa.



# REAL VEGGIE BURGERS...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep in the fridge for a week or more. Can be difficult to reheat without them falling apart.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**burgers burning** - keep an eye on the temperature, it's easy to cook the burgers too quickly so they over brown before the middles have a chance to cook through.

**burgers falling apart** - if the burger isn't cooked for long enough on the first side to form a crust, it will crumble when you try to turn it. Next time make sure the burger has started to form a crust before attempting to move it.

**bland** - remember to season the burgers well before forming into patties. A little salt sprinkled over the finished burgers will help.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Use them anywhere you'd normally use a burger patty. OR serve on a bed of baby spinach with some natural yoghurt as in the photo above.



baked *frittata*

# BAKED FRITTATA

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.

serves 2:

2 handfuls ingredient 1  
1 handful ingredient 2, optional  
4 eggs, lightly beaten  
handful highlight ingredient

1. Preheat oven to 200C (400F) and place a baking tray on the middle shelf.
2. Line a 20cm (8in) springform pan with baking paper & grease generously with olive oil. Or grease a small oven-proof frying pan.
3. Place ingredients 1 and 2, if using in the prepared tin. Pour over the beaten egg & scatter over the highlight ingredient. Season.
4. Place on the preheated tray and bake until golden and puffy and the centre feels firm and springy, 10-15 minutes.



## VARIATIONS

**ingredient 1** - cooked or canned beans, lentils or chickpeas. Cooked veg such as potato, sweet potato, pumpkin and parsnip. Wilted greens, cooked zucchini, steamed broccoli, steamed broccolini, steamed cauliflower. Cooked pasta, rice or other grains.

**ingredient 2** - sun dried tomatoes, artichoke hearts, sweet corn kernels, asparagus, bacon, salami, prosciutto, smoked chicken, cooked chicken, cold roast meats, smoked salmon, cooked sliced or crumbled sausages, sliced chorizo, leftover roast veg, roast beets, red capsicum (bell peppers)

**highlight ingredient - cheese** - especially parmesan, goats cheese, ricotta, taleggio, cheddar.

**highlight ingredient - herbs** - rosemary, sage, thyme. Add leafy herbs such as basil, mint or parsley after the frittata is cooked.

**highlight ingredient - other** - pinenuts, toasted bread crumbs, chilli flakes or powder, preserved lemon slices, olives.

**larger frittata** - use 8 eggs and a 28cm (10in) pan to serve 4. Increase baking time slightly. Around 20 minutes.

# BAKED FRITTATA...

## VARIATIONS *[continued]*

**pure 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.

## 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.

## 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 springform 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.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great on its own. Or with a green salad or wilted greens. Also good sliced and served as a sandwich filling.



one *pot* chilli

# ONE POT CHILLI

For an inexpensive, warming supper it's hard to go past a good chilli. If you're feeding vegetable-phobics, it's a good opportunity to sneak some extras in. Just finely grate the veg rather than chop so they are easier to disguise.

per person

125g (4oz) vegetables, diced

125g (4oz) ground protein

1/2 can tomatoes

1/4 - 1/2 can beans

1/2 - 1 teaspoon chilli flakes or powder

1. Heat a few glugs of oil in a saucepan. Cook veg on a medium heat for about 5 minutes or until softened.
2. Add protein and increase the heat to high. Cook, stirring to break up any lumps for about 5 minutes or until the protein is no longer pink.
3. Add tomatoes, beans and chilli. Simmer gently for at least 15 minutes or for 30-40 minutes if you have time. You're looking for the sauce to reduce a little and for the flavours to combine.
4. Taste and season, adding a little more chilli if it needs it.

## VARIATIONS

**vegetables** - onions would probably be my first choice. But also consider zucchini, carrots, celery, red capsicum (bell peppers), sweet potato, pumpkin (winter squash).

**ground protein** - I've used ground beef but buffalo, lamb, pork, veal, chicken or turkey could all be used. For vegetarians use cooked or canned green or brown lentils. If using cooked red lentils add them at the end so they don't overcook in the sauce.

**beans** - red kidney beans are traditional but feel free to mix it up with cannellini, black beans, borlotti beans, adzuki, butter beans or even chickpeas. Feel free to use home cooked beans instead (1 can drained is about 250g or 1/2 lb).

**canned tomato alternatives** - water, chicken stock, vegetable stock, tomato puree.

**chilli** - I like dried chilli flakes but powdered chilli is good. Experiment with different varieties of chilli. For a milder chilli try using ancho chillies.



# ONE POT CHILLI...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Brilliant! Reheats really well. And one of those dishes that improves with age. Also freezes well.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too hot** - chilli varies quite a bit in heat levels. Next time add less. But for now, stir in a little olive oil for richness or serve with natural yoghurt.

**too watery** - simmer for a little longer to help the sauce reduce down.

**too bland?** - add in a little more salt and pepper. Or some tomato paste.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Lovely with a green salad on the side. Or some fresh coriander (cilantro) leaves for some greenery. Parsley is good too.

You could serve with bread, tortillas, rice or cauliflower rice to soak up the sauce. Also consider serving sour cream or natural yoghurt to cool any inflamed taste buds. A little extra chilli on the side is good for any hot heads.

*sauteed veggies*



# SAUTEED VEGGIES

'Saute' is the French term for pan frying in a little butter or oil. It's a delicious way to cook veggies quickly, especially sliced mushrooms as in the photo.

per person

*1-2 tablespoons butter, optional*

*1 large handful veggies, chopped or sliced*

*1 teaspoon flavouring, optional*

*splash of seasoning, optional*

1. Heat a frypan on a high heat. Add butter, if using, and a little oil.
2. Add veggies and flavouring, if using, and cook, stirring often for about 5 minutes or until the veg are browned and tender. Reduce the heat if the veg start to burn.
3. Remove from the heat. Add seasoning or just season with salt & pepper.

## VARIATIONS

**dairy-free** - skip the butter and increase your oil.

**veggies** - all mushrooms. Especially large field or portabello mushrooms. Carrots, broccoli, zucchini, cabbage, brussels sprouts, parsnip, red capsicum (bell peppers), asparagus, fennel, cauliflower. Harder veg will take longer to cook - more like 10-15 minutes.

**flavouring** - finely sliced garlic, fresh or dried chilli, rosemary, thyme, oregano.

**seasoning** - soy sauce, vinegar (sherry, rice vinegar, red wine vinegar, white wine vinegar), lemon juice, miso paste, fish sauce.



VIDEO

# SAUTEED VEGGIES...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Brilliant! Reheats really well. Great to make a large batch and keep in the fridge for different uses.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**bland** - season with more salt & pepper.

**burning** - reduce the heat a little. If that doesn't help, add a splash of water. Putting a lid on will help keep the moisture in and the veg will steam as well so they'll cook quicker.

**veggies too crunchy** - next time cut the veg into smaller pieces so they cook quicker. For now keep cooking until you're happy.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Use anywhere you need some cooked veggies. A good quicker alternative to roasting.

For the mushrooms, they're lovely with a poached egg or two and some greens.

veggie mash



# VEGGIE MASH

Most people, especially the Irish around here, think potatoes as soon as you say 'mash'. But there are many equally delicious, less carb-laden alternatives. I love a good mash because it acts as both a side and a 'sauce' in one.

per person

*1 large handful chopped veggies*

*1-2 tablespoons butter, optional*

1. Place veg in a saucepan. Cover with water and bring to the boil.
2. Simmer until tender. 10-15 minutes for things like cauliflower and broccoli. About 1/2 hour for root veg.
3. Scoop out a cup of the cooking liquid.

## VARIATIONS

**vegetables** - cauliflower, parsnips, potato, sweet potato, pumpkin, broccoli, celeriac (celery root), sweede (rutabaga), turnip, carrot

**dairy-free** - replace the butter with a little extra virgin olive oil.

**cheesy mash** - stir through some finely grated cheese at the end. Parmesan is a favourite.

**super creamy mash** - double the butter or stir in a generous glug of cream or sour cream.

**'champ'** - stir in a handful of finely sliced spring onions (green onions) for some crunchy freshness.

**'colcannon'** - traditionally made in Ireland with potatoes. Stir finely sliced kale, cavalo nero, cabbage or spinach into your hot mash.



# VEGGIE MASH...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

OK. Will keep in the fridge for a week or 2. Just gently reheat in a pan on a low heat.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland** - season with salt & pepper. A little more butter may help.

**too watery** - sounds like you haven't drained the veg enough.

Not much you can do now except change the name from 'mash' to 'puree'. Next time drain more thoroughly.

**lumpy mash** - if your veg aren't cooked enough, they'll be difficult to mash. Next time simmer until really tender before starting to mash. If the lumps really bother you, pass through a fine sieve.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great as a side to pan fried protein, especially sausages. Also really lovely with sauteed mushrooms. Can also be used as a topping for pies like 'shepherds pie'.

simple braised supper



# SIMPLE BRAISED SUPPER

Growing up, my Mum used to make a braised beef dish that we kids didn't like at all. So much so that we renamed it 'yuk'. It took a long time for me to get into 'braising' after that rocky start but now I love it.

per person

*1/4 cup liquid*

*1/2 - 1 tablespoon flavouring, optional*

*200g (7oz) protein or veg*

*1-2 tablespoons butter, optional*

*flavour highlight*

1. Preheat oven to 200C (400F). Place liquid and flavouring in a medium sized baking dish. Add the protein or veg scatter over the butter, if using.
2. Bake for 30-45 minutes uncovered until the protein or veg are almost cooked, turning the protein / veg about half way.
3. Sprinkle over the flavour highlight if you'd like it to be cooked and continue to braise for another 10-15 minutes.

## VARIATIONS

**protein** - Chicken drumsticks or thighs, sausages, lamb chops, pork chops, tofu, canned chickpeas or beans are a great veggie option. Or try tofu. Fish fillets (reduce cooking time to 15-25 minutes).

**veg** - I've used fennel in the picture. Eggplant (aubergine), zucchini, sweet potato, butternut squash, mushrooms.

**liquid** - water, chicken stock, vegetable stock, fish stock, white wine, red wine, apricot nectar, tomato puree, canned tomatoes.

**flavouring** - tomato paste, soy sauce, spices (use 1 teaspoon), finely sliced garlic, preserved lemons, olives, bay leaves.

**flavour highlight - cheesy** - melting cheeses are best like parmesan, cheddar, blue cheese, gruyere, swiss cheese.

**flavour highlight - herby / spicy** - thyme, rosemary, chilli, spices such as fennel seeds, smoked paprika, cumin seeds, coriander seed, curry powder.

**flavour highlight - no cooking** - fresh herbs like parsley, thyme, pesto, hummus, mayonnaise.

**VIDEO**

# SIMPLE BRAISED SUPPER...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Brilliant! Reheats really well. Great as a bake ahead dish and then just reheat in the oven, adding more liquid as needed.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland** - season with salt & pepper.

**too dry** - add a little water, stir well in the dish to scrape up any lovely pan pieces and cook for another 5 minutes. Or just serve with a sauce (see suggestions below).

**burning** - make sure the pan doesn't dry out too much. Keep an eye on it and if you think it's starting to burn, add more water 1/4 cup at a time. Reducing the oven temp to 180C (350F) can help.

**veggies too crunchy** - next time cut the veg into smaller pieces so they cook quicker.

**shriveled / tough protein** - when protein overcooks it tends to go all wrinkly, and tough. Next time cook less, turn more often or reduce the temperature.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Serve with something carby like mash, pasta, lentils or beans. Or with a simple green or shaved veg salad.



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 curry.

**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 an egg into it. Bake for about 10 minutes or until egg whites are set and yolks still runny.

# KETCHUP 'BAKED' LEGUMES...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Brilliant! Reheats really well. Also freezes well. Should keep in the fridge for about 2 weeks.

## 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.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Lovely straight up or with a side of shredded kale or baby spinach. Also good with hot buttered toast.

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. Options include spices, herbs, sauces, preserved lemon, chilli powder.

**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.



# CHUNKY VEG SOUP..

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Brilliant! Reheats really well. One of those things that improves with age.

## 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.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great as a light meal on its own. Or serve with crusty bread & butter.

herb & nut sauce



# HERB & NUT SAUCE

We all know and love pesto, that classic combo of fresh basil, garlic, pinenuts and parmesan. But it's just the beginning. The possibilities are endless!

makes about 1 cup

*1 big bunch herbs*

*1-2 cloves garlic, optional*

*1 large handful nuts*

*1/4 - 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil*

*1 large handful grated parmesan or extra nuts*

1. Whizz herbs, garlic and nuts in a food processor until finely chopped.
2. Add enough oil to make a loose paste.
3. Stir in cheese. Taste & season.

## VARIATIONS

**herbs** - basil, of course, but other leafy herbs work well. Parsley, mint and coriander leaf (cilantro) are all great. Stronger herbs like sage or oregano can be used sparingly - best if combined with parsley so the flavour isn't too crazy.

**nuts** - pinenuts are number 1 choice. Almonds, cashews, brazil nuts, walnuts, pecans, peanuts. I prefer unroasted so the nut flavour doesn't dominate, but feel free to experiment with roasted nuts too.

**dairy-free** - replace the parmesan with extra nuts

**nut-free** - replace the nuts with extra parmesan or fresh breadcrumbs.

**budget** - replace the nuts with breadcrumbs and reduce the cheese. A combination of basil, which tends to be expensive, as well as other cheaper herbs like parsley or mint can help.

**don't have a food processor?** - just chop everything by hand and stir together. Aim for a more rustic, chunky pesto.

**VIDEO**

# HERB & NUT SAUCE...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Good. Pop in an airtight container and cover with a layer of oil to prevent browning. Should keep in the fridge for a few weeks. I haven't had much luck freezing it.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland** - season with salt & pepper or a little more parmesan. A splash of lemon juice can also help bring it to life. Next time try a different source of herbs.

**too dry** - add a little more oil.

**fluro green colour** - if you're using a blender or liquidiser it can mash up the herbs too much so you get a crazy-coloured puree. Next time just chop everything by hand and stir together.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Where should I begin! Brilliant with soups, as a spread, as a dip, as a sauce especially for chicken. With cooked or raw veg. In salads. Also great with scrambled eggs. On pizza. There aren't many things a little pesto doesn't improve.

kebabs *with* sauce



# KEBABS WITH SAUCE

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 tablespoon marinade ingredient

sauce, to serve

greens or salad, to serve

flatbread or tortillas, optional, to serve

1. Cut protein or veg into bite sized cubes and place in a small bowl with the marinade.
2. Place a skillet or frying pan or BBQ on a high heat.
3. Thread protein or veg onto 2 bamboo skewers.
4. Add a little oil to the pan and cook skewers for 3 minutes on the first side. Turn then cook for another 2-3 minutes or until just cooked.
5. Serve skewers with sauce drizzled over. And salad / greens / flatbread passed separately.

## VARIATIONS

**protein** - tender cuts of meat like pork fillet, lamb fillet, pork neck, beef fillet, steak, chicken breasts or thighs. Fish fillets. Tofu. Seitan. 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.

**satay sauce** - combine 2-3 tablespoons peanut butter, 1 teaspoon thai red curry paste or some fresh chilli, 1-2 teaspoons soy sauce and 2 teaspoons oil per person.



# KEBABS WITH SAUCE...

## VARIATIONS *[continued]*

**other sauces** - hummus, pesto, herb & nut sauce, hoisin sauce or sriracha (chilli sauce). Even ketchup or BBQ sauce.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

OK. Most kebabs work best when fresh but can be served cold wrapped in fresh flatbread with the sauce. Will keep in the fridge for a week or so.

## 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 or pork until just cooked and serve drizzled with the peanut sauce.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Serve the skewers and sauce with the salad and bread on the side.

# # Module 4. DAILY UPDATES

**PLANNING & SHOPPING VIDEO**  
**DAY 16. A FINAL MEATLESS MONDAY**  
**DAY 17. CHILLI TUESDAY**  
**DAY 18. A RAINY WEDNESDAY**  
**DAY 19. SECOND LAST DAY!**  
**DAY 20. THE LAST DAY!!**

**WEEK 4.  
DAY 16.  
A FINAL  
MEATLESS  
MONDAY**

The last week, looking over my shoulder as I shop and cook each day...  
So that means our last meatless monday!

**BREAKFAST**

:: [Green Smoothie] with kale

**LUNCH**

:: Quinoa, tomato & baby spinach 'kettle' soup with almonds

Also known as...

:: ['kettle' soup]

**DINNER**

:: Zucchini burgers with baby spinach & natural yoghurt

also known as...

:: [Real veggie burgers]

**VIDEO**

# WEEK 4. DAY 17. CHILLI TUESDAY

A soft, rainy day today. Perfect conditions for a big warming bowl of beans and chilli!

## BREAKFAST

Quick breakkie of natural yoghurt with oat bran, cooked quinoa and almonds.

## LUNCH

:: Frittata of wilted greens and roast parsnip  
also known as...

:: [Baked frittata]

## DINNER

:: Chilli beef with zucchini & red kidney beans  
also known as...

:: [One pot chilli]

**VIDEO**

# WEEK 4. DAY 18. A RAINY WEDNESDAY

Well into Autumn now around here which is a great reason to cook mushrooms! A decadent treat I normally don't bother with apart from weekends.

## BREAKFAST

:: Sautéed mushrooms with poached eggs & shaved kale also known as..

:: [Sautéed veggies]

## LUNCH

:: Leftover chilli with leftover zucchini 'noodles' and parmesan (pictured over)

## DINNER

:: Pork sausages & cauliflower mash with my Gran's green tomato pickles also known as..

:: [Mashed veggies]

**VIDEO**

leftover *chilli*+zucchini noodles



# WEEK 4. DAY 19. SECOND LAST DAY!

A stellar Autumn day here!

So rather than make the chunky soup I had planned, we ended up having leftover chilli as a salad with shaved cabbage & avocado.

## BREAKFAST

Quite an experimental breakfast – raw chopped broccolini with coconut yoghurt, almonds & protein powder. Like a smoothie without getting the food processor dirty!

## LUNCH

:: Salad of shaved red cabbage, rice vinegar dressing, avocado & leftover one pot chilli (pictured over).

also known as...

:: [Raw Veg Lunch Salad]

## DINNER

:: Braised fennel with parmesan. Shaved radish & red belgian endive salad.

And for my Irishman.. a leftover sausage from last night as well.

also known as...

:: [Simple braised supper]

**VIDEO**

leftover chilli & avocado salad



# WEEK 4. DAY 20. THE LAST DAY!!

Well I can't believe it's gone so quickly. It seems like only yesterday that I took you guys on a tour of my fridge and veggie garden!

I hope you've enjoyed seeing how I put my meal planning into real life action :)

## BREAKFAST

My new favourite weekend breakfast treat! I wanted to share it with you (any excuse really) so made my ketchup 'baked' beans this morning.

:: ketchup 'baked' beans with shredded kale  
also known as...

:: [ketchup 'baked' legumes]

## LUNCH

:: Chunky zucchini soup with pesto  
also known as...

:: [Chunky veg soup] with [herb & nut sauce].

## DINNER

Continuing the Friday night tradition of 'posh' junk food.

:: Lamb kebabs marinated in ground cumin with hummus & shaved cabbage salad  
also known as..

:: [Kebabs with sauce]

:: [Kebabs with sauce]

:: [Shaved Veg Side Salad]

**VIDEO**

# Module 5.

VIDEO

CLASSIC  
FLAVOUR  
COMBINATIONS

# THE 7 GOLDEN RULES OF FLAVOUR PAIRING

When I was studying to be a winemaker, we spent a lot of time learning about flavours and how our bodies perceive them. We also covered a lot about pairing wine with food.

I didn't realise it at the time, but that knowledge helped me become a better cook.

So here are the golden rules of flavour pairing just for home cooks.

Feel free to extend them to your food and wine matches as well!

## 1. THERE ARE NO RULES

I know this sounds a little Monty Python-esque but really the most important thing with putting different ingredients and flavours together is to use your imagination. There are no rules that work for every meal and every person so relax and don't waste your time worrying about breaking them.

At the end of the day, the most important thing is that you and your dining companions enjoy what you're eating.

## 2. TRUST YOUR OWN INSTINCTS

I've said it before and I'll say it again. Even if you're not super confident in the kitchen, you have YEARS of experience as an eater.

Those three-meals-a-day have taught you more than you realise about which flavours work well together, and those that don't. So trust your taste buds and you'll be fine.

# THE 7 GOLDEN RULES OF FLAVOUR PAIRING

*[continued]*

## 3. MATCH THE FOOD WITH PEOPLE FIRST

Just as some people don't enjoy certain styles of wine, there are others who always have and always will hate certain foods, regardless of how well cooked.

It is true that sometimes this may be based on a bad experience with a poor quality example, and if the person in question did actually try a well cooked example, they may find that they love it. But forcing people to try things against their will is not going to do anyone any favours.

So please respect that everyone's palate is different and think about your guests first and the food second.

## 4. FLAVOURS CAN CONTRAST ONE ANOTHER

Contrast is something I, personally, love to play with. Think a hot fiery curry with a cooling slick of natural yoghurt. Or a rich piece of slow cooked pork belly with a refreshing squeeze of lemon. It's all about looking for the difference in ingredients or dishes and using them to your advantage.

And don't just limit yourself to flavours. Contrasting textures and temperatures are just as useful in choosing which ingredients to use in a particular dish.

## 5. FLAVOURS CAN COMPLIMENT EACH OTHER

Finding similarities between ingredients is another way to approach successful flavour pairing. Similarities can build on one another to give a stronger result in the finished dish. Think of the earthiness found in both lentils and mushrooms and how well these work together.

# THE 7 GOLDEN RULES OF FLAVOUR PAIRING

*[continued]*

## 6. INTENSITY IS IMPORTANT

Lighter, more delicate flavours generally work best with other lighter flavours because anything too intense or heavy can overpower. Think of steamed fish with a squeeze of lime.

By the same token, strong flavours tend to be best when teamed with other intense flavours, with care of course.

## 7. DON'T FORGET 'CLANCY'S LAW OF COOKING'.

In case you missed it in week 2, I've developed my own law of cooking after years of experimentation:

It is equally valid when thinking about flavour pairing and runs along these lines...

**'IF YOU THINK IT'S GOING TO TASTE DELICIOUS,  
IT PROBABLY WILL.'**

# CLASSIC FLAVOUR PAIRINGS

When it comes to creating new dishes there's no need to 'reinvent the wheel' each time. Some ingredients were just made to be together so it can be helpful to know the classic combinations.

These are just some of my favourite pairings and by no means a complete list. You may not even agree with me on some!

So take this as a starting point and add (or cross off) your favourites...

## VEGETABLE PAIRINGS

- :: tomato & basil
- :: beetroot & goats cheese
- :: carrot & cumin
- :: cauliflower & spices
- :: cauliflower & cheese
- :: broccoli & lemon
- :: peas & mint
- :: potato & rosemary
- :: potato & garlic
- :: potato & parsley
- :: cabbage & bacon
- :: cabbage & cheese
- :: avocado & chilli
- :: avocado & bacon – think BLT with more!
- :: wilted greens & garlic
- :: mushroom & garlic
- :: mushrooms & thyme
- :: eggplant & tomato
- :: eggplant & olive oil
- :: asparagus & egg
- :: parsley & mint
- :: lime & chilli

# CLASSIC FLAVOUR PAIRINGS

[continued]

## FISH PAIRINGS

- :: fish / shellfish & lemon
- :: fish / shellfish & lime
- :: fish & fennel
- :: fish & dill
- :: fish, chilli, soy & ginger
- :: fish & chips & vinegar
- :: salmon & beetroot
- :: fish & capers
- :: fish & saffron – think paella or bouillabaisse
- :: fish & white wine

## MEATY PAIRINGS

- :: meat & potatoes – the way to an (Irish) man's heart
- :: beef & horseradish
- :: beef & mustard
- :: beef & coffee – as in this coffee rub
- :: beef & blue cheese
- :: chicken & peanut – think satay
- :: chicken & red capsicum (bell pepper)
- :: chicken & apricot – one of my mum's specials
- :: chicken & garlic – chicken 'kiev' anyone?
- :: pork & fennel – either fennel seeds or the bulbs
- :: pork & apple
- :: lamb & rosemary
- :: lamb & artichoke – the Roman classic
- :: lamb & mint
- :: meat pie & 'sauce' (ketchup) – the Aussie icon
- :: bacon & eggs
- :: duck & orange
- :: ham & cheese
- :: ham & chutney & cheese

# CLASSIC FLAVOUR PAIRINGS

*[continued]*

## CHEESY PAIRINGS

- :: blue cheese & pear
- :: cheese & onion
- :: cheese & potato
- :: cheese & quince paste
- :: cheese & chives
- :: goats cheese & basil – one of my favourite omelettes
- :: sour cream & chives
- :: ricotta & salami – a favourite pizza combo
- :: cheese & mushrooms

## SWEET PAIRINGS

- :: apple & cinnamon
- :: chocolate & hazelnut – or pretty much any other nut
- :: chocolate & chilli
- :: chocolate & coffee
- :: honey & almond
- :: vanilla & eggs – yum, custard
- :: vanilla & cream
- :: strawberries & cream
- :: orange & almond
- :: chocolate & zucchini – don't knock it until you've tried it in a cake
- :: pineapple & mint
- :: blackberry & apple

# FLAVOUR PROFILES & CLASSIC INGREDIENTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

One of the easiest ways to make a particular dish feel new and different is to change the flavour profile in terms of its nationality or ethnicity.

To help you get more confident with experimenting with different flavour profiles, here's a list of the major cuisines from around the world with the classic ingredients used to characterise each.

It's not meant to be a complete exhaustive list. Nor is it intended to be 100% authentic. Although I have eaten in all of the countries listed except for India and China, so there is some real experience behind each list.

I'm just sharing my personal interpretation of these different cuisines. It's about giving you a starting point to go off and explore the world of flavours for yourself.

So please feel free to add to or subtract from this list depending on what works for you.

## ITALIAN

Truly one of the world's greatest and best loved cuisines. It's hard to go past a good pizza or a comforting bowl of pasta. And don't forget the gelato!

- :: parmesan cheese
- :: basil
- :: oregano
- :: garlic
- :: tomato fresh, canned, pureed & paste
- :: olive oil
- :: balsamic vinegar
- :: pasta
- :: risotto

**Instant 'Italian':** throw in some garlic, drizzle generously with olive oil and grate over some parmesan.

# FLAVOUR PROFILES & CLASSIC INGREDIENTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

[continued]

## CHINESE

Another or the worlds best travelled cuisines. I love the fact that Chinese food tastes different wherever you go. The Australian Chinese is very different from Chinese in Cuba or Ireland or even Spain.

It's also a very large country with many diverse regional cuisines. I'm not even beginning to do it justice with this list.

- :: szechuan peppercorns
- :: hoisin sauce
- :: soy sauce
- :: sesame oil
- :: Chinese 5 spice powder
- :: garlic
- :: ginger
- :: green (spring) onions
- :: dried mushrooms
- :: steamed rice
- :: fried rice
- :: wheat and egg noodles

**Instant 'Chinese'** – Toss in some ginger, chilli and or garlic while cooking. Drizzle with sesame oil before serving.

# FLAVOUR PROFILES & CLASSIC INGREDIENTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

*[continued]*

## FRENCH

The inventors of fancy 'Haute Cuisine' but also home to wonderfully rustic country cooking.

Tends to focus on fancy time, consuming techniques and sauces rather than simplicity.

- :: garlic
- :: butter
- :: anchovies
- :: foie gras
- :: tarragon
- :: red & white wine

- :: mushrooms
- :: baguettes, crusty bread
- :: croissants

**Instant 'French'** – Toss in some garlic, loads of sweet butter and a splash or two of wine.

# FLAVOUR PROFILES & CLASSIC INGREDIENTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

*[continued]*

## LEBANESE / MIDDLE EASTERN

Slightly exotic, yet still similar enough to the cuisines on the other side of the Mediterranean to feel homely.

Love their use of vegetables and pulses.

- :: hummus
- :: tahini (sesame seed paste)
- :: mint
- :: flat leaf parsley
- :: za'atar (spice blend of sumac, thyme and sesame seeds)
- :: dried mint
- :: ground cumin
- :: allspice
- :: babaganoush
- :: pomegranate seeds & molasses
- :: lebanese bread / pita

**Instant 'Lebanese'** – Add a touch of allspice or za'atar and serve with loads of fresh parsley and lashings of hummus.

# FLAVOUR PROFILES & CLASSIC INGREDIENTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

[continued]

## MOROCCAN

If someone was mean enough to force me to nominate my favourite cuisine, I think I'd have to choose Moroccan. From the zestiness of their preserved lemons to the heat of harissa, it's hard not to get addicted.

- :: preserved lemons
- :: green olives
- :: coriander seeds
- :: chilli
- :: harissa
- :: ground ginger
- :: cinnamon in savoury dishes
- :: saffron
- :: ras el hanout (spice blend)
- :: sumac (lemony spice)
- :: coriander leaves (cilantro)
- :: honey
- :: mint
- :: couscous
- :: flat bread

**Instant 'Moroccan'** – Add in some preserved lemons and serve with harissa and couscous.

# FLAVOUR PROFILES & CLASSIC INGREDIENTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

*[continued]*

## INDIAN

The other country I haven't yet visited. While it's hard to go past a good curry, Indian cuisine is far more diverse than that.

Aromatic with the perfume of spices.

- :: fresh & dried chilli
- :: curry powder
- :: garam marsala (spice blend)
- :: curry leaves
- :: cumin
- :: turmeric
- :: ground coriander
- :: ghee (clarified butter)
- :: natural yoghurt
- :: basmati rice
- :: naan bread

**Instant 'Indian'** – toss in some garam marsala or curry powder and a handful of curry leaves. Serve with a generous dollop of natural yoghurt.

# FLAVOUR PROFILES & CLASSIC INGREDIENTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

*[continued]*

## THAI

The first country I ever left home to visit, Thailand is a special place for me. I adore the warm friendliness of the Thai people but it's their amazingly fresh & delicious food which keeps bringing me back.

- :: lemon grass
- :: mint
- :: kaffir lime leaves
- :: fresh coriander (cilantro) roots, shoots and leaves
- :: thai basil (or regular basil)
- :: curry pastes (red & green)
- :: coconut esp coconut milk
- :: palm sugar (or brown sugar) in savoury dishes
- :: dried shrimp paste
- :: chilli
- :: fish sauce
- :: oyster sauce
- :: jasmine rice
- :: rice noodles

**Instant 'Thai'** – get yourself some curry paste and coconut milk. Be sure to season for 'sweet, salty, sour and bitter'.

# FLAVOUR PROFILES & CLASSIC INGREDIENTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

*[continued]*

## VIETNAMESE

Similar to Thai but with an interesting French heritage which means they have decent bread and coffee!

For me, Vietnamese is all about smelly fish sauce, fragrant mint and fiery chilli.

Another classic 'Vietnamese' flavour profile is the 'hot and sour' usually achieved with chilli and fresh pineapple.

- :: chilli – fresh red
- :: fish sauce
- :: rice vinegar
- :: Vietnamese mint
- :: coriander (cilantro) leaves
- :: fresh pineapple in savoury dishes
- :: jasmine rice
- :: rice paper rolls

**Instant 'Vietnamese'** – Be aggressive with the chilli and serve with loads of fresh (preferably Vietnamese) mint.

# FLAVOUR PROFILES & CLASSIC INGREDIENTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

*[continued]*

## JAPANESE

The one country that no matter how long I stay there, I never feel 'at home'. A super diverse cuisine based on a country of perfectionists.

While not technically a 'flavour profile' when I think of Japanese cuisine I think of elegant and beautiful, even pains taking presentation.

So much more than sushi rolls and miso soup.

- :: miso paste
- :: sesame oil
- :: sesame seeds
- :: soy sauce
- :: rice vinegar
- :: dashi
- :: nanami togarashi (mixed chilli pepper)
- :: mirin (rice wine similar to dry sherry)
- :: raw fish & seafood
- :: pickled ginger and other vegetables
- :: wasabi
- :: seaweed (nori sheets)
- :: soy beans (edamame)
- :: steamed rice

**Instant 'Japanese'** – splash in some mirin (or dry sherry) & soy sauce.

# FLAVOUR PROFILES & CLASSIC INGREDIENTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

*[continued]*

## MEXICAN

It's practically impossible to get authentic Mexican in Australia so I was completely blown away by the complexity and down-right deliciousness of real Mexican when I travelled there.

So much more than beans, cheese and sour cream.

- :: chilli – esp jalapenos & habanero (scotch bonnet)
- :: fresh cheeses
- :: mexican oregano (epazote)
- :: coriander leaves (cilantro)
- :: limes & lime juice
- :: refried beans
- :: fresh tomato
- :: fresh salsas – green & red
- :: avocado
- :: tortillas
- :: tortilla or corn chips
- :: beans
- :: rice

**Instant 'Mexican'** – Serve with super fresh salsa and loads of chilli and lime.

# FLAVOUR PROFILES & CLASSIC INGREDIENTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

*[continued]*

## SPANISH

After spending 6 weeks renting an apartment in the beautiful city of Barcelona, I felt half Spanish. If only the language had rubbed off on me!

After Moroccan, one of my favourite cuisines. Tricky for vegetarians with their devotion to pork products.

- :: smoked paprika
- :: saffron
- :: olives
- :: olive oil
- :: sherry vinegar
- :: Marcona almonds
- :: jamon
- :: chorizo
- :: manchego cheese
- :: membrillo (quince paste)
- :: roasted red peppers (piquillo or bell peppers)
- :: chickpeas
- :: paella rice

**Instant 'Spanish'** – Toss in some smoked paprika and chorizo or roast almonds and finish with a splash of sherry vinegar.

# MY TOP 10 FAVOURITE FLAVOUR COMBOS

I don't want you to feel overwhelmed by all these lists. Learning to combine flavours is a skill that takes time and practice. The most important thing is that you start observing what works (and what doesn't) as you experiment at home AND when you're eating out.

To help bring all the information in this module into real life, here are the top 10 combinations that I use on a regular basis with examples.

## 1. BEETS & GOATS CHEESE.

Roast beets as per the roast root veg template recipe.

**'Raw Veg Lunch Salad'** – use bok choy or broccoli as the raw veg, use the roast beets as the 'garnish' and goats cheese as the 'protein'.

**Roast Veg Salad** – use beets as the veg, keep the chickpeas in and replace the almonds and mayo with soft goats cheese.

**Smooth Veggie Soup** – use raw beets as the veg (expect them to take 40 minutes or so to cook). Serve with fresh goats cheese on top.

**Herb & Nut Sauce** – replace basil with 2 handfuls roast beets. Replace parmesan with goats cheese. Serve with pan fried salmon or chicken breast / thighs.

## 2. MUSHROOMS & THYME

**The Perfect 'Steak'** – use mushrooms as the 'steak' and thyme leaves as the flavour highlight.

**Baked Frittata** – sautee mushrooms as per the sauteed veg template and use as ingredient 1, use parmesan as ingredient 2 then use thyme as the highlight.

**Warm Legume Salad** – use mushrooms as the 'protein' and thyme as the highlight.

# MY TOP 10 FAVOURITE FLAVOUR COMBOS

*[continued]*

## 3. GARLIC & GREENS

**Sauteed veggies** – use a bunch of greens such as spinach or kale as the veggie and garlic as the ‘highlight’. I often have this as a meal on its own served with chunks of parmesan or some sardines for protein.

**Pasta with ‘No Cook’ Sauce** – Use precooked sauteed veggies with garlic above instead of the ‘fresh’ leaves.

**Layered Veggie & Ricotta Bake** – use sauteed greens with garlic as above as the ‘vegetables’.

## 4. TOMATO & BASIL

**Pasta with ‘No Cook’ Sauce** – Use basil as the ‘leaves’ and semi dried tomatoes instead of the ‘cheese’.

**Meat or Legume Balls** – use tomato passata as per the recipe and serve either type of ‘ball’ topped with fresh basil.

**Canned Bean Salad** – use halved cherry tomatoes as the vegetable and use basil leaves as the highlight ingredient.

## 5. POTATO & ROSEMARY

**Ultimate Roast Spuds** – use rosemary as the highlight.

**Baked Frittata** – use roast spuds as ‘ingredient 1’ and rosemary as the highlight. I’d be inclined to favour bacon as ‘ingredient 2’.

**Canned Bean Salad** – change the name to ‘Irish salad’ and replace canned legumes with diced roast spuds and rosemary. Use salad leaves as the veg. Boiled eggs as the protein and rosemary leaves as the highlight.

# MY TOP 10 FAVOURITE FLAVOUR COMBOS

*[continued]*

## 6. LAMB & ROSEMARY

**Super Slow Roast** – Use lamb shanks or lamb shoulder as the ‘meat’ and rosemary as the highlight. I’d probably use carrots as the veg here.

**Pan Fried Protein + Salad** – Use lamb chops or cutlets as the protein and rosemary oil as the ‘sauce’ (for each person just finely chop about 1 teaspoon rosemary leaves and leave to infuse for 10 minutes or longer in 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil).

**Slow Cooked Meat Ragù** – Use lamb shanks or neck chops as the meat and rosemary as the flavouring. Red wine would be my liquid of choice here.

## 7. BEEF & COFFEE

This is a bit of a one trick pony... but rub steaks with a little coffee rub (recipe over here). BBQ or pan fry until cooked how you like. Top steaks with a knob (hunk) of butter and allow to rest for a few minutes. Soo good!

I guess you could try coating beef burger patties in coffee rub as well.

## 8. FISH & LEMON

**Pan Fried Protein + Salad** – Use fish fillets as the protein. Skip the oil / sauce and serve with the lemon half instead.

**Classic Green Salad** – Turn this classic side into a meal by using lemon juice as the ‘acid’ for the dressing. Serve with a drained can of tuna, salmon or sardines and drizzle over a heap of extra lemon juice – a lunch I have at least once a week.

**Simple Braised Supper** – use fish fillets such as salmon as the protein (reduce cooking time to 20-30 minutes). Use white wine as the liquid. Preserved lemon as the flavouring. And sprinkle over a handful of chopped flat leaf parsley as the ‘highlight’ once the fish is cooked.

# MY TOP 10 FAVOURITE FLAVOUR COMBOS

*[continued]*

## 9. BLUE CHEESE & PEAR

**Green Pea Blue Cheese & Pear Salad** – use blue cheese as the protein, finely sliced fresh pear as the ‘leafy ingredient’.

Serve finely sliced ripe pear with a big hunk of blue cheese instead of dessert.

**Warm Legume Salad** – with lentils. Use blue cheese as the protein and finely sliced raw pear as a cold ‘highlight’.

## 10. CHOCOLATE & HAZELNUT

**Super Quick Mousse** – use melted chocolate as the highlight and serve topped with chopped roast hazelnuts.

**No Bake Chocolate Tart** – Replace peanut butter with hazelnut paste or Nutella.

**Almost Instant Sorbet** – use banana as the fruit and chopped dark chocolate and roast hazelnuts as the ‘topping’.

# Module 5.  
**RESOURCES**

# MODULE 5 RESOURCES

## OTHER GOOD BOOKS

**The Flavour Thesaurus** – Pairings, Recipes and Ideas for the Creative Cook by Niki Segnit. Well worth picking up a copy if you'd like to take flavour pairings further. Segnit includes some weird and wonderful matches along with the classics. Love her descriptions as to why different matches work, complete with popular culture references.

**The Cook's Companion** by Australian chef Stephanie Alexander. A complete A-Z of ingredients, she includes a list of what each ingredient goes well with along with tips for preparation, choosing and storing and of course recipes.

## WEBSITE

**[www.foodpairing.com](http://www.foodpairing.com)** If you want to get really 'nerdy' check out their free trial. Enter in an ingredient and it will give you a diagram of ingredients related by the chemical flavour compounds they contain. For more advanced flavour-pairers only.

# # Module 5.

# 'TEMPLATE' RECIPES

- :: [Noodle Soup]
- :: [Pasta with No-Cook Sauce]
- :: [Legume & Tahini Sauce] aka 'hummus'
- :: [Cooked Lentils]
- :: [Super Quick Legume Soup]
- :: [Meat or Legume Balls]
- :: [Baked Vegetable 'Noodles']
- :: [Raw Veg 'Rice']
- :: [Fresh Herb Sauce]
- :: [Almost Instant Sorbet]
- :: [Super Quick Mousse]

noodle soup



# NOODLE SOUP

When it comes to satisfying, healthy, meals in minutes, it's hard to go past a good noodle soup. If using dried noodles or spaghetti, you can simmer them in the stock or liquid, you'll just need to adjust the cooking time accordingly.

per person

1 1/2 cups liquid

1-2 teaspoons flavouring, optional

handful protein &/or vegetables, optional

100g (3.5oz) fresh or cooked noodles

small handful highlight ingredient

1. Place liquid and flavouring in a medium saucepan. Bring to a simmer.
2. Add protein and/or veggies. Simmer until veg are cooked.
3. Add noodles and bring back to a simmer.
4. Taste. Season and serve with highlight ingredient on top.

## VARIATIONS

**liquid** - chicken stock, coconut milk, vegetable stock, fish stock, tomato puree, canned tomatoes, water, instant dashi powder combined with water.

**flavouring** - soy sauce, chilli oil, thai curry pastes or laksa paste (use 1 tablespoon), curry powder, smoked paprika, dried chilli, curry leaves, kaffir lime leaves, miso paste.

**protein** - leftover cooked meat, cooked chicken, salami, chorizo (brown first), cooked or canned beans or lentils, tofu, soft boiled eggs.

**vegetables** - zucchini, peas, sugar snap peas, snow peas, cabbage, asparagus, broccoli, cauliflower, red capsicum (bell peppers), bok choy, asian greens, baby spinach, silverbeet, chard.

**noodles - dried** - (cook according to the packet directions - you can simmer in the stock / liquid and adjust the cooking time accordingly if you like). I used dried soba noodles in the picture. Dried udon, rice sticks, rice vermicelli, mung bean noodles, glass noodles, vermicelli, egg noodles, spaghetti, 2-minute noodles (ramen).



# NOODLE SOUP...

## VARIATIONS *[continued]*

**noodles - fresh** - fresh egg noodles, fresh pasta, fresh udon noodles.

**highlight ingredient** - I used crispy fried shallots in the picture. Leafy herbs work really well like coriander (cilantro), mint, basil, parsley. Fresh chilli, torn dried seaweed (nori sheets).

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep in the fridge for a week or so but the noodles are going to go a bit icky.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**bland** - next time use a more fully flavoured liquid, for now add a little soy sauce.

**noodles falling apart** - if cooked for too long. Next time get them off the heat earlier.

**soup cloudy** - If you'd prefer a clear broth, cook the noodles separately.

**too salty** - Dilute the soup down with some more water.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Serve in deep bowls with chopsticks and soup spoons.

pasta with *no-cook* sauce



# PASTA WITH NO-COOK SAUCE

This recipe began life as a pasta with chilli oil, lemon juice, parmesan and rocket or basil leaves. The idea here is to make a 'dressing' to stir through cooked pasta. The heat from the pasta will warm the sauce and any other ingredients.

per person

100g (3.5oz) pasta

2 tablespoons oil

1-2 tablespoons lemon juice

large handful grated or torn cheese

large handful leaves

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to the boil. Cook pasta according to the packet directions, or until al dente.
2. Scoop out a cupfull of cooking water. Drain pasta and return to the hot pot.
3. Stir in oil, lemon juice, cheese and leaves. If it looks a little dry add some of the reserved cooking water.
4. Taste & season.

## VARIATIONS

**pasta** - this works equally well with short or long pasta. Dried or fresh. For something different try Asian noodles instead. Filled pastas like tortellini or ravioli are also great.

**oil** - extra virgin olive oil or any flavoured oil such as chilli oil, lemon oil, garlic oil.

**no lemon juice?** - a splash of vinegar will be OK instead. Try a milder vinegar like rice vinegar or sherry.

**cheese** - finely grated parmesan is a favourite. A soft fresh goats curd is also lovely. Ricotta, creamy blue cheese, buffalo mozzarella, bocconcini even grated cheddar.

**dairy-free** - either skip the cheese or replace with finely grated brazil nuts or toasted breadcrumbs.

**leaves** - rocket (arugula), basil, parsley, radicchio, baby spinach, mint, anything fresh & green, chopped chives. Coriander (cilantro) in small amounts.



# PASTA WITH NO-COOK SAUCE...

## VARIATIONS *[continued]*

**gluten-free / slow carb** - replace pasta with cooked or canned beans or lentils. Butter beans are a favourite in our house. Gluten-free pasta or rice noodles can also be used.

**other possible additions** - finely chopped garlic, roasted nuts (especially pine nuts), grilled bacon or prosciutto, fresh prosciutto, chorizo, salami, cooked mushrooms, smoked salmon, pesto.

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Not the greatest. Will keep in the fridge for a week or so but the leaves will wilt. Reheat in pan with a little oil - a little like a stir fry.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**dry** - depending on your cheese, you may need a little more cooking water or oil.

**gluggy pasta** - it's important not to overcook pasta. You want it to still have some bite or a little bit of chalkiness in the middle. For now just add a little more oil.

**bland** - be generous with the seasoning or add more cheese. Next time try a different brand of pasta.

**short on time?** - use fresh pasta.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great as a quick one-bowl meal on its own.

legume & *tahini* sauce



# LEGUME & TAHINI SAUCE

More commonly called hummus, this is one of my favourite sauces, ever. It's super versatile and works as an accompaniment, a bit like mash just as readily as it works as a sauce.

makes about a cup

*1 can legumes (400g / 14oz) + liquid*

*1-2 cloves garlic, peeled*

*3 tablespoons lemon juice*

*3 tablespoons tahini*

1. Whizz all ingredients in a food processor with 3 tablespoons of the cooking or canning liquid. Use a high speed and keep whizzing until the hummus is creamy and smooth.
2. Taste and season, adding a little more lemon juice if needed.

## VARIATIONS

**legumes** - chickpeas are traditional but white beans are equally as good. Lentil hummus takes on a more earthy, interesting flavour. I haven't tried red or black beans but they should work just as well.

**vegetable hummus** - replace some or all of the legumes with cooked vegetables. You need about 250g (1/2 lb) cooked veg. Roast carrots or beets are really lovely. Sweet potato, pumpkin, butternut squash, cauliflower or parsnip are also great.

**can't find tahini?** - tahini is a paste made from ground sesame seeds. Replace with ground nut butters such as almond, cashew or brazil nut. Peanut butter could also be used but the flavour will be completely different.

# LEGUME & TAHINI SAUCE...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Great! Will keep in the fridge for a couple of weeks.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**lumpy hummus** - keep whizzing until the hummus is super smooth.

**bland** - be generous with the seasoning. And add a little more tahini and lemon juice if you think it will help.

**don't have a food processor?** - make a more chunky style hummus by just mashing everything together with a fork. Make sure you chop the garlic nice and fine.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great as a dip or sauce to serve with roast or grilled vegetables or meat. Also lovely as a spread on sandwiches or hot buttered toast.

cooked lentils



# COOKED LENTILS

While my favourite lentil is easily the french-style 'puy', pretty much all lentils can be cooked in this manner. You'll just need to adjust the cooking time. Red lentils will cook more quickly whereas brown will probably take a little longer.

serves 2-4:

*250g (9oz) small lentils  
1 aromatic veg, peeled & diced  
1 bay leaf, optional  
2-3 tablespoons soy sauce  
2-3 tablespoons acid*

1. Rinse lentils and place in a medium saucepan with the aromatic veg and bay leaf.
2. Cover generously with water and bring to the boil.
3. Simmer, uncovered for 15-20 minutes or until lentils are tender.
4. Drain lentils and return to the pan. Season with soy, acid and a few tablespoons extra virgin olive oil.

## VARIATIONS

**lentils** - all lentils are good here. Red lentils will cook quickly, and have the potential to turn to mush so be careful.

**aromatic veg** - onions are my favourite but celery or carrots would be good instead. Or use all 3.

**bay leaf alternatives** - rosemary, thyme.

**soy-free** - use something like Bragg's liquid aminos or skip the sauce and use salt to season instead. Fish sauce will also work.

**acid** - sherry or rice vinegar are my favourites but red or white wine vinegar will work as well. Lemon juice could be used.



# COOKED LENTILS...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Brilliant! Reheats really well. Great as a bake ahead dish and then just reheat in the oven, adding more liquid as needed.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**mushy lentils** - some lentils fall to mush very easily so you need to keep an eye on them. Next time only cook until they are al dente – so tender but still a little firm. The other option is to seek out French-style green lentils (also sometimes called puy lentils) or Italian castellecircco lentils. Both of these more expensive lentils have the advantage of not falling apart even when over cooked a little.

**lentils taking forever to cook** - the cooking time will vary greatly depending on the type of lentil and how long they've been sitting around for. I've also noticed that the less water you have available, the longer they take to cook so be generous with the water. You don't need as much as you would for pasta but make sure your lentils have space to swim freely.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**bland** - lentils need generous seasoning which is why we're using soy and vinegar. Feel free to add more. And don't forget the salt.

**crunchy lentils** - just means your lentils are undercooked. You could pop them back in the saucepan with more water or just chalk it as a lesson for next time.

**burning on the bottom** - not enough water. Quick add some.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Super versatile. Use anywhere and everywhere when you're looking for a tasty veggie source of protein, carbs or both!



super-quick *legume* soup

# SUPER QUICK LEGUME SOUP

This recipe is brilliant for when you only have access to limited cooking equipment, like a work kitchenette.

per person

*1/2 can legumes + liquid*

*3/4 cup liquid*

*flavour highlight, to serve, optional*

1. Combine legumes, the legume canning liquid and the liquid in a heat proof bowl (or 2 bowls).
2. Microwave for 3 – 4 minutes or until very hot. Alternatively heat in a saucepan on the stove until hot.
3. Taste. Season. Serve with highlight ingredient sprinkled over the top, if using.

## VARIATIONS

**legumes** - all the usual suspects. White beans, butter beans, chickpeas, lentils, black beans, red kidney beans. You can also use cooked legumes and lentils. Cooked quinoa is also great in soups. Just increase the liquid to 1 cup to make up for the lack of canning liquid.

**liquid** - tomato puree or a jar of pasta sauce are my favourite. You could also use stock such as chicken or vegetable. Or try a few tablespoons of white miso paste mixed into water and a splash of soy sauce.

**flavour highlight** - shaved parmesan, goats cheese, ricotta, parsley, thyme, basil, mint, olive oil, chilli flakes or powder, a squeeze of lemon or lime juice.



# SUPER QUICK LEGUME SOUP...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Brilliant. Will keep in the fridge for a week or two. Also freezes well.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too thick** - add a little hot or boiling water.

**bland** - be generous with the seasoning. A splash of soy sauce can help.

**too thin** - add in some more legumes, if you can. Or try a handful of fresh breadcrumbs.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

In a deep bowl on its own. Also good with crusty bread and butter.



meat or legume balls

# MEAT OR LEGUME BALLS

There's something super comforting about little balls of protein baked in a tasty tomato sauce.

per person:

1 cup tomato passata (tomato puree)

parmesan cheese, to serve

for legume balls:

1/2 can legumes, drained

40g (1.5oz) almond meal

1/2 egg

for meat balls:

1/2 small onion, diced

150g (5oz) ground meat

40g (1.5oz) almond meal

1. Preheat oven to 200C (400F).
2. For lentil balls - Roughly mash lentils in a large bowl with a fork, then add almond meal and the egg. Mix and season.
3. For meat balls - soften onion in a little oil. Stir into the ground meat and almond meal. Season.
4. Place tomato passata in the base of a large oven proof dish. Using a soup spoon, form the lentil or meat mixture into small balls. Placing them in the sauce as you go.
4. Drizzle very generously with extra virgin olive oil and bake for about 20 minutes for lentil balls or 30-40 minutes for meat balls or until balls are firm and the sauce has reduced a little.

## VARIATIONS

**legumes** - lentils, white beans, butter beans, chickpeas, black beans, red kidney beans. You can also use cooked legumes and lentils.

**ground meat** - beef is traditional but minced pork, veal, lamb, turkey or chicken or a combination of these can be used.

**nut-free / budget** - replace almond meal with fresh soft breadcrumbs.

**flavours for sauce** - try a little chilli powder, some ground cumin, or butter.

**vegan/egg-free** - I've tried making these without the egg and they ended up as lentil 'mush' so probably best to try another dish if you can't have egg.

**dairy-free** - replace the parmesan with finely shaved brazil nuts or chopped fresh herbs such as basil or parsley or chives.



# MEAT OR LEGUME BALLS...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Great. Just reheat gently in the sauce in the oven. Makes a great sandwich filling. Can be frozen but may fall apart when you try to reheat.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**balls falling apart** - next time compact the balls more firmly together with your hands.

**bland** - be generous with the seasoning.

**sauce too acidic or sharp?** - add a few tablespoons of olive oil or butter for extra richness.

**balls browning too much** - cover with foil and cook until done.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great on a bed of baked noodles, or pasta or raw veg rice.

baked vegetable 'noodles'



# BAKED VEGETABLE NOODLES

One of the easiest way to get more vegetables in your diet is to replace starchy foods like pasta, with veggie alternatives. These baked 'noodles' are great anywhere you'd normally serve pasta.

per person

*150-200g (5-7oz) vegetables*

## VARIATIONS

**vegetables** - zucchini or carrots are my two favourites. Other root veg such as parsnip, celeriac are also good. Eggplant can also be used, but you'll need to increase the amount of oil.

1. Preheat oven to 180C (350F).
2. Slice veg into ribbons or 'noodles' using a mandoline or vegetable peeler. Or a sharp knife and a steady hand.
3. Layer veg on a baking tray and drizzle with a little olive oil.
4. Bake for 15-25 minutes or until veg are tender and starting to brown slightly.



# BAKED VEGETABLE NOODLES...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Great. Will keep in the fridge for a week or so. Just reheat gently in a warm oven.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**'noodles' difficult to eat** - either they've been cut too thickly, or they're undercooked or possible both. Next time slice more finely and keep cooking until the noodles feel as soft as al dente pasta.

**bland** - be generous with the seasoning. Next time try a different sauce.

**don't have an oven?** - the noodles can be simmered in boiling water for a few minutes, like pasta. Just be careful not to overcook as they will fall apart and go 'watery' quite easily.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great to serve with your favourite ragu, stew or pasta sauce.

A stack of three white ceramic bowls filled with white rice, with wooden chopsticks resting on top, set against a dark wood background. The rice is fluffy and piled high in the top bowl. The chopsticks are made of light-colored wood and are positioned diagonally across the bowls. The background is a dark, textured wooden surface.

raw veg 'rice'

# RAW VEG 'RICE'

Rice can be a hassle to cook without it going 'gluggy'. Finely grated raw veg only take a fraction of the time and end up lovely and fluffy every time. Plus it's a really easy way to get more veg into your diet.

per person

*150-200g (5-7oz) vegetables*

## VARIATIONS

**veg** - cauliflower is best here because of the more neutral flavour and rice-like colour. Broccoli, carrot or zucchini can also be used.

1. Grate veg finely using your food processor. Or a coarse microplane grater.

# RAW VEG 'RICE'...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

OK. Will keep in the fridge for a week or so. I usually stir in a tablespoon of olive oil to help prevent oxidation and browning.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**hard to eat** - it's important to grate the veg finely, so you end up with tiny pieces about the size of a grain of rice.

**bland** – it's meant to be used as an accompaniment to more fully flavoured dishes.

**don't have a food processor with a grater blade?** – you can grate by hand but it can be hard work! The alternative is to super finely chop the veg using a sharp knife.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Use anywhere you'd normally serve steamed rice. With curries or stir fries.

fresh herb sauce



# FRESH HERB SAUCE

This recipe began life as the classic Argentinean sauce, 'chimichurri'. The Argentines favour a combination of oregano and parsley, but other herbs can be used equally successfully.

makes about 3/4 cup

3 tablespoons acid

large handful herb 1.

large handful herb 2.

1/4 teaspoon chilli powder

2 cloves garlic, peeled & very finely chopped

1. Combine sherry vinegar with 1/4 teaspoon salt, 1/4 cup water and 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil. Stir until salt is dissolved.
2. Finely chop herbs and add to the sauce along with the chilli and garlic.
3. Stir until well combined. Taste and adjust seasoning as required.

## VARIATIONS

**acid** - sherry vinegar, rice vinegar, white wine vinegar, lemon juice.

**herbs** - parsley, oregano, marjoram, thyme, mint, basil, coriander leaf (cilantro).



# FRESH HERB SAUCE...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Actually tastes pretty good after a night in the fridge. The garlic flavour will intensify. The herbs will brown a little. Keeps for a good week in the fridge.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**difficult to eat** - chop the herbs more finely.

**bland** - be generous with the seasoning. Next time try a different sauce.

**too hot** - next time skip or tone down the chilli. For now, dilute with a little more olive oil.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Wonderful with grilled or BBQ meat or vegetables. Also lovely with savoury pastries or quiches.



almost *instant* sorbet

# ALMOST INSTANT SORBET

This is one of those recipes that you won't believe how simple AND delicious it is until you try it. In the picture I've used frozen chunks of banana, but I also LOVE frozen berries or other fruit.

per person

1 large handful fruit

1 -2 tablespoons 'topping', optional

1. Peel and chop the fruit and freeze overnight or for at least 6 hours. Or buy a box of frozen prepared fruit.
2. When you're ready to eat, pop the frozen fruit chunks in your food processor with a few tablespoons of water.
3. Whizz fruit until smooth and 'sorbet-ey' - it might take a few minutes to get there.
5. Sprinkle over topping, if using and serve ASAP.

## VARIATIONS

**fresh fruit** - banana, mango, pineapple (or use canned), peaches, pears, nectarines, apricots, strawberries, raspberries, blueberries.

**frozen fruit** - berries, anything that comes in pre-prepared frozen pieces.

**topping** - dark chocolate shavings, crumbled cookies, roasted nuts, crumbled praline, smashed honeycomb.



# ALMOST INSTANT SORBET...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

OK. Just return to the freezer. Puree again to break up any ice crystals just before serving.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland** - add a little icing (powdered) sugar. Next time use riper or better quality fruit.

**fruit not whizzing** - it can take a little while for the fruit to melt enough to puree. Add a little more water and be patient.

**short on time?** - don't be tempted to freeze the fruit, especially mangos or bananas without peeling them first – it's far more difficult to chop and peel frozen fruit (although not impossible, I've learned from experience).

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Best in individual bowls served with teaspoons.

super quick mousse



# SUPER QUICK MOUSSE

A mousse is a great way to finish a meal with something sweet but not too heavy.

per person

*1/3 cup whipping cream*

*1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract*

*70g (3oz) flavour highlight*

1. Whip cream until you have soft peaks. Add in vanilla.
2. Mash berries with a fork until you have a rough puree.
3. Fold the berries through the cream, leaving it a little unmixed or 'swirled'.
4. Divide between 4 small glasses and serve immediately or refrigerate until ready.

## VARIATIONS

**dairy-free / vegan** - chill a can of coconut cream. Scoop out the white cream from the top of the can, discarding any watery liquid. Whip as per regular cream.

**flavour highlight - fruit** - fresh or frozen fruit such as berries, bananas, mango (puree in a food processor), peaches, plums, passionfruit.

**flavour highlight - chocolate** - melt your favourite dark, milk or white chocolate and swirl through the whipped cream.

**flavour highlight - other** - smashed honeycomb, smashed cookies such as Oreos or Tim Tams, praline, raw honey.

**healthier** - replace some or all of the cream with natural yoghurt.



# SUPER QUICK MOUSSE...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Best when freshly made. Although will keep in the fridge for a few hours if you feel like preparing in advance.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**not sweet enough** - this is really relying on the ripeness of the berries to give enough sweetness. Serve with a little icing sugar (powdered) for people to adjust the sweetness level if you're worried about it.

**watery** - sounds like the cream wasn't whipped enough OR the fruit wasn't ripe enough. Change the name to 'berry soup'. :)

**grainy** - be careful when whipping the cream not to take it too far to the 'grainy' stage. The highlight ingredient will help mask the grainy texture, or stir in a little more unwhipped cream if you have some.

**short on time?** - use an electric mixer to whip the cream or if you're really desperate try whipped cream out of a can...or better yet, serve the berries with some commercial vanilla ice cream.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

In pretty glasses or tea cups with tiny spoons.

*Your*

**BONUSES**

VIDEO

\* Bonus 1.

THE 6 KEYS TO MEAL  
PLANNING SUCCESS

# THE 6 KEYS TO MEAL PLANNING SUCCESS

You're about to embark on learning a completely NEW way to plan and shop for your meals. Which means there's going to be a lot of change in this part of your life.

For most of us change can be exciting but at the same time it can bring up some fear and resistance. So to help get you ready to revolutionize YOUR meal planning system, I've created this Quick Start training to get you ready and raring to go. AND most importantly make sure that the change sticks and you get the results you're after.

## **KEY 1. START SMALL.**

This is one of the best concepts I've come across. It was taught to me by the lovely Leo Babauta from Zen Habits when I took a class in meditation with him last year. Leo's story is amazing. Over the last 6 years he's completely changed his life from being an overweight smoker stuck in a job he hated with loads of debt. To a clean, healthy debt-free, marathon-running machine who loves his work. And how has Leo achieved all this? One habit at a time. AND by starting small.

Leo's reasoning is that changing our lives is hard work. So the secret to his success has been to start as small as possible. This way he sets himself up for success and actually following through with the change. A much smarter approach than what we so often do, get all excited and start making heaps of massive changes all at once. Which of course we can't sustain so we get burnt out and give up all together.

Small steps are really where it's at.

## **KEY 2. FULLY COMMIT TO MAKING A CHANGE.**

As I mentioned earlier, change is scary for all of us in some way or other. One of the best ways to give yourself momentum so that you'll make the change in spite of the fear is to make a public commitment. So put it out there. Tell at least one person. It could be your family, friends or your social media network. Just as long as it's someone whose opinion you care about. Someone you won't want to let down by not keeping your commitment.

# THE 6 KEYS TO MEAL PLANNING SUCCESS

## **KEY 3. ADOPT AN ATTITUDE OF POSITIVE EXPECTANCY.**

I've only recently come across the concept of 'positive expectancy'. Basically it's all about Henry Ford's great quote

"If you think you can or think you can't, you'll be right either way"

Regardless of your situation or confidence level, there's no reason why YOU won't be able to get the 2-Minute Meal Planning system to work for you. So I want you to start believing that you can do it right now.

When you catch yourself thinking negative thoughts like, 'this won't work for me' you need to stop the thought. And then turn it into a question... 'HOW can this work for me?' And focus your attention on looking for solutions. And if you find you're struggling to find solutions for your situation, just leave a comment and let me know what you're struggling with so we can try and find a solution together.

## **KEY 4. START BEFORE YOU'RE READY.**

We're going to have 5 weeks together while I introduce you to new concepts and new ways of cooking. But no matter how much attention you pay to each lesson or how many times you watch each video, you're NOT going to see any results until you actually get started and make some changes.

One of the characteristics that differentiates successful people from not-so-successful people is that successful people know they're never going to feel completely safe and 'ready'. They don't let this hold them back from taking the first step. They take action.

I want you to be successful in your meal planning efforts which means you're going to need to 'start before you're ready'. It might be a little scary, but it's the only way to get results.

# THE 6 KEYS TO MEAL PLANNING SUCCESS

## **KEY 5. KNOW WHERE YOU'RE AT NOW.**

One of the most important steps to making lasting changes is to know exactly where you're starting from. To do this you need to observe your current meal planning system. Identify what's working and your areas for improvement. Make a list so you'll know where to focus your time and energy over the next 5 weeks.

This will also help you be on the lookout for the ideas that are going to have the biggest positive impact on your particular situation.

## **KEY 6. KNOW WHERE YOU WANT TO GET TO.**

They say you 'can't hit a target you can't see' for a good reason. You need to know where you want to get to in order to get there!

Set yourself just one goal for this class. It might be that you want to learn to 'wing it' for cooking dinner 1 night per week. Or maybe you're ready to go the 'whole hog' and say goodbye to your old meal planning ways forever. Be realistic but also aim high enough that your goal excited you when you think about it.

✦ Bonus 3.

**NEW TEMPLATE RECIPES**



one pot grain & veg

# ONE POT GRAIN & VEG

This is a favourite one pot meal when you're in the mood for something nourishing. I've called it 'grain' and veg but as you'll see you could easily use legumes instead if you prefer to keep it 'slow carb'.

per person

*1 large handful veg, rinsed and chopped*

*1 cup liquid*

*250g (9oz) cooked grain or legumes*

*1 small handful flavour highlight*

1. Heat a large saucepan on a very high heat. Add a little oil and the veg. Jam on the lid and cook for 2 minutes.
2. Stir and jam the lid back on for another 2 minutes.
3. Reduce the heat to medium low. Add the liquid, cooked grain or legumes and flavour highlight.
4. Cover again and cook for another 2 minutes or until everything is hot. If there's too much liquid, simmer uncovered for another few minutes. Taste & season.

## VARIATIONS

**veg** – Broccolini, broccoli, asparagus, cabbage, fennel, snow peas, carrots, capsicum (bell peppers) or zucchini are all great. You could use leafy veg as well – they will only need to be cooked until wilted. Think baby spinach, rocket (arugula), flat leaf parsley, mint leaves, basil leaves, finely sliced kale or any salad leaves.

**liquid** - Coconut milk, chicken stock, vegetable stock, white wine, fish stock, tomato juice, tomato puree, water.

**cooked grain or legumes** – brown rice, white rice, quinoa, millet, couscous, beans, chickpeas, lentils, cracked wheat, freekah, or burghl.

**highlight** – fresh chilli, dried chilli, lemon juice, lime juice, herbs such as thyme, rosemary added during cooking or leafy herbs added at the end such as mint, basil, parsley or coriander (cilantro).



# ONE POT GRAIN & VEG...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

Will keep in the fridge for a week or so but may dry out – if so just add a little more liquid when you're reheating.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**dry** – Different grains will absorb liquid at different rates – just add more until you're happy.

**sloppy** – simmer uncovered to reduce down. Next time use less liquid with that particular grain / legume.

**bland** – don't forget to be generous with the seasoning.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

In a big warming bowl.



*quick main course salad*

# QUICK MAIN COURSE SALAD

I love having salad for dinner. Especially when it's super hot out and I don't really feel like creating any heat in the kitchen. I love the convenience of picking up a BBQ chicken from my local supermarket and turning that into a meal as in the video, but there are literally hundreds of ways you could create this recipe.

per person

2 teaspoons acid

1 teaspoon mustard, optional

100g (3.5oz) carby ingredient

100g-150g (3-5oz) cooked protein

1/2 bag washed salad leaves

1. Whisk together acid, mustard, if using and 1-2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil. Season.
2. Toss in the carby ingredient and protein. Season.
3. Toss in the salad leaves and serve immediately.

## VARIATIONS

**acid** – Sherry vinegar, rice wine vinegar, lemon juice, lime juice, red/white wine vinegar, champagne vinegar.

**carby ingredient** – butter beans, cannellini beans, borlotti beans, chickpeas, lentils, red kidney beans. Pretty much any canned legume or home cooked ones, shaved raw vegetables, cooked noodles (as in the picture above), torn crusty bread (sourdough is especially good), cooked grains such as rice, quinoa or pasta.

**less carby** – replace the carby ingredient with extra leaves and protein.

**cooked protein** – canned tuna, salmon, sardines, nuts, cooked chicken, smoked chicken, BBQ chicken, salami, prosciutto, cold roast meats, avocado (not strictly protein but good), boiled eggs, smoked salmon, goats cheese, ricotta, cheddar, parmesan, cottage cheese.

**salad leaves** – pretty much any washed salad leaves, torn into big sized pieces if large.



# QUICK MAIN COURSE SALAD...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

OK but nicer when super fresh. Not something you should freeze.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too much dressing** – for now just transfer the whole salad to a clean bowl, leaving behind as much dressing as you can. Toss again to rub off dressing. Next time mix the dressing up in a small jar and gradually add to the salad.

**too dry** – either mix up some more dressing and drizzle over OR just drizzle over some more oil and acid separately as the italians do.

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

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

We tend to go for big bowls.

ground protein with veg



# GROUND PROTEIN WITH VEG

This isn't the type of dish you'll be thinking about for your next dinner party. But it's super versatile and comforting and not to mention quick to clean up after. The version in the picture is ground beef and kale with just lemon juice but you could try an Asian version or even Mexican or Thai... Anything really. For a more budget-friendly option serve on a bed of steamed rice or mash or pasta or even with lentils.

per person

200g (1/2lb) ground (minced) protein

1 teaspoons flavouring

1 large handful vegetables, finely sliced crosswise

1-3 tablespoons sauce

1. Heat a little olive or coconut oil in a large frying pan on a high heat.
2. Add protein and flavouring. Stir fry for a few minutes until will browned.
3. Add the veg and continue to cook, stirring now and then until the veg tender – another few minutes.
4. Taste and season with salt, pepper & your sauce.

## VARIATIONS

**protein** – pretty much any ground (minced) meat such as beef, chicken, lamb, pork or veal. You could also try sausage meat (remove from the casings) or finely chopped fish fillets. Be careful not to overcook the fish.

**vegetarian protein** – replace the ground meat with 6 eggs. Cook the veg first remove from the pan then scramble the eggs and cook until no longer 'snotty'. Other veggie protein options include cooked lentils or legumes.

**different veg** - Most green veg will work. Try collard greens, spinach, silverbeet, chard, baby spinach, broccoli or zucchini. Other veg such as carrots, capsicum (bell peppers), asparagus will also be great.

**different flavouring** – fresh or dried chilli, garlic, ginger, curry powder, garam marsala, ground cumin, ground coriander, smoked paprika.

**sauce** – lemon juice, soy sauce, oyster sauce, hoisin sauce, sweet chilli sauce, lime juice, salsa, curry paste, fish sauce, tomato ketchup, tomato paste, butter, yoghurt (best served as a dollop on top).



# GROUND PROTEIN WITH VEG...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

OK. Will keep in the fridge for a week or so but best when hot from the pan.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**dry** – drizzle with a little oil and/or sauce. Next time consider using ground meat with a higher fat content to keep everything moist.

**bland** – don't forget to be generous with the seasoning and add more sauce or try a different sauce.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Serve in a big bowl.



protein with *instant* sauce

# PAN FRIED PROTEIN WITH INSTANT SAUCE & SALAD

This is one of my favourite template recipes. I love the concept of 'instant' sauces because they can quickly transform a dish from boring to exotic. I also love them because they help 'hide' if you've overcooked the protein and it has dried out a little. It's definitely more general so there are literally thousands of options you could take.

per person

*approx 150-250g (5-9oz) protein*

*1 tablespoon lemon juice*

*2 handfuls finely sliced raw veg or salad leaves*

*3-4 tablespoons sauce, to serve*

1. Heat a frying pan on medium high heat. Add a little oil to the pan or rub the protein with oil. Pan fry the protein until browned on both sides and cooked to your liking. Anywhere from 2-5 minutes each side.
2. Combine lemon juice with 1-2 tablespoons olive oil. Season. Toss in finely sliced veg.
3. Serve protein on a bed of the salad with sauce drizzled over.



## VARIATIONS

**veggie 'protein'** - Halloumi, tofu or seitan would also work well here. Or pan fry some precooked / canned beans or lentils until they are just cooked. Field or portabello mushrooms are great here too. Or slice an eggplant into thick 'steaks'.

**carnivore protein** – 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. Or minced (ground) meat into burger patties.

**pescetarian protein** – any fish fillets will be great.

**raw veg** – Broccolini, broccoli, asparagus, cabbage, fennel, snow peas, carrots, capsicum (bell peppers) or zucchini are all great. Pretty much any veg that will work in a shaved salad is good here. You could use salad leaves as well. Think baby spinach, rocket (arugula), flat leaf parsley, mint leaves, basil leaves, finely sliced kale or any salad leaves.

**'instant' sauce** – Don't be afraid to call on convenient ready-made options if you don't have time to make your own. Things like pesto, hummus, babaganoush, chilli oil, basil oil, lemon oil, tabasco, mayonnaise, aioli, hollandaise, chilli sauce, lemon wedges, lime wedges, oyster sauce or soy sauce (for an Asian vibe), even good old ketchup can all work.

# PAN FRIED PROTEIN WITH INSTANT SAUCE & SALAD...

## LEFTOVER POTENTIAL?

OK! Will keep in the fridge for a week or so but best when hot from the pan. Especially if you're using halloumi.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**protein dry** – It could be the quality of the meat or it could be overcooked. Next time err on the side of undercooking. You can always add it back to the pan but you can't undo overcooked meat.

**salad difficult to eat** – with raw veg it's super important to chop them as finely as possible to make it pleasant to eat rather than a chore. If it's hard on the jaws, it needs more prep work.

**salad dry** – drizzle with a little more oil and lemon juice.

**bland** – don't forget to be generous with the seasoning and add more sauce or try a different sauce.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Serve protein on top of a bed of the salad with oil / sauce drizzled over.

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR



The author of this e-cookbook is Jules Clancy.

I'm a qualified Food Scientist, and the creator of the simple food blog [Stonesoup](#) and the Stonesoup Virtual Cookery School.

I've been writing my blog since 2005 because I believe that the ability to cook simple, healthy, delicious food is a basic skill, like reading, that everyone should and can have.

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 Irishman in particular].

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