



video edition

# SOLVE *your* Dinner Dilemma

How to make healthy dinners you'll LOVE in 15 minutes or less

*julesclancy*

For YOU! Thanks so much for being a Stonesoup student.  
I really appreciate the chance to help make your cooking easier and more fun!

Jx

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THE  
HABIT CHANGE  
FORMULA

# THE HABIT CHANGE FORMULA VIDEO

## The Habit Change Formula Video

All the material in the next few pages is covered in this introductory video:



video

### Why Habit Change?

You may be wondering why I've included a bonus on habit change for a class on healthy dinners.

Here's why...

1. Our habits are a massive driver for many of our behaviours including how we plan, shop, cook and eat.
2. No habits or bad habits generally lead to unhealthy eating.
3. Having healthy habits practically puts dinners on auto-pilot making healthy eating much easier and more fun.

# 3 GOLDEN RULES FOR CHANGING YOUR HABITS

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. By changing his habits he has completely transformed his life. He quit smoking, lost weight, became vegetarian, started running marathons, he got out of debt, and has built an incredibly successful blog that has allowed him to quit a job that he hates. All with a wife and six kids.

He's pretty much turned his whole life upside down. And how did he do it? One small change at a time.

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

## 3 golden rules of changing habits

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

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

**3. Focus on one habit at a time.** Basically, the secret to making changes in your life is to set small goals and take baby steps. By setting ourselves up for success, we gain the confidence and the motivation to keep making changes, one after the other. It also helps us persevere and try again when we fail.

Like to learn more?

on Zen Habits: [The habit change cheat sheet: 29 ways to successfully ingrain a behavior.](#)

# 4 TIPS TO SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS

## 1. Make it as easy as possible.

When I was learning to develop the habit of 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. I think of it as the first major step is just forming the new habit. Focus on this first. Then once you feel confident you've 'adopted' your new habit, it's time to start getting better at the habit. No rush though.

## 2. Plan some time for a pantry 'makeover'.

We'll cover pantry management in great detail in module 1. 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 makeover or spring clean some time in the not-to-distant-future.

## 3. 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' home made meal every night of the week. 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'

## 4. Take the first step!

Taking action is the only way you're going to make a difference to your current dinner situation. And there's no need to wait until the class starts to get going. Just follow the '2-step healthy dinner quick start program on the next page.

# 2-STEP HEALTHY DINNER QUICK START PROGRAM

While each of the 5 pillars that we'll be learning in Solve Your Dinner Dilemma is super important and will really help you change your dinner habits to a more sustainable healthy way, you don't necessarily need to implement all 5 pillars at the same time to make a difference.

So I wanted to give you an even easier process that you can implement straight away...

## STEP 1. Stock up

Here's the thing. You need actual food in the house to be able to make any sort of dinner. We'll be delving deep into a step-by-step guide to setting up and actually using your life-saving pantry / fridge / freezer in Module 1.

But if you're keen to get going fast, just check out the list of pantry recipes under the recipes tab. Choose 2-3 and shop for those ingredients.

## STEP 2. Make a promise with yourself and get cooking!

Make a promise to yourself (OR as we've discussed, make a public commitment to a friend or family member, or on facebook) that you're going to change your habits and take action.

Next time you get home from work late and you don't feel like cooking, turn the thought around and just cook one of your pantry recipes anyway. There's no need to wait to get started.

That's it!

# MODULE 1. YOUR PANTRY

"A step-by-step guide for setting up and using your life-saving pantry. With 15 pantry recipes you can make in 15 minutes or less."

# YOUR PANTRY MODULE VIDEOS

## Module 1 Video

All the material in the next few pages is covered in this video:

video

**Prefer to listen on your ipod?** [CLICK HERE](#) to download the audio in mp3. (you may need to right click and 'save link as')

A Virtual Tour of My Pantry, Fridge and Freezer

video

# a STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO SETTING UP & USING YOUR PANTRY

## STEP 1. Choose 2 pantry recipes.

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

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

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

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

Then it's up to step 2...

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

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

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

## STEP 3. Relax.

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

It's that simple.

# a STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO SETTING UP & USING YOUR PANTRY

[continued]

## **OPTIONAL BONUS!**

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

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

Here's how I do it....

1. Remove everything from the shelf.
2. Throw out anything that smells funny, is well past the 'best before' date, you have no idea what you'd use it in OR anything you don't really like.
3. Wipe down the shelf.
4. Put the 'keepers' back in some sort of order.

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

# HOW TO STOCK YOUR PANTRY

## **oils**

- :: good quality extra virgin olive oil – for salads and drizzling
- :: cheaper extra virgin olive oil – for cooking (I buy in bulk)
- :: peanut oil or macadamia oil – for frying and where you need a neutral flavoured oil.

## **vinegar**

- :: sherry vinegar – my favourite. Red wine vinegar would also be OK.
- :: balsamic – because sometimes you want a little more sweetness.
- :: lemons – not technically vinegar, but they do the same thing.

## **canned things**

- :: tomatoes – preferably whole peeled
- :: chickpeas – my all time favourite pantry ingredient
- :: beans – butter beans, cannellini, red kidney
- :: lentils
- :: fish – tuna in oil (with chilli), sardines
- :: chicken – I preferred smoked chicken
- :: coconut milk – especially for Asian cooks and vegan / dairy free fans.

## **jars**

- :: curry paste – red Thai or Indian
- :: tomato 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 – for people who don't like vegemite
- :: honey &/or maple syrup

# HOW TO STOCK YOUR PANTRY

[continued]

## sauces & condiments

- :: mustard – I always have both dijon & wholegrain
- :: soy sauce – wonderfully versatile
- :: mayonnaise – I've gotten into making my own, but that's not for everyone
- :: ketchup – that's tomato sauce for the Aussies out there
- :: oyster and/or fish sauce – for Asian cooks.

## seasonings

- :: salt – sea salt flakes like Maldon, cheaper fine sea salt or kosher salt for salting water.
- :: black peppercorns – best quality you can afford

## spices

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

## baking (not for everyone)

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

## dry goods

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

# HOW TO STOCK YOUR PANTRY

[continued]

## nuts

[not necessarily all at once]

- :: almonds
- :: pinenuts
- :: hazelnuts
- :: walnuts
- :: brazil nuts
- :: cashews

## fridge

- :: cheese – parmesan, ricotta, goats cheese, halloumi
- :: other dairy – butter, yoghurt
- :: 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)

# HOW TO STOCK YOUR PANTRY

[continued]

## nuts

[not necessarily all at once]

- :: almonds
- :: pinenuts
- :: hazelnuts
- :: walnuts
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## fridge

- :: cheese – parmesan, ricotta, goats cheese, halloumi
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- :: vegetables – frozen peas, broad beans, spinach
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# 13 WAYS TO HELP YOUR PANTRY COME TO THE RESCUE

Without some sort of pantry backup, life can be much harder than it needs to be. The thing is, having some sort of pantry doesn't need to be difficult or scary. Or require some sort of super human organisation.

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

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

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

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

## **3. Avoid the trap of deep shelves**

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

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

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

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

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

# 13 WAYS TO HELP YOUR PANTRY COME TO THE RESCUE

[continued]

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

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

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

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

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

Meat will keep for up to a month in the fridge, ready to use when vacuum packed or 'cryovaccated'. 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.**

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

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

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

# 13 WAYS TO HELP YOUR PANTRY COME TO THE RESCUE

[continued]

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

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

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

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

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

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

# 4 MOST COMMON PANTRY MISTAKES [HOW TO AVOID]

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

I've said it before, a pantry is only useful if it contains actual ingredients you can use for actual dishes or recipes you love to cook and eat. Think about your shopping habits. Decide on the best frequency for you to have a dedicated 'pantry' shop – it could only be once a month where you write a list and do a big stockup. Or it might be something you do once a week.

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

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

An overflowing pantry with things stuffed in willy-nilly, can be just as useless as an empty pantry. And a lot more daunting. Chaos is also unlikely to inspire you when you're feeling tired and hungry. Think about it, isn't the thought of a chaotic pantry enough to make you want to avoid your scary pantry all together and just pick up the phone and order some delivery?

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

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

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

## **4. Allowing infestation to strike.**

This used to be a big problem when I was living in Sydney. Between the cockroaches and Indian meal moths, there was a lot of waste in my pantry. That was until I invested in a set of glass canisters from Ikea that look great and weren't very expensive. I can't recommend this enough. Get a system for sealing open packets – preferably glass canisters but at the least use zip-lock bags – open packets are an invitation to insects and moths.

pantry~cauliflower~cheese



I love this method for cooking a whole range of veg from fresh broccoli and broccolini to asparagus to even things like bok choy. It's super quick and with the combination of charring and steaming give lovely complex veggie flavours. Frozen veg can be a little on the 'watery' side. This cooking method is brilliant because it cooks off all the extra water, leaving you with concentrated tasty veg.

# PanTRY CAULIFLOWER CHEESE

serves 2

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

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

video



# PANTRY CAULIFLOWER CHEESE

## do ahead potential?

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

## variations for fun

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## problem solving guide

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

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

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

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

## serving suggestions

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

parmesan peas *with* noodles



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

# PARMESAN PEAS WITH NOODLES

serves 2

2-3 tablespoons butter

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

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

2-3 handfuls grated parmesan cheese

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

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

3. Serve with parmesan on top.

video



# Parmesan Peas WITH NOODLES

## do ahead potential?

OK but best when freshly cooked.

## variations for fun

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

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

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

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

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

## problem solving guide

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

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

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

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

## serving suggestions

In bowls with extra parmesan on the side.

rice and greens



There's a classic Cuban dish of rice and beans which was everywhere when I visited. This is a 'fresher' healthier take.

If you can get spinach frozen into little 'bricks' rather than one big block, it's much better because it defrosts much more quickly. If you're stuck with a big frozen chunk of spinach, it may need a little spin in the microwave to speed up the defrosting process.

# RICE & GREENS

serves 2

- 2 cloves garlic, finely sliced
- 1 can coconut milk (400mL / 1.5 cups)
- 1 packet frozen spinach (250g / 9oz), defrosted
- 1 packet par-cooked brown rice (250g / 9oz)

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

video



# Rice and Greens

## do ahead potential?

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

## variations for fun

**sautéed greens** – just replace frozen spinach with your own sautéed greens ([recipe here](#))

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## problem solving guide

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

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

**bland** – it needs salt.

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

## serving suggestions

Lovely on it's own.



warm salmon & chickpea salad

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

# WARM SALMON & CHICKPEA SALAD

serves 2

*1 medium can salmon (200g / 7oz), drained  
1 can chickpeas (400g / 14oz), drained  
1 tablespoon rice vinegar or lemon juice*

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

video



# WARM SALMON & CHICKPEA SALAD

## do ahead potential?

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

## variations for fun

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

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

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

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

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

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

## problem solving guide

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

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


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

## serving suggestions

In bowls with forks.

green~spinach~lentils





If I had to pick a favourite lentil it would be 'Puy' also known as 'French-Style Green Lentils'. For me, they're the 'rolls royce' of the lentil world. I just adore the deep, earthy flavour and the fact that if you over cook them they still keep their shape.

If you can get spinach frozen into little 'bricks' rather than one big block, it's much better because it defrosts much more quickly. If you're stuck with a big frozen chunk of spinach, it may need a little spin in the microwave to speed up the defrosting process.

# GREEN SPINACH LENTILS

serves 2

200g (7oz) French-style green lentils  
250g (9oz) frozen spinach, defrosted  
2 tablespoons soy sauce  
2 tablespoons rice or white wine vinegar  
parmesan cheese, to serve

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

video

# GREEN SPINACH LENTILS

## do ahead potential?

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

## variations for fun

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## problem solving guide

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

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

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

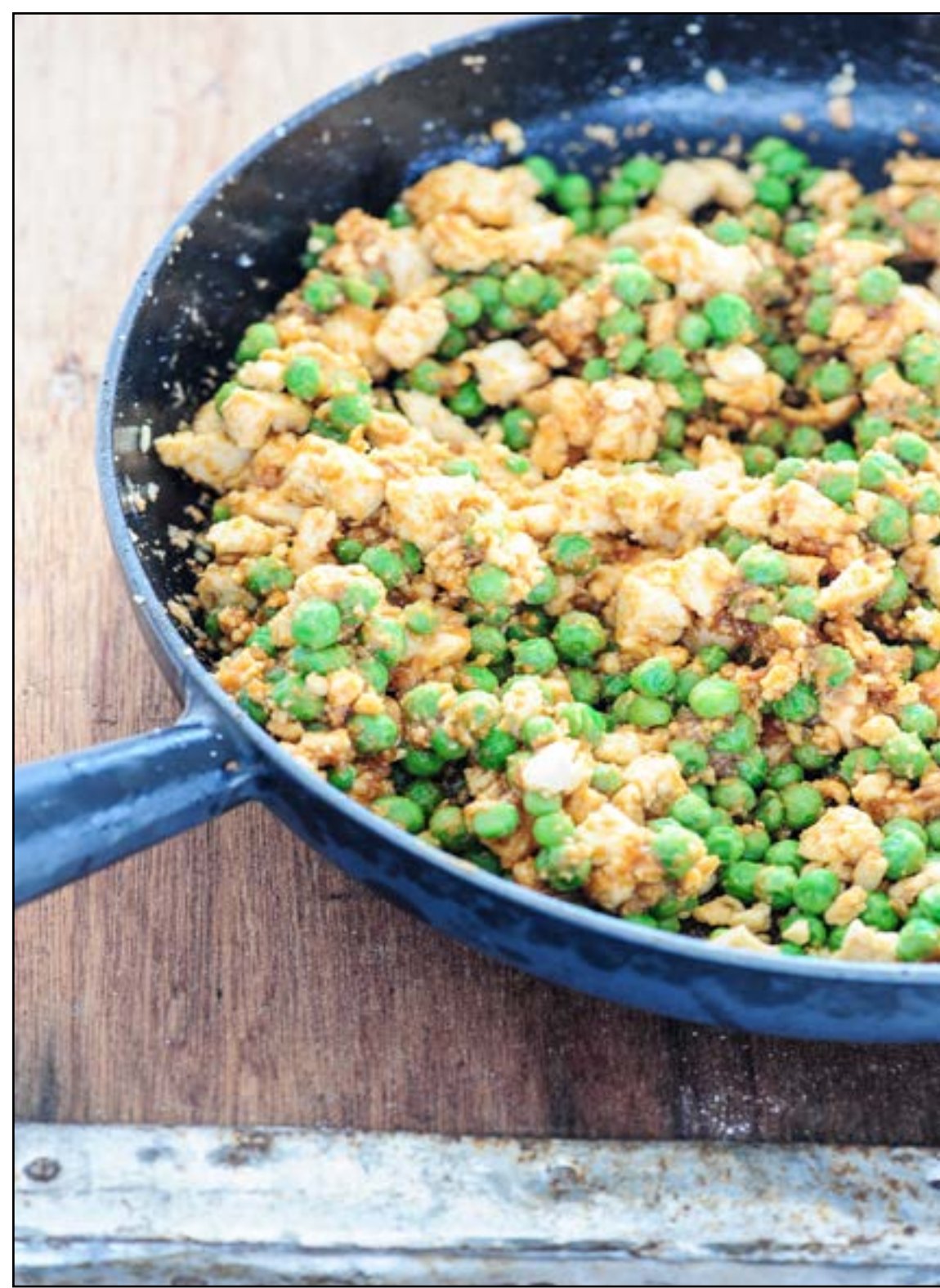
**bland** – add more soy and vinegar.

## serving suggestions

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



*quick~veggie~satay*



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

# Quick Veggie SATAY

serves 2

300g (11oz) firm tofu, crumbled

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

1-2 tablespoons Thai red curry paste

3-4 tablespoons peanut butter

1-2 tablespoon soy sauce

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

video

# QUICK VEGGIE SATAY

## do ahead potential?

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

## variations for fun

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

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

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

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

## problem solving guide

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

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

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

## serving suggestions

In big bowls.

broccoli~pantry~curry



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

# BROCCOLI PANTRY CURRY

serves 2

1 can coconut milk (400mL / 1.5 cups)

1 bag frozen broccoli (500g / 1lb)

2-3 teaspoons curry powder

1. Add coconut milk, frozen broccoli and curry powder to a medium saucepan.
2. Cover and place on a high heat. Bring to a boil then cook for about 5 minutes or until the broccoli is hot and cooked.
3. Taste and season generously, it will need quite a bit of salt. You may like to add a little more curry powder too.

video

# BROCCOLI PANTRY CURRY

## do ahead potential?

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

## variations for fun

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

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

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

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

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

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

## problem solving guide

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

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

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

## serving suggestions

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

creamy~coconut~lentils



Red lentils are one of my favourite pantry staples because they're cheap, packed with protein, are really quick to cook and taste super delicious. This dish is 'comfort central' in a similar way to a good risotto. I also think that coconut milk is an underutilized ingredient apart from Asian cooking. This recipe really showcases how versatile coconut milk can be.

# CREAMY COCONUT LENTILS

serves 2

1 can tomatoes (400g / 14oz)

1 can coconut milk (400mL / 1.5 cups)

200g (7oz) red lentils

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

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

video



# CREAMY COCONUT LENTILS

## do ahead potential?

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

## variations for fun

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

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

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

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

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

## problem solving guide

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

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

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

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

## serving suggestions

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

beet & tomato soup



This is a classic pantry recipe that I developed, literally because I was looking for something quick for dinner using what I had in the house. The almond butter may sound a bit odd but it gives a lovely richness and unexpected complexity.

# BEET & TOMATO SOUP

serves 2

1 jar tomato pasta sauce (400g / 14oz)  
1 can baby beets (440g / 15oz), drained  
2 teaspoons ground cumin or coriander  
6-8 tablespoons almond butter

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

video



# BEET & TOMATO SOUP

## do ahead potential?

Will keep in the fridge for a week or so.

## variations for fun

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

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

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

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

## problem solving guide

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

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

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

**no almond butter?** replace with fresh cream or tahini (ground sesame seeds) or cashew butter. Or see the nut-free options above.

## serving suggestions

Brilliant on its own.

quinoa & grilled veg salad



I just love quinoa in salads as it has the most wonderful chewy texture.

# quinoa & GRILLED VEG SALAD

serves 2

100g (3.5oz) dried quinoa, (or 250g cooked)

2 tablespoons lemon juice

large handful roast eggplant, sliced & drained

large hand grilled red capsicum (bell peppers), sliced

handful brazil nuts or almonds, to serve

1. Bring a medium pot of water to the boil. Rinse quinoa well then simmer for 10-12 minutes or until al dente like pasta. Drain. If using cooked quinoa skip this step.
2. Combine lemon juice with 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil. Season.
3. Toss warm quinoa in the dressing. Add eggplant and red capsicum and serve with nuts sprinkled over.

video



# Quinoa & GRILLED VEG SALAD

## do ahead potential?

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

## variations for fun

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

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

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

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

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

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

## problem solving guide

**can't find quinoa?** – use brown rice, green lentils or pasta cooked according to the packet directions. Or use drained canned chickpeas – 1 can should do it.

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

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

## serving suggestions

Wonderful on it's own. OR for a healthier (non-pantry) option serve over a handful of baby spinach leaves.



KEEN'S  
Curry

quick~veg~curry

While I just adore Indian food and restaurants, sometimes its much nicer to make your own curry so you know exactly what has gone into it. Choose your favourite curry powder here and be prepared to play around with the level. Likewise with the chilli. The veg are also something to adjust according to what you have on hand although I love the simplicity of this pantry version.

# QUICK VEG CURRY

serves 2

- 1 jar tomato pasta sauce (400g / 14oz)
- 1 can white beans (440g / 15oz), drained
- 1 jar roasted red peppers (280g / 10oz), drained
- 1/2 - 1 teaspoons chilli flakes
- 4 teaspoons curry powder

1. Place tomato sauce (marinara sauec), beans, peppers, chilli and curry powder and bring to a simmer.
2. Cook gently for 2 -3 minutes or until the curry is hot.
3. Taste and season, adding more curry powder and chilli if you think it needs it. Serve with a generous drizzle of extra virgin olive oil.

video



# QUICK VEG CURRY

## do ahead potential?

You could easily prepare this a few days in advance and keep in the fridge. Currys tend to improve when left to their own devices.

## variations for fun

**quick roast veg curry** – replace peppers with 2 large handfuls diced roast veg (recipe here).

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

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

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

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

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

## problem solving guide

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

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

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

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

## serving suggestions

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

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

garlic & chili spaghetti



I remember the first time I came across this super simple pasta dish in an Italian restaurant. I was so intrigued that I just had to order it to find out how you could actually have a pasta dish with so little sauce. Safe to say I've been hooked ever since. As long as you have pasta in the pantry, you have the makings for a delicious comforting meal.

# CHILLI & GARLIC SPAGHETTI

serves 1

100g (3.5oz) spaghetti or other pasta  
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
1/2 - 1 teaspoon dried chilli flakes  
1 clove garlic, finely sliced

1. Bring a pot of salted water to the boil. Add pasta and set the timer for 1 minute less than the duration recommended on the packet.
2. Stir pasta every few minutes, but meanwhile make your sauce.
3. Gently heat oil in a small saucepan. Add chilli and garlic and fry for a minute or until garlic is starting to go a little brown. Remove from the heat.
4. When the pasta timer rings. Taste pasta and give it a little longer if it is still too crunchy. When the pasta is al dente, scoop out a cup of cooking liquid and drain.
5. Return pasta to the hot pan and toss in the oil. Taste and season and add a little cooking water if it looks too dry.

video



# CHILLI & GARLIC SPAGHETTI

## do ahead potential?

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

## variations for fun

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

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

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

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

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

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

## problem solving guide

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

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

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

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

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

## serving suggestions

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

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

tuna & lentil salad



For years tuna and white bean or butter bean salad has been on high rotation in our house as a quick lunch or dinner.

So I was tempted to include that salad in our pantry recipes, but then I had the bright idea to try it with canned lentils and capers instead. Don't tell the butter beans but I think I've found my new favourite tuna salad.

# Tuna & LENTIL SALAD

serves 2

- 1 tablespoon sherry or white wine vinegar
- 1 can lentils (400g / 14oz), drained & rinsed
- 2 tablespoons capers
- 2 cans tuna in oil (125g / 5oz each)

1. If your tuna is in good quality olive oil, place 2 tablespoons of the oil in a large salad bowl. Drain and discard the rest of the oil or keep it for another use.

2. Toss vinegar in with the oil. Add drained lentils and toss to combine.

3. If the capers are salted, place them in a little bowl of water then remove and squeeze dry. Toss in with the salad.

4. Flake tuna into the salad and toss lightly. Taste and season.

video



# Tuna & LENTIL SALAD

## do ahead potential?

Will keep in the fridge for a week or so.

## variations for fun

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

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

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

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

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

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

## problem solving guide

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

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

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

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

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

## serving suggestions

Brilliant on its own or toss in some leaves for a more salady vibe.

pea & pesto soup



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

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

# Pea & PESTO SOUP

serves 2

500g (1lb) frozen peas

2-4 tablespoons pesto

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

video



# PEA & PESTO SOUP

## do ahead potential?

Brilliant. Will keep for a week in the fridge.

## variations for fun

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

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

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

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

## problem solving guide

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

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

## serving suggestions

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

chickpea~veg~salad



I love this method for cooking a whole range of veg from fresh broccoli and broccolini to asparagus to even things like bok choy. It's super quick and with the combination of charring and steaming give lovely complex veggie flavours. Frozen veg can be a little on the 'watery' side. This cooking method is brilliant because it cooks off all the extra water, leaving you with concentrated tasty veg.

# CHICKPEA & VEG SALAD

serves 2

1 jar grilled red peppers (280g / 10oz), drained  
1 jar grilled eggplant (280g / 10oz), drained  
1 can chickpeas (400g / 14oz), drained  
1 tablespoon sherry or red wine vinegar  
handful almonds, optional

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

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

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

video



# CHICKPEA & VEG SALAD

## do ahead potential?

You could easily prepare this a few days in advance and keep in the fridge. Bring it up to room temp or reheat in a pan before serving. I'd leave the almonds to add at the last minute because they can go a little soggy in the dressing.

## variations for fun

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

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

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

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

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

## problem solving guide

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

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

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

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

## serving suggestions

With the chickpeas and almonds it's a great vegetarian meal on its own. Also lovely as a side salad with grilled or roast meat or poultry. Would also be great with kebabs or falafels

MODULE 2.  
YOUR  
10 INGREDIENT  
SHOPPING LIST

"The quickest, easiest done-for-you meal planning system."

# YOUR 10 INGREDIENT SHOPPING LIST MODULE VIDEOS

## Module 2 Video

All the material in the next few pages is covered in this video:



**Prefer to listen on your ipod?** [CLICK HERE](#) to download the audio in mp3. (you may need to right click and 'save link as')

# SHOPPING LIST no. 1

This shopping list is the shortest of the collection. The go-to proteins in this collection of recipes are good old fashioned steak and chicken thigh fillets. Hummus has been included to add protein and substance to the 'meat-free Monday' vegetarian recipe of the group.

## Recipes

Chicken & Broccoli Stir Fry  
Vietnamese Beef Salad  
Chilli Chicken with Hummus  
Lemon Steaks with Broccoli  
Hummus Charred Broccoli

## Shopping List

1. Steak
2. Chicken Thigh Fillets
3. Hummus
4. Cashew Nuts
5. Lime Juice
6. Lemon Juice
7. Salad Leaves
8. Broccoli

## Pantry Items

Oyster Sauce  
Fish Sauce  
Dried Chilli  
Olive Oil  
Salt & Pepper

# SHOPPING LIST no. 2

This shopping list, features salmon, prosciutto, chickpeas and parmesan. If you find it difficult to buy fresh fish, chicken breasts can be substituted in the two salmon recipes.

## Recipes

Prosciutto Baked Salmon  
Chickpea & Yoghurt Salad  
Pasta with Prosciutto & Spinach  
Salmon, Lime & Chilli Salad  
Hot Cheesy Chickpeas

## Shopping List

1. Salmon
2. Prosciutto
3. Parmesan
4. Chickpeas
5. Natural Yoghurt
6. Lime
7. Mint
8. Coriander (Cilantro)
9. Baby Spinach
10. Pasta (or canned white beans)

## Pantry Items

Lemon juice or vinegar  
Dried Chilli  
Olive Oil  
Salt & Pepper

# SHOPPING LIST no. 3

This is the vegetarian collection of the series. If you don't have access to canned lentils, you can substitute cooked, dried lentils. We'll be going into more detail on cooking lentils in module 3. but for now just cook them in boiling water like pasta until they are tender and use as per the recipe.

## Recipes

Curried Scrambled Eggs  
Warm Onion & Lentil Salad  
Pea & Parsley Baked Eggs  
Pea & Lentil Salad  
Egg Fried Lentils

## Shopping List

1. Frozen Peas (or fresh)
2. Onions
3. Flat Leaf Parsley
4. Mixed Salad Leaves
5. Eggs
6. Canned Lentils
7. Parmesan Cheese
8. Soy Sauce
9. Balsamic / Sherry Vinegar
10. Walnuts

## Pantry Items

Dried Chilli  
Olive Oil  
Salt & Pepper  
Curry Powder  
Lemon Juice

# LINKS TO MORE 10 INGREDIENT SHOPPING LISTS


Links to Other 10 Ingredient Shopping Lists  
on Stonesoup

10 Ingredient Shopping List Links by Key Protein...

1. [Ground beef, tuna, lentils](#)
2. [Eggs, tofu, lentils \(veggie\)](#)
3. [Ground chicken, white beans, pork sausages](#)

vietnamese beef salad





This is one of my go-to dinners when I'm looking for something fast and fresh. I just love the combo of lime juice and fish sauce for bringing boring old steak to life.

I've just used salad leaves here but feel free to add in fresh herbs, especially mint and coriander (cilantro).

# Vietnamese BEEF SALAD

serves 2

2 steaks

5 tablespoons fish sauce

6 tablespoons lime juice

1 teaspoon dried chilli flakes, or fresh chilli

4 handfuls salad leaves

1. Drizzle 2 tablespoons fish sauce over the steak and allow to marinate while you heat a pan on a high heat.
2. Pan fry the steaks for about 3 minutes on each side until cooked to your liking.
3. Meanwhile, combine lime juice with remaining 3 tablespoons fish sauce and the chilli.
4. When the beef is cooked, transfer to the dressing and rest for a few minutes.
5. Finely slice the steaks and return to the dressing. Toss in the salad leaves and serve immediately.

video

# vietnamese BEEF SALAD

## do ahead potential?

You could either marinate the raw beef in fish sauce for a day or so in the fridge. Or cook the beef and let it rest in the fridge for a day or so before serving cold with the leaves tossed through.

Will keep for over a week in the fridge – the salad leaves will wilt but it will still be edible.

## variations for fun

**vegetarian / vegan** - replace the fish sauce with soy sauce (2 tablespoons should do it). And stir fry sliced mushrooms to use in place of the beef.

**herby** – add in fresh coriander (cilantro) or mint leaves as well as or instead of the salad leaves.

**budget** – replace the steak with ground (minced) beef. Brown it well then toss into the dressing.

**more substantial** – serve with cauliflower ‘rice’ or steamed rice or toss in some rice noodles cooked as per the packed directions.

## problem solving guide

**steak too tough** – it could just be the steak, or it’s over cooked. Next time try a different cut OR a different butcher.

**too salty** – different brands of fish sauce vary in their intensity. If it’s too much, balance out with a little more lime juice and a pinch of sugar.

**bland** – add in a little more fish sauce or some salt. More chilli will help liven things up as well.

**short on time?** – slice the raw beef into strips and stir fry for a few minutes until just browned.

## serving suggestions

Great as a light, fresh dinner on its own. Or serve as part of an Asian banquet with a curry and possibly another stir fry.

chilli~chicken~with~hummus



Hummus is one of my favourite ingredients. It's wonderful here as a cross between a sauce and an accompaniment. You can get some decent commercial hummus these days so don't feel like you need to make your own from scratch.

# CHILLI CHICKEN + HUMMUS

serves 2

- 4 chicken thigh fillets
- 1 teaspoon dried chilli flakes or powder
- 8 tablespoons hummus
- 2 large handfuls washed salad leaves
- 1 lemon halved lengthwise

1. Heat a frying pan or skillet on a very high heat.
2. Trim fat from chicken and bash with your fist to even out the thickness. Rub with a little olive oil and sprinkle with chilli. Season.
3. Sear with the oiled side down for 3 minutes. Turn and cook for another 2-3 minutes or until chicken is cooked through.
4. Smear hummus over the base of 2 plates. Top with chicken and serve with leaves and salad on the side.

video



# CHILLI CHICKEN WITH HUMMUS

## do ahead potential?

Pretty good. Can be eaten cold or the chicken reheated. Will keep in the fridge for 4-5 days. Hummus will keep longer.

## variations for fun

**vegan** – replace chicken with 2 field or portabello mushrooms per person. Trim and pan fry for about 4 minutes each side until the mushrooms are tender and juicy. Sprinkle on the chilli at the end before serving.

**vegetarian** – replace chicken with sliced halloumi cheese and cook in a little oil until golden and oozing.

**home made hummus** – whizz 1 can chickpeas with 3 tablespoons lemon juice, tahini, canning liquid and 1 clove garlic in a food processor until smooth.

**more substantial** – serve with pita bread for wrapping.

## problem solving guide

**too bland** – Season with salt & pepper. Try some chilli.

**too dry** – Add a little more olive oil or serve with more hummus. If the chicken is very dry it means it's been overcooked. Next time get it out of the pan earlier.

**chicken pink** – Means it's not cooked properly. Just pop back in the pan and cook for another few minutes. Next time consider being a bit more aggressive with your bashing to make sure the chicken is thinner and will cook more quickly.

## serving suggestions

Either serve chicken on a bed of hummus or serve hummus on top.



lemon~steaks~with~broccoli

Bashing the steaks like this has three benefits. First, it allows them to cook quicker. It also makes it easier to tell when the steaks are cooked. And finally it tenderises the meat, meaning it's fine for less expensive cuts as well. Although truth be told, my favourite part of this recipe is how the lemon juice and olive oil mingles with the juices as the steaks rest to make the most wonderful instant sauce.

# Lemon STEAKS WITH BROCCOLI

serves 2

2 steaks

*1 head broccoli, sliced lengthwise*

*2 tablespoons lemon juice*

1. Preheat a skillet or frying pan on a super high heat.
2. Using your fist or the base of a saucepan, bash steaks out until they are about half the thickness. Rub with olive oil and season.
3. Sear steaks for 2 minutes. Turn and sear for another 1-2 minutes, or until cooked to your liking.
4. Divide steaks between 2 warm dinner plates. Top with lemon and drizzle with your best peppery extra virgin olive oil.
5. Add a little oil to the pan and stir fry broccoli for a few minutes, or until charred on the outside.
6. Serve steaks topped with broccoli.

video



# Lemon STEAKS WITH BROCCOLI

## do ahead potential?

Best if served hot and fresh.

## variations for fun

**vegetarian** – Replace the steak with sliced haloumi cheese and cook in a little oil until golden and oozing. Serve straight away with the broccolini and chilli oil.

**vegan** – slice a block of tofu into 5mm (1/4in) thick slices and pan fry until golden on both sides.

**fun** – explore different types of meat. Chicken breast is lovely cooked in this way.

**hot!** – drizzle the steaks with chilli oil, or use a little dried chilli.

## problem solving guide

**too bland** – Season with salt & pepper. Try some chilli.

**too dry** – Add a little more olive oil.

**broccoli too crunchy / soft** – Next time cook it for longer / less time.

**steak tough** – sounds like you didn't bash your steaks out enough. Next time be more aggressive. And consider trying a different cut of steak.

## serving suggestions

Great on its own. Or with a little Dijon mustard.



hummus~charred~broccoli

This is one of my all-time favourite ways to cook broccoli. By getting the pan super hot and using the lid to trap the steam, the broccoli chars on the bottom and steams on the top, giving a really lovely texture and complex flavour.

# HUMMUS CHARRED BROCCOLI

serves 2

2 heads broccoli

8 tablespoons hummus

large handful roasted cashews or almonds

1. Heat a large frying pan on a very high heat. Chop your broccoli into mini trees.
2. Add a few tablespoons olive oil to the pan and add broccoli immediately. Cover and cook for 2 minutes.
3. Stir broccoli, recover and cook for another 2 minutes or until how you like it.
4. Smear hummus over the base of two plates. Top with hot broccoli and scatter over the cashews.

video



# HUMMUS CHARRED BROCCOLI

## do ahead potential?

I happily eat this broccoli cold so it's fine to prepare ahead.

## variations for fun

**carnivore** – For a more substantial meal. brown some ground beef until really well cooked. Season and sprinkle over the broccoli.

**nut-free** – Just skip the nuts or replace with chopped hard boiled egg.

**home made hummus** – Whizz 1 can chickpeas with 3 tablespoons lemon juice, tahini, canning liquid and 1 clove garlic in a food processor until smooth.

**more substantial** – serve with fresh pita bread.

## problem solving guide

**too bland** – Season with salt & pepper and lemon juice.

**too dry** – drizzle over a few tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil. Or use more hummus.

**broccoli burning** – Add a few tablespoons of water to the pan to prevent burning and increase the steam. Make sure you are covering the broccoli as best you can.

**broccoli too crunchy** – This method does tend to give more al dente broccoli. If you prefer it more tender, just cook for longer. A little extra water can help as well. Or use frozen broccoli which naturally less crunchy because of the freezing process.

## serving suggestions

Great on its own. Or with some well browned ground (minced) beef.



chicken & broccoli stir fry

This is one of my all-time favourite stir fries. I just love how the chicken, broccoli and cashews come together to make a super tasty meal in a bowl.

# CHICKEN & BROCCOLI STIR FRY

serves 2

2 chicken breasts, finely sliced  
1 bag frozen broccoli (500g / 1lb) or fresh  
3 tablespoons oyster sauce  
1 tablespoon lime juice  
1 cup cashew nuts (150g / 5oz)

1. Heat a large frying pan or wok on a very high heat.
2. Add a few tablespoons peanut or macadamia oil to the pan and add chicken immediately.
3. Stir fry for a few minutes or until the chicken is no longer pink. Remove chicken from the pan.
4. Add broccoli and cook stirring occasionally until the broccoli is tender and hot.
5. Return the chicken to the pan with the oyster sauce, lime juice & nuts. Stir until hot. Taste and season.

video



# CHICKEN & BROCCOLI STIR FRY

## do ahead potential?

Stir fries are best made at the last minute. But you can reheat if that's more convenient.

## variations for fun

**carnivore** – Feel free to try different types of meat such as beef or pork. Tender cuts are the best. Minced chicken (ground) would also be lovely.

**fish free** – Oyster sauce should actually contain some oysters (who knew?) replace the oyster sauce with hoisin sauce or soy sauce.

**gluten free** – Some oyster sauce brands contain gluten thickeners. Replace with gluten-free soy sauce (tamari) or find an oyster sauce that is gluten-free.

**vegetarian / vegan** – replace the chicken with tofu or a can of drained beans and replace oyster sauce with soy.

**nut-free** – replace cashews with 1/2 can drained white or black beans.

## problem solving guide

**too bland** – Season with salt & pepper and extra lime juice.

**too dry** – Add a little more oyster sauce

**chicken too dry or tough** – next time cut the chicken into finer slices so it cooks more quickly and remains moist and tender. Also it's better to be sure you don't overcook the chicken so remove it from the pan as soon as it's done, cook the broccoli and return the chicken at the end (don't follow my method in the video of leaving the chicken in the pan with the broccoli)

**can't find limes?** – Lemon juice or even a little rice wine or other wine vinegar will be a lovely replacement.

**still can't find oyster sauce?** – replace with soy sauce or hoisin or other stir fry sauce.

**broccoli too crunchy** – Frozen broccoli tends to be naturally more tender due to the freezing process. If you're using fresh it will take longer to cook and will benefit from having the lid on while you cook. Add a little water if it starts to burn before it is tender.

## serving suggestions

Great on its own. If you're having cravings for rice, serve with breakfast lentils on the side.



prosciutto *baked* salmon

Salmon wrapped with prosciutto was the first Jamie Oliver recipe I ever made. Jamie serves his salmon on a bed of 'herby lentils' but I prefer to keep it simple and serve on a bed of baby spinach.

This is a great way to cook fish if you want to avoid 'fishy' smells in your apartment.

# PROSCIUTTO BAKED SALMON

serves 2

2 salmon fillets

4 slices prosciutto

2 large handfuls baby spinach

4-6 tablespoons natural yoghurt

1. Preheat your oven to 200C (400F).
2. IF the salmon has skin, use a sharp knife to remove the skin,
3. Wrap each fillet with two slices of prosciutto and place on a baking tray. Drizzle with a little olive oil.
4. Bake for 10-15 minutes or until prosciutto is starting to brown and the salmon is cooked but still pink in the middle.
5. Serve salmon on a bed of baby spinach drizzled with yoghurt and lots of freshly ground black pepper.

video



# PROSCIUTTO BAKED SALMON

## do ahead potential?

You could bake the salmon ahead of time and then serve chilled or reheat in the oven for 5 minutes or so. Wait until the last minute before adding the yoghurt and greens. Will keep for a few days in the fridge.

## variations for fun

**carnivore** – Try wrapping chicken breasts with prosciutto. Will take a little longer to bake than the salmon, in the 15-20 minute range.

**salmon & peas** – while the salmon is baking, cook some frozen peas in a pan with a little olive oil until hot and serve with the salmon either instead of or as well as the baby spinach.

**pescatarian** – skip the prosciutto and season the salmon with lots of salt & pepper.

**no oven?** – pan fry the wrapped salmon instead. It will take 3-4 minutes on each side.

**vegetarian** – roast mushrooms in a hot oven for 20-25 minutes or until tender and serve on a bed of baby spinach with the yoghurt sauce.

**vegan** – roast mushrooms as per the vegetarian recipe and serve with spinach & lentils. Mix a drained can of lentils in with the spinach and season with lemon juice and a little olive oil.

## problem solving guide

**dry salmon** – this is tough to achieve. But sounds like your salmon is overcooked. Next time cook for less. For now be generous with the yoghurt.

**unevenly cooked salmon** – if your salmon fillets are quite different in size and shape it can be difficult to get them to cook evenly. Not much you can do now, but next time try to choose fillets from the middle of the fish rather than the tail end.

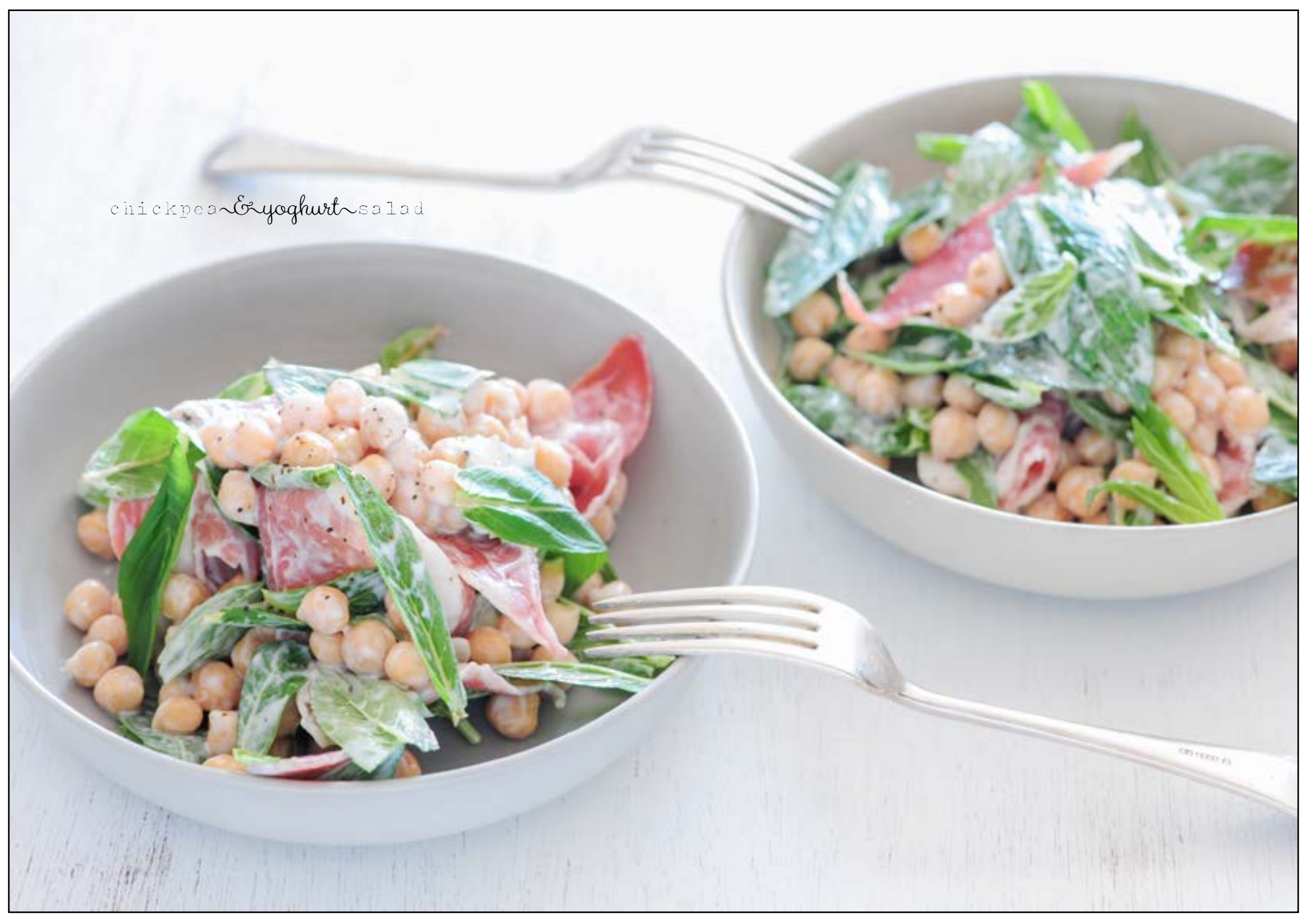
**bland** – next time try a different fishmonger for your salmon. For now be more generous with the salt & pepper and try a squeeze of lemon to freshen things up.

**short on time?** – pan fry the wrapped salmon instead. It will take 3-4 minutes on each side.

## serving suggestions

Great as is.

chickpea & yoghurt salad



I love using yoghurt as an ingredient. It adds lovely creaminess without being too rich and heavy. Make sure you use a good quality full-fat yoghurt.

# CHICKPEA + YOGHURT SALAD

serves 2

3 tablespoons natural yoghurt

1 tablespoon lemon juice

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

4-6 slices prosciutto, torn

1 small bunch mint, leaves picked

1. Combine yoghurt and lemon juice in a bowl. Season.
2. Toss in chickpeas, prosciutto and mint. Serve.

video

# CHICKPEA & YOGHURT SALAD

## do ahead potential?

Will keep in the fridge for about a week. If making ahead best to add the mint leaves just before serving to avoid wilting.

## variations for fun

**dairy-free** – replace yoghurt with extra virgin olive oil.

**vegan** – replace prosciutto with grilled red peppers or semi-dried tomatoes and replace yoghurt with extra virgin olive oil.

**vegetarian** – replace prosciutto with grilled veg or chopped hard boiled eggs (2 should do it) or a handful of roasted hazelnuts or almonds.

**warm salad** – warm chickpeas in the microwave or a small saucepan before tossing in the salad. The prosciutto can be pan fried until crispy as well if you like.

**different greens** – baby spinach or salad leaves or basil can substitute for the mint.

**budget** – replace prosciutto with chopped bacon that has been pan fried until crisp.

## problem solving guide

**too watery** – make sure the chickpeas are well drained before tossing in the dressing. You may like to pat dry on paper towel. The other culprit could be the brand of yoghurt. Next time try a creamier natural yoghurt.

**bland** – season with a little more salt and possibly a splash more lemon juice.

## serving suggestions

Lovely in a bowl on its own. You could also consider serving with pita bread on the side.

*pasta with prosciutto*



It's hard to go past a good quick pasta dinner. Especially ones like these where all you need to do is boil the pasta and make an 'instant sauce' by stirring the flavourings in at the last minute. Of course, I've included a 'pasta-free' option in the variation for those of you who prefer to go easy on the carbs or gluten.

# Pasta WITH PROSCIUTTO

serves 2

200g (7oz) pasta

2 tablespoons lemon juice

4-6 slices prosciutto, torn

2 handfuls finely grated parmesan + extra to serve

2-3 handfuls baby spinach leaves

1. Bring a medium pot of salted water to the boil. Add pasta and set your timer as per the recommendations on the pasta packet.
2. When pasta is 'al dente' or tender, drain and return to the pot.
3. Add lemon juice and 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil to make your sauce.
4. Add prosciutto, parmesan and baby spinach. Toss to combine. Taste & season.
5. Serve with extra parmesan if needed.

video



# Pasta WITH PROSCIUTTO

## do ahead potential?

Best when fresh. Will keep in the fridge for a few days.

## variations for fun

**vegetarian** – replace the prosciutto with sliced semi-dried tomatoes.

**vegan** – replace parmesan with finely grated brazil nuts or almond meal and replace prosciutto with semi dried tomatoes or grilled red peppers.

**dairy-free** – just skip the cheese or replace parmesan with finely grated brazil nuts or almond meal.

**pasta-free** - heat a drained can of white beans or chickpeas in a frying pan. Remove from the heat and continue from step 3.

**different greens** – replace spinach with fresh basil leaves or rocket (arugula)

## problem solving guide

**bland** – add more parmesan.

**dry** – drizzle with a little more extra virgin olive oil and possibly a little more lemon juice.

**pasta sticking together** – either the pasta hasn't been stirred enough, especially during the initial few minutes of cooking. Or the pasta is overcooked.

## serving suggestions

A great quick one bowl meal. Or if feeding people who are a bit afraid of greens – serve with spinach on the side.

salmon lime & chilli salad



When my Irishman asked what was for dinner and I told him it was this salad he wasn't very impressed with the idea and asked if we could have some beef or potatoes with it. After we ate the salad for dinner, however his story had done a complete backflip and he wanted to know if there were seconds! We both loved how the freshness of the herbs and dressing contrasted the rich hot salmon.

# salmon, lime & CHILLI SALAD

serves 2

2 salmon fillets

1-2 small red chillies, finely sliced

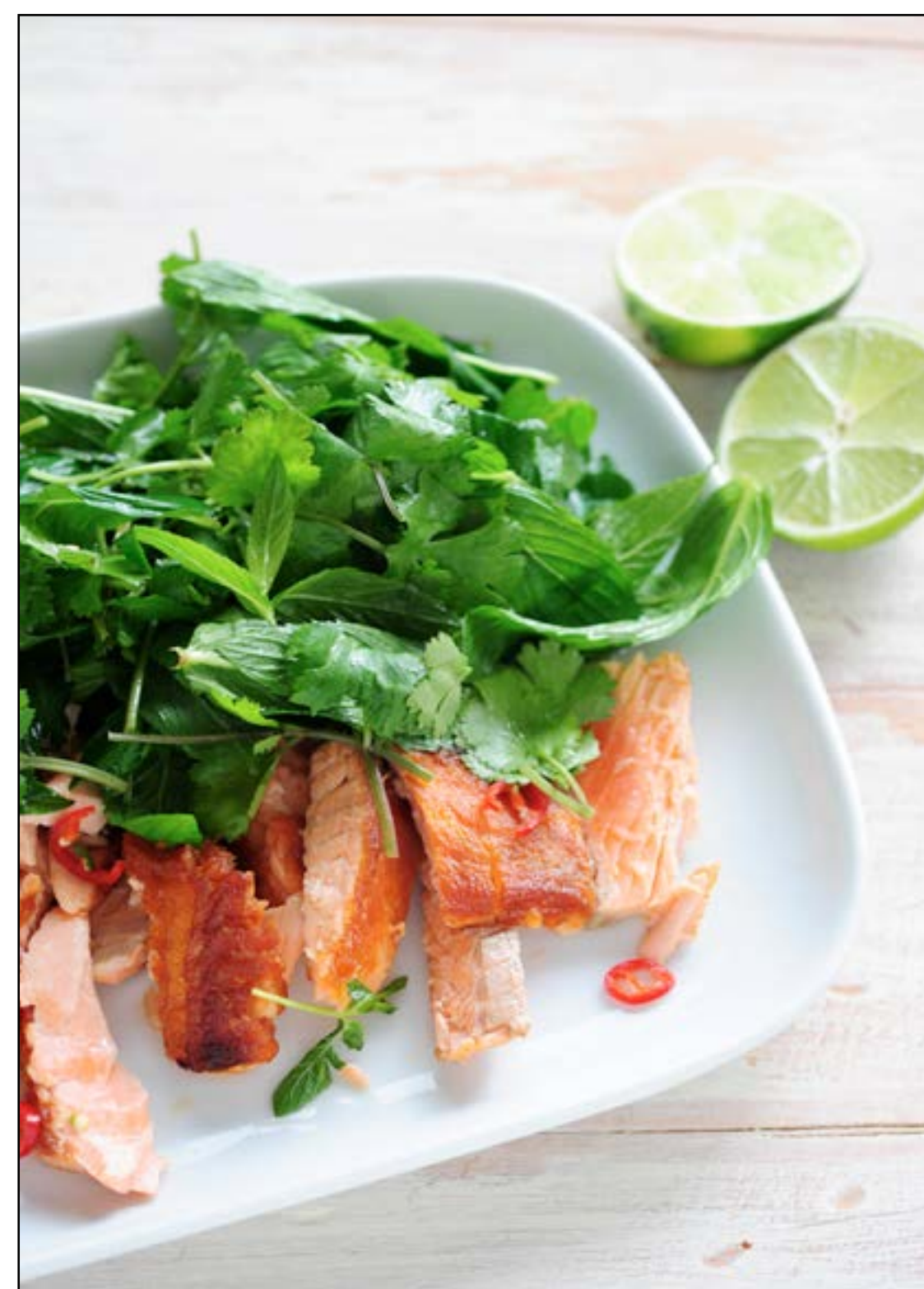
4 tablespoons lime juice

bunch mint, leaves picked

bunch coriander (cilantro) leaves picked

1. Heat a pan on a medium high heat. Rub the salmon with oil.
2. Sear the salmon, skin side down first until cooked to your liking. I like it quite rare in the middle and cooked it about 4 minutes on the first side and 3 on the second.
3. Meanwhile, combine lime juice and chilli with 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil. Taste & season with salt or fish sauce.
4. When the salmon is cooked, slice or tear into chunks, discarding the skin or keeping it as you like.
5. Toss the herbs in the dressing and serve on top of salmon chunks.

video



# Salmon Lime & CHILLI SALAD

## do ahead potential?

The salad will wilt but the salmon will keep in the fridge for 3-4 days.

## variations for fun

**different fish** – most fish fillets will work. Just adjust the cooking time accordingly.

**beef salad** – replace the salmon fillets with steaks.

**vegetarian / vegan** – replace salmon with tofu or seitan.

**different leaves** – feel free to use baby spinach or other salad leaves instead of or as well as the herbs. Thai basil is also really lovely.

## problem solving guide

**fish sticking to the pan** – make sure your pan is hot before adding the fish and be generous with the oil.

**fish burning** – reduce the heat or turn the fish so the other side gets cooked.

**bland** – spike with more lime and or chilli. You may need a little salt or fish sauce.

## serving suggestions

Great as a quick healthy weeknight meal. You could skip the salmon chopping step and serve the whole fillets with the salad if you like.

hot~cheesy~chickpeas



This is one of my favourite quick comfort-food meals. I just love how the cheese forms a natural warm sauce for the chickpeas. The original recipe is served with flat leaf parsley, but I've substituted in baby spinach to fit in with our 10 ingredient shopping list.

# HOT CHEESEY CHICKPEAS

serves 2

*1/2 - 1 can chickpeas, drained  
handful freshly grated cheese such as guryere,  
parmesan or cheddar  
small handful baby spinach leaves, to serve*

1. Place chickpeas in a microwave proof bowl. Toss in the cheese.
2. Cook for 1-2 minutes on high until the cheese has melted and everything is hot. Serve with baby spinach on top.

*OR under the grill...*

1. Heat the chickpeas and cheese under the grill until hot and melted. Serve with baby spinach.

video



# HOT CHEESEY CHICKPEAS

## do ahead potential?

Best served fresh but the chickpeas and cheese could be combined ahead of time.

## variations for fun

**different legumes** – feel free to use other canned or cooked beans instead of the chickpeas.

**different cheeses** – a good melting cheese is best. Or try a combination of parmesan, mozzarella, cheddar.

**carnivore** – add in a handful of chopped bacon or salami

**vegan / dairy-free** – heat the chickpeas on their own and serve drizzled with tahini.

## problem solving guide

**bland** – choose a different cheese next time or use more!

**dry** – again a different cheese will help or drizzle with a little extra virgin olive oil.

**don't have a microwave?** - just heat the chickpeas and cheese under the grill until hot and melted.

## serving suggestions

Best when hot from the microwave.

eggfried lentils



Inspired by egg fried rice which is apparently a hugely popular dish in Chinese restaurants in Ireland. If you struggle to get canned lentils, consider the rice option in the variations.

The original recipe calls for green onions (shallots) but I've substituted flat leaf parsley to keep to our 10 ingredient shopping list.

# EGG FRIED LENTILS

serves 2

2 eggs

1 can lentils (400g / 14oz), drained  
small handful flat leaf parsley leaves  
1-2 tablespoons soy sauce

1. Place a medium frying pan (skillet) or wok on a medium heat. Crack eggs into a bowl and lightly whisk.
2. Add a few tablespoons neutral flavoured oil to the pan and add eggs.
3. Cook for about 30 seconds then stir the eggs to scrape the cooked egg away from the bottom of the pan and allow the raw egg to cook.
4. Add lentils and continue to stir fry until lentils are warm and the egg is cooked through.
5. Remove from the heat, add parsley and soy sauce. Taste and season with a little more soy if you think it needs it.

video



# EGG FRIED LENTILS

## do ahead potential?

Absolutely. Just gently reheat in a wok or frying pan with a little more oil and possibly a little more soy. Will keep in the fridge for at least a week.

## variations for fun

**carnivore** – fry some diced bacon in the pan before you add the eggs or toss in some cooked chicken at the end.

**vegan / egg-free** – skip the eggs and serve with a generous handful of sliced almonds instead.

**rice** – for a more classic dish. Use 2 cups fluffy cooked basmati rice that has been allowed to cool.

**chickpeas** - replace canned lentils with a can of chickpeas.

**hot!** - add in a little dried or fresh chilli.

## problem solving guide

**watery** – sounds like the lentils weren't drained properly. It's important to be thorough when draining the lentils. Rinsing with water may help get rid of the canning liquid.

**egg texture tough or rubbery** - sounds like overcooked eggs. Next time add the lentils earlier in the cooking process and remove from the heat before you think the eggs are 100% cooked. The residual heat from the pan will finish cooking the eggs.

**bland?** add in a little more soy sauce.

**can't find canned lentils?** Try substituting rice or chickpeas as per the suggestions above. Or use home cooked lentils. Just boil lentils in water and drain, like you would for pasta. You'll need about 250g (9oz) cooked lentils.

## serving suggestions

Great as a spartan meal on its own. Or serve as part of an Asian meal or as a rich side dish to serve with curries..

pea & lentil salad



This salad could almost be included in the pantry recipes. Just skip the salad leaves and you'd have a great pantry salad.

# Pea + LENTIL SALAD

serves 2

1 tablespoons sherry vinegar  
1 can lentils (400g / 14oz), drained  
2 handfuls frozen peas  
handful washed salad leaves  
parmesan cheese

1. Bring your kettle to the boil.
2. Combine vinegar with 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil in a salad bowl. Season.
3. Toss drained lentils in the dressing.
4. Pour boiling water over the peas and drain.
5. Toss peas and leaves into the salad.
6. Serve with parmesan shaved over the top.

video



# Pea + LENTIL SALAD

## do ahead potential?

This salad can be made in advance up to the stage of adding the leaves.

## variations for fun

**carnivore** - toss in some finely sliced salami or prosciutto.

**vegan / dairy-free** - skip the parmesan and serve the salad with sliced almonds instead.

**different cheese** - a lovely creamy blue cheese would make a nice change from parmesan.

**lentil-free** - for a lighter, fresher salad skip the lentils and double the amount of peas.

**lemony** - for a different dressing substitute lemon juice for the vinegar and toss in the zest of a lemon.

## problem solving guide

**watery** – sounds like the lentils weren't drained properly. It's important to be thorough when draining the lentils. Rinsing with water may help get rid of the canning liquid.

**bland?** add in a little more salt & pepper and possibly a little more vinegar to sharpen things up.

## serving suggestions

Great on it's own or as a side dish for grilled or pan fried meat such as lamb or beef.



pea & parsley baked eggs

Baked eggs are a wonderful thing to have in your quick veggie dinners repertoire. Feel free to explore different flavourings. Chilli, cherry tomatoes and mushrooms are work well here.

# Pea + PARSLEY BAKED EGGS

serves 2

2 eggs

2 handfuls frozen peas

1 tablespoon sherry vinegar

1/2 bunch flat leaf parsley, leaves picked  
parmesan cheese

1. Preheat your oven to 200C (400F) and bring your kettle to the boil.
2. Grease 2 ramekins and crack an egg into each. Place ramekins in a heat proof dish and fill the dish with boiling water to come 1/2 way up the sides of the ramekins.
3. Bake for 8-10 minutes or until the egg white just feels set to the touch.
4. Meanwhile combine the vinegar with 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil. Season.
5. Place peas in a strainer and pour boiling water over the peas to quickly defrost them. Drain and toss peas in the dressing.
6. Add parsley and toss. Serve eggs with salad on the side and parmesan grated over the top.

video



# Pea + Parsley Baked Eggs

## do ahead potential?

This salad can be made in advance up to the stage of adding the parsley. You could pre-bake the eggs and reheat – but there's a risk your texture will be a little rubbery unless you're super gentle. leftover potential

## variations for fun

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

**vegan** – skip the parmesan and serve the salad with avocado halves instead of the eggs. Feel free to bake the avocado and serve warm. Will take about 10 mins in a hot oven.

**egg-free** - replace the eggs with a few scoops of ricotta and bake until golden.

**more substantial** - crack 2 eggs into each of the buttered ramekins and bake for 12-15 minutes.

**super quick** – microwave the eggs on HIGH for 60 seconds per egg. It's important to butter the ramekins so the eggs don't stick.

**truffled eggs** - serve eggs with a small drizzle of truffle oil.

## problem solving guide

**eggs rubbery** – this is a classic sign of overcooked eggs. Next time start checking them earlier.

**snotty eggs** – undercooked whites look decidedly snotty. You could pop them back in the oven for a few minutes. Next time, feel the whites with your fingers to make sure they're firm before you serve.

**egg sticking to the ramekins** - next time make sure you butter the ramekins super generously.

**too bland?** add in a little more cheese to the salad and remember to season the eggs with salt and pepper.

## serving suggestions

Wonderful as a simple light lunch or supper on its own. The pea & parsley salad also makes a great side salad to fish or anything Italian like risotto or pasta.



warm onion & lentil salad

There's something about onions and lentils together that just works. I think it's the warm earthiness that they both bring to this dish.

# + WARM ONION LENTIL SALAD

serves 2

2 large onions, peeled sliced  
4 tablespoons balsamic vinegar  
1 can lentils (400g / 14oz), drained  
handful washed salad leaves  
large handful walnuts

1. Heat a few tablespoons olive oil in a medium saucepan over a medium heat.
2. Add onion and cook, covered, stirring occasionally for about 10 minutes or until onions are soft and deeply golden. If the onion starts to brown too much, turn down the heat and add a splash of water.
3. When the onions are cooked, remove from the heat and stir in lentils, balsamic and a little extra virgin olive oil.
4. Toss in salad leaves and serve sprinkled with walnuts.

video



# WARM ONION + LENTIL SALAD

## do ahead potential?

This salad can be made in advance up to the stage of adding the salad leaves. Or you could just caramelise the onions in advance. leftover potential

## variations for fun

**carnivore** – toss in some chopped crispy bacon or chorizo.

**nut-free** – just skip the walnuts or replace with some soft goats cheese or ricotta.

**lentil-free** - replace the lentils with drained canned beans.

## problem solving guide

**onions burning** – it's important to remember to stir the onions and cook over a low enough heat that they soften without burning. Next time stir more frequently, but for now adding in a splash of water will help. Keeping the eggs covered so the steam stays in also helps avoid over browning or burning.

**bitter** - burnt onions will give a bitter flavour to the whole salad. For now try and add a little more olive oil to soften the bitterness.

**too bland?** don't forget to season generously. And possibly add in a little more balsamic.

## serving suggestions

Wonderful as a simple supper on its own. Or serve as a side dish to grilled halloumi cheese or some pan fried pork sausages.



curried~scrambled~eggs

Scrambled eggs can feel a little 'breakfasty'. To make them more of a grown-up dinner in their own right, we've added the lovely complexity of onion, curry powder and a hit of chilli. Serving with a side of parsley leaves completes the evening ensemble

# CURRIED SCRAMBLED EGGS

serves 2

1 large onion, peeled & diced

1 teaspoon dried chilli flakes

2 teaspoons curry powder

4 eggs

1/2 bunch flat leaf parsley, leaves picked

1. Heat a few tablespoons olive oil in a medium saucepan over a medium heat. Add onion and cook, covered, stirring occasionally for about 5 minutes or until onions are soft and a little golden. If the onion starts to brown too much, turn down the heat and add a splash of water.

2. Meanwhile lightly whisk eggs in a small bowl and season. When the onions are soft, add the chilli and curry and stir for a few seconds.

3. Add eggs to the pan and cook for about 30 seconds. Stir well, scraping up the cooked egg from the base of the pan and cook for another 30 seconds or until the egg is almost cooked.

4. Remove from the heat, stir in parsley & serve immediately.

video



# CURRIED SCRAMBLED EGGS

## do ahead potential?

Scrambled eggs are tricky to reheat so best to make as you need it. The onions could be softened in advance, though.

## variations for fun

**carnivore** – serve with crispy bacon or some cooked sausages.

**vegan** – replace eggs with about 350g (12oz) crumbled firm tofu. And increase the curry powder a little.

**greener** - replace the parsley with a few handfuls of baby spinach and allow to wilt into the eggs before serving.

## problem solving guide

**onions burning** – it's important to remember to stir the onions and cook over a low enough heat that they soften without burning. Next time stir more frequently, but for now adding in a splash of water will help. Keeping the eggs covered so the steam stays in also helps avoid over browning or burning.

**eggs sticking to the base of the pan** – eggs have a tendency to stick. Be generous with the oil and stir vigorously to help avoid this.

**eggs rubbery** - the first sign that eggs are overcooked is the texture goes all rubbery. For now, add a little olive oil to moisten them but next time take the pan off the heat before you think the eggs are cooked.

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

**too bland?** don't forget to season generously. And possibly add in a little more curry powder and/or chilli.

## serving suggestions

Wonderful as a simple supper on it's own. Or serve with a green salad on the side or some steamed broccoli.

# MODULE 3. YOUR 1-HOUR PREP PLAN

"How a one hour investment of your time on the weekend  
can transform your week night meals."

# YOUR 1-HOUR PREP PLAN MODULE VIDEOS

## Module 3 Video

All the material in the next few pages is covered in this video:



**Prefer to listen on your ipod?** [CLICK HERE](#) to download the audio in mp3. (you may need to right click and 'save link as')

# 6 EASY WAYS TO USE THE MAGIC OF 'MISE EN PLACE' IN YOUR KITCHEN

Ever eaten at a restaurant with an exposed kitchen so you could watch the chefs at work? And ever noticed all the little containers and bottles of sauces they have at their work stations?

## What is Mise en place?

Mise en place is a French term that I roughly translate as 'put in place'. In cooking it's used to describe the practice of chefs preparing food up to a point where it is ready to be used in a dish during food service. It may be as simple as washing and picking herbs into individual leaves or chopping vegetables. Or more complicated like caramelising onions or slow cooking meats.

The main benefit in a restaurant is that it makes it much quicker and easier to get food on the table after the customer has ordered. The secondary benefit is that the preparation can help to extend the shelf life of fresh produce.

## How can we home cooks use this chef secret to our advantage?

### 1. Prep when we have time to save time later

By taking the time on weekends 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

Cooked ingredients tend to last longer than fresh. This is because cooking reduces the amount of bacteria in the food AND cooking destroys enzymes which can also cause spoilage. So employing a little 'mise en place' not only saves time, it can also reduce waste.

For example, a slow cooked meat dish will last for a few weeks in the fridge, where as fresh meat can only be a few days. Same goes for wilted spinach vs a bunch of spinach.

# 6 EASY WAYS TO USE THE MAGIC OF 'MISE EN PLACE' IN YOUR KITCHEN

[CONTINUED]

## **1. Precooking grains or legumes**

Dried grains and legumes such as rice, barley, lentils, chickpeas and beans tend to take between 30-90 minutes to cook. And longer if you factor in the soaking time for beans.

Once cooked, grains and legumes will keep in the fridge for a few weeks. To keep for longer they can be frozen – a great option as they tend to keep their shape and defrost easily, like frozen peas.

## **2. Precooking meat or fish**

Fresh fish and meat is highly perishable. Using mise en place to pre-cook dramatically increases keeping time. Poaching keeps everything moist so is an excellent method. But roasting or even pan frying can also be employed.

## **3. Wilting vegetables**

Wilting veg prolongs their shelf life, primarily by deactivating enzymes. Consider methods such as sauteeing, steaming or even boiling briefly.

## **4. Roasting vegetables**

Roasting veg takes at least 30 minutes, or longer for larger pieces. Having a stash of pre-roasted veg opens up a world of possibilities for quick, healthy dinners.

## **5. Making sauces or 'preserves'**

Sauces can transform a meal from ho-hum to amazing. The balsamic onions from this module are a great example.

We'll cover 10 of my favourite quick sauces in Module 4 when we master the art of adaptation.

## **6. Fully preparing meals.**

Do-ahead dinners are another easy way to harness the benefits of 'mise en place'. More on these in Module 5.

# YOUR WEEKEND PREP PLAN 1.



Your Weekend Prep Plan 1.

**prep time:**  
60 minutes

**prep recipe:**  
[Balsamic Onions](#)

**weeknight recipes:**  
[Burgers with Balsamic Onion & Mashy Peas](#)

[Bangers & Quick Mash](#)

[Balsamic Onion Soup](#)

# YOUR WEEKEND PREP PLAN 2.



## Your Weekend Prep Plan 2.

**prep time:**  
30-35 minutes

**prep recipe:**  
[Roast Diced Veg](#)

**weeknight recipes:**  
[Warm Roast Veg Salad](#)

[Roast Veg Frittata](#)

[Quick Veg Curry](#) (replace jarred peppers with 2 handfuls roast diced veg)

# YOUR WEEKEND PREP PLAN 3.



## Your Weekend Prep Plan 3.

**prep time:**  
15 minutes

**prep recipe:**  
[Cooked Quinoa](#)

**weeknight recipes:**

[Quinoa & Grilled Veg Salad](#)

[Egg Fried Quinoa](#)

[Quinoa 'Biryani'](#)

# YOUR WEEKEND PREP PLAN 4.



Your Weekend Prep Plan 4.

prep time:  
10-15 minutes

prep recipe:  
[Sautéed Greens](#)

weeknight recipes:

[Pasta & Greens](#)

[Rice & Greens](#) (replace the frozen spinach with your sautéed greens)

[Green Lentils](#) (replace the frozen spinach with your sautéed greens)

# YOUR WEEKEND PREP PLAN 5.



Your Weekend Prep Plan 5.

prep time:  
30 minutes

prep recipe:  
[Poached Chicken](#)

weeknight recipes:

[Thai Chicken Soup](#)

[Chicken with Asian Slaw](#)

[Chicken & Broccolini Salad](#)



~poached~chicken

I'm not a huge fan of poached meat as I find lots of the flavour can be lost to the poaching liquid. Chicken, though, is an exception because it prevents the dryness often associated with cooked chicken breasts. And the poaching liquid can be used as a light chicken stock.

# POACHED CHICKEN

serves 2  
2 or more chicken breasts

1. Bring 4 cups water to the boil in a medium saucepan.
2. Add chicken. Cover with a lid and simmer very gently for 5 minutes.
3. Turn heat off and allow chicken to stand for 20 minutes.
4. Either cool in the liquid or slice and serve warm.

video



# POACHED CHICKEN

## do ahead potential?

Will keep for 5 days in the fridge. Store in the poaching liquid to keep moister. Freezes well.

## variations for fun

**vegetarian** - try boiled or poached eggs instead.

**vegan** – you could poach tofu in this manner, but the poaching liquid would need to add lots of flavour.

**flavoured poaching liquid** – try some fresh chilli, thyme leaves, bay leaves or rosemary.

**short on time?** – leave the heat on and simmer the chicken breasts until just cooked through. About 10 minutes. Be careful not to overcook.

**chicken thighs** – a better choice for more flavour. Since they're smaller, just simmer for 2 minutes then stand for 15-20 minutes.

**whole chicken** - can be cooked in this way as well. Double the water and use a large pot, make sure there's enough water to completely submerge the chicken. Simmer very gently for 10 minutes then stand, covered for 1 hour.

## problem solving guide

**chicken dry / tough** – A sign of overcooking. Next time watch that the simmering for the first 5 minutes is VERY gentle. For now, finely slice the chicken across the 'grain' (or muscle fibers) and serve with lots of sauce!

**too bland?** That can be a problem with chicken. Next time try a better quality, preferably free range chicken. For now, serve with flavousome accompaniments. And remember that we haven't yet seasoned the chicken so a little salt may help the situation.

**chicken undercooked or pink** – It's a good idea to test your chicken. If when you cut into it it's still pink add back to the pot and bring back to a simmer. Stand for another 5 minutes or until the chicken is cooked to your liking.

## serving suggestions

**salads** – the obvious choice – slice or tear and toss in your favourite salad.


**canned fish replacer** – use anywhere you'd normally use canned tuna or salmon.

**sandwiches** – an all time favourite – with lashings of good quality mayo and rocket (arugula) leaves.

**soups** – finely slice and add to soups just before serving.

chicken with *asian* slaw





This Asian inspired slaw ticks all the boxes. It's quick, fresh, crunchy and packed with zesty flavour from the lime & soy dressing.

Note: In the video we're serving the 'slaw with a BBQ chicken, just substitute your poached chicken breasts.

# CHICKEN WITH asian SLAW

serves 2

2 tablespoons lime juice

1 tablespoon soy sauce

1/4 cabbage, shredded on a mandoline

1 carrot, grated

2 poached chicken breasts ([recipe here](#)), to serve

1. Combine lime juice, soy & 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil in a medium bowl. Taste. Season.
2. Toss carrot and cabbage in the dressing.
3. Serve salad with chicken chopped into quarters.

video

# CHICKEN WITH asian SLAW

## do ahead potential?

Will keep in the fridge for a week or so but the texture will lose its crunch. I actually like it after a few days when it's a little soggy. If you're a crunchy-salad-only type of person, best to eat it fresh.

## variations for fun

**BBQ chicken / short on time** – If you don't have time to poach your own chicken breasts just pickup a BBQ chicken on your way home.

**vegetarian / vegan** – serve the slaw as part of an asian meal OR replace the chicken with a few generous handfuls of roasted cashew nuts and shaved coconut flakes.

**italian 'slaw** – replace the lime juice with sherry vinegar and serve sprinkled very generously with finely grated parmesan cheese.

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

**duck** – serve with a BBQ Chinese duck instead of the chicken.

**soy-free** – skip the soy and season with salt or fish sauce instead. OR try braggs liquid aminos.

**different cabbage** – pretty much all cabbage works here. Try Chinese or savouy or even a red cabbage. Tiny brussels spouts in season would also be delish.

## problem solving guide

**too dry** – splash in some more lime juice and oil to make the dressing go further. Next time use a smaller cabbage or make a larger batch of dressing.

**can't find BBQ chicken?** – roast your own. 1 hour in the oven at 200C (400F) usually does the trick.

**too bland** – season with a little more salt or soy or try upping the lime. Adding in the zest from the lime will also help.

**not spicy enough** – serve with some chilli oil or dried chilli flakes so you can adjust the chilli heat level to suit your taste.

## serving suggestions

Great as a super quick lunch or dinner on its own. Also great for picnics. Just wait until you're ready to serve before tossing the cabbage and carrot in the dressing.

thai~chicken~soup



This soup is equally delicious on a chilly winter evening or a hot summers day. If you can't find kaffir lime leaves, use the zest of a lime. It won't be the same but since you won't know any different it will still be wonderful.

Note: In the video I'm using raw chicken thigh fillets. See the method below for instructions using poached chicken breasts.

# THAI CHICKEN SOUP

serves 2

1 can coconut milk (400mL / 14oz)  
2 tablespoon thai green curry paste  
2 poached chicken breasts ([recipe here](#)), sliced  
6 kaffir lime leaves,  
1 bunch coriander (cilantro) leaves

1. Place a large saucepan over a high heat.
2. Scoop a tablespoon of the coconut cream from the top of the can and add it to the saucepan with the curry paste.
3. Cook curry paste for about 15 seconds and then add 2 cups water and the remaining coconut milk. Bring to the boil.
4. Add chicken. Simmer gently for a minute or until everything is hot. Serve with coriander (cilantro) leaves.

video



# THAI CHICKEN SOUP

## do ahead potential?

A great soup to cook ahead. Just save the coriander for the last minute. Will keep in the fridge for a week or so.

## variations for fun

**no poached chicken breasts?** – replace with raw sliced chicken breasts or thighs. Simmer for 4-5 minutes or until chicken is well cooked.

**vegan / vegetarian** – replace the chicken with tofu or button mushrooms.

**basil** – for a different fragrance replace the fresh coriander with fresh basil or better yet, fresh Thai basil.

**noodles** – for a more substantial soup, soften some rice noodles by covering in boiling water and standing while the chicken cooks. Then drain and add to the soup before bringing back to the boil.

**red soup** – replace green curry paste with red curry paste.

**no lime leaves?** – Replace with the zest of 1-2 fresh limes and serve with lime wedges.

**no curry paste?** – If you can't find green Thai curry paste, you could use another curry paste or even 1 tablespoon of your favourite curry powder.

## problem solving guide

**chicken tough** – it's important not to simmer too rapidly otherwise the chicken will over cook and end up too tough. Next time cook more gently. The other cause of tough chicken is the quality of the chicken you are using. Making sure the chicken is sliced across the grain (muscle fibres) helps with tenderness as well.

**too hot** – curry pastes vary in intensity. Diluting with a little more coconut milk will help. Yoghurt or milk can help cool your tongue between sips of soup.

**bland** – different curry pastes vary in their intensity. If you're not happy with the flavour add a little more curry paste. And remember to be generous with the seasoning. A splash of fish sauce can help liven things up too.

**not coconutty enough** – different coconut milk brands vary quite considerably in the amount of added water. The higher the fat content the more concentrated your coconut milk will be. I avoid 'lite' coconut milks, if you're worried about fat just use less coconut milk and more water and save yourself some money.

## serving suggestions

I prefer to serve this as a meal on its own with the coriander (cilantro) on the side. I like to leave the kaffir lime leaves in and eat them, but they can require a bit of chewing! If you'd prefer, you could use the leaves whole and fish them out before serving – the fragrance won't be as strong.



chicken and broccolini salad



This salad is a favourite when I'm feeling like something light and clean. If you don't have some poached chicken breast up your sleeve, see the 'short on time' options in the variations.

Note: In the video I'm poaching the chicken breasts and steaming the broccolini. See the method below for a quicker option using pre-poached chicken.

# CHICKEN + BROCCOLINI SALAD

serves 2

2 poached chicken breasts (recipe here)

1 bunch broccolini, halved crosswise

1 lemon

2 handfuls baby spinach leaves, washed

handful roasted almonds

1. Bring a small saucepan of water to the boil. Simmer broccolini for 3-4 minutes or until just tender. Drain.

2. Meanwhile whisk 1 tablespoon lemon juice, zest of the lemon and 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil in a large bowl.

3. Pat broccolini dry with paper towel and toss in the dressing. Slice or shred chicken and add to the dressing along with spinach.

4. Toss and serve with almonds scattered over.

video

# CHICKEN + BROCCOLINI SALAD

## do ahead potential?

If you don't mind soggy salad leaves, will keep in the fridge for a few days.

## variations for fun

**vegetarian** – skip the chicken poaching. Steam the broccolini for about 8 minutes or until tender. Serve salad with generous spoonfuls of soft goats cheese or ricotta.

**vegan** – replace chicken with a drained can of butter beans OR some pan fried tofu cubes – season very generously.

**nut-free** – replace the almonds with finely diced red onion for colour and crunch.

**no poached chicken? / short on time** – just pickup a BBQ chicken on the way home from work or replace chicken with canned tuna or salmon.

## problem solving guide

**can't find broccolini?** -just replace with a head of regular broccoli chopped into florettes.

**chicken tough or dry?** – this means the chicken has been cooked at too high a temperature. Next time keep an eye on it in the initial simmering phase to make sure it's at a gentle simmer.

**broccolini too crunchy** – I like a little crunch but if it's difficult to eat, the broccolini hasn't been cooked enough. Next time simmer for longer.

**broccolini brown / lifeless** – either the broccolini wasn't the freshest to start with or you've over cooked it. Next time check the broccolini earlier during the cooking process.

**salad too dry** – sounds like not enough dressing. Either drizzle over a little more olive oil and vinegar or mix up another batch of dressing in a small bowl and toss that over.

**too bland?** don't forget to season generously. And possibly sharpen things up with a little more vinegar.  
serving suggestions

## serving suggestions

A wonderful light, fresh meal on its own.

*pasta with greens*



Fresh pasta can be a big life saver when you're in a hurry as it only takes a couple of minutes to cook. Of course you could substitute in dried pasta if you prefer. Cavalo nero, or Tuscan cabbage is one of my favourites, but it can be a little tricky to track down. Feel free to use whatever greens you like. Spinach, like I've used here would be lovely or even some curly kale or silver beet (swiss chard).

# Pasta WITH GREENS

serves 2

200g (7oz) fresh pasta

1 quantity sauteed greens ([recipe here](#))

2 handfuls whole almonds  
squeeze of lemon

1. Bring a medium saucepan of salted water to the boil.
2. Cook pasta for 2 minutes or according to the packet directions. Drain.
3. Return saucepan to the heat and add greens. Heat for a minute or so.
4. Toss pasta in the pot and add almonds. Season with salt, pepper and a drizzle of lemon.

video



# Pasta WITH GREENS

## do ahead potential?

Better when freshly made. Will keep in the fridge for a week or so.

## variations for fun

**vegan** – Be sure to use pasta that doesn't contain eggs. Most fresh pasta is egg based so you may have to go for dried.

**nut allergies** – Replace almonds with 2 small handfuls of breadcrumbs that have been toasted in oil. You could do this at step 3 with the garlic and remove and keep on paper towel while you continue to cook the spinach and then add back at step 6.

**carnivores** – Replace almonds with about 4 rashers of bacon or chopped spec. Fry these until brown at step 3. Alternatively, some finely sliced and torn prosciutto tossed in at the end would be another delicious injection of pork products.

## problem solving guide

**too bland** – Add more salt & pepper and possibly more lemon. A grating of parmesan cheese may help the situation as well but I do love this without cheese.

**too watery** – Your greens either haven't cooked enough or there was too much water left on after washing. Stir fry for a few minutes extra to evaporate the excess moisture.

**pasta breaking apart** – Sounds like it's overcooked. Fresh pasta takes hardly any time. Not much we can do now, but next time cook pasta less.

**pasta sticking together** – I often do this – if you forget to stir the pasta during the early stages of cooking it tends to stick. The other problem is from draining and allowing to sit around for too long before you combine the cooked pasta with the sauce.

**too dry** – add in a little peppery extra virgin olive oil.

## serving suggestions

A brilliant one bowl meal. Feel free to serve with some parmesan for grating if you love cheese.

*wilted greens*



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

# WILTED GREENS

per person

1-2 cloves garlic

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

1. Heat olive oil in a large frying pan.
2. Add the garlic and greens and continue to cook stirring for a few minutes until they are just wilted.
3. Remove from the heat. Taste and season with salt, pepper and a little lemon juice, if you like.

video



# WILTED GREENS

## do ahead potential?

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

## variations for fun

**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.

## 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.

~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.

# COOKED QUINOA

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.

video



# COOKED QUINOA

## do ahead potential?

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

## variations for fun

**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.

## 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.

eggfried quinoa





Egg fried rice used to be one of my Irishman's favourite meals. And then I made this version with quinoa. Now he keeps asking me when we can have egg fried quinoa again. Definitely a keeper!

# EGG FRIED QUINOA

serves 2

250g (9oz) cooked quinoa ([recipe here](#))

3 eggs, lightly beaten

1-2 small red chillies, finely sliced

2 tablespoons soy sauce

small handful sliced green onions  
(shallots / scallions / spring onions)

1. Heat a little oil in a wok or frying pan. Add quinoa, eggs and chilli.
2. Cook, stirring often over a medium heat until there is no more runny (snotty) egg visible. Remove from the heat. Stir in soy and green onions.

video

# EGG FRIED quinoa

## do ahead potential?

OK. Will keep in the fridge for a few days.

## variations for fun

**carnivore** – brown some sliced chicken breast in the pan before adding quinoa and egg.

**vegan / egg-free** – replace egg with crumbled tofu (about 200g / 7oz) and 1 teaspoon ground turmeric for colour.

**soy-free** – replace the soy sauce with fish sauce or just season generously with salt instead.

**can't find quinoa?** – replace with cooked brown or jasmine rice.

## problem solving guide

**too dry** – it's meant to be a fairly dry dish. Drizzle with a little oil or chilli oil if it's too dry for you. And make sure you don't overcook your eggs.

**rubbery** – a sign of overcooked eggs. Add in a little butter to moisten and next time remove from the heat earlier.

**bland** – add in a little more soy and chilli.

## serving suggestions

Serve in small bowls 'rice' bowls with chopsticks.



quinoa biryani

Biryani is a fragrant Indian rice-based dish. Here we've given it a bit of a twist by using our cooked quinoa instead of rice. If you come across a 'biryani' spice blend, by all means use that. But regular curry powder is pretty tasty!

# Quinoa 'BIRYANI'

serves 2

300g (11oz) cooked quinoa ([recipe here](#))

2-3 teaspoons curry powder

1 bunch mint, leaves picked

4-6 tablespoons natural yoghurt

large handful brazil nuts or almonds, chopped

1. Heat a little oil in a large frying pan. Add quinoa and curry powder and cook over a medium high heat until the quinoa is hot.
2. Remove from the heat. Taste and season with salt. You may like to add a little more curry powder too.
3. Stir through mint. Drizzle over yoghurt and scatter over nuts.

video



# Quinoa 'BIRYANI'

## do ahead potential?

Great! Will keep in the fridge for a week or longer. The mint will wilt but it will still be tasty.

## variations for fun

**dairy-free / vegan** – replace the yoghurt with a mixture of equal parts tahini, lemon juice and water.

**no quinoa?** – replace with cooked brown or basmati rice.

**nut-free** – replace the nuts with diced red capsicum (bell pepper).

**different herbs** – parsley or cilantro (coriander) could be used instead of the mint.

**carnivore** – serve as a side to a meaty curry.

**more substantial** – serve with hard boiled or poached eggs.

## problem solving guide

**too dry** – serve with extra yoghurt.

**bland** – add more curry powder and be more generous with the seasonings. Next time you might like to try a different brand of curry powder.

## serving suggestions

Lovely on it's own. Or as part of an Indian banquet.



roast~diced~veg

Chopping veg into a smaller dice allows them to cook more quickly. AND increases the surface area so you get lots of lovely roasted flavour. Pretty much all root veg or a combo can be use here. Think about sweet potato, parsnip, celeriac, swedes, turnips, rutabagas, pumpkin, butternut squash or the humble spud.

# ROAST DICED VEG

*makes about 3 cups*

*4 cups diced 2cm (1in) root vegetables*

*1 head garlic, optional*

*small bunch thyme, leaves picked*

1. Preheat oven to 200C (400F).
2. Wash veg well then chop into cubes, about 2cm (1in) square. Break garlic into individual cloves, if using, but don't worry about peeling.
3. Toss veg on a roasting tray with a generous glug of olive oil. Sprinkle with thyme, if using. Season.
4. Roast for 25-35 minutes, stirring once or twice. They're done when the veg are tender and golden brown.

**video**



# ROAST DICED VEG

## do ahead potential?

Will keep in the fridge for a few weeks.  
Can be frozen.

## variations for fun

**potatoes** – waxy potatoes are lovely here as well – don't worry about peeling them.

**beets** – chop beets small so they cook at the same time as the rest of the veg.

**sweet potato** – a lovely addition.

**carrots** – another sweet veg that doesn't get roasted often enough.

**pumpkin / winter squash** – much better if left unpeeled. Butternut is my favourite here.

**cauliflower** – don't worry about getting it into 'cubes'. One of my favourite roast veg.

**brussels sprouts** – another that don't 'cube' well. Chop in half and be amazed how tasty they are.

## problem solving guide

**burning** – reduce the heat and turn the veg more frequently. Make sure your foil is well sealed to prevent drying out. A splash of water can retard the burning process.

**hard / dry veg** – not cooked for long enough OR cooked at too high a temperature and not covered enough. Veg are much less sensitive to overcooking than meat.

**too bland?** Add in a little more salt.

## serving suggestions

**risotto** – stir into your favorite risotto.

**baked frittata** – just lovely with eggs and a little parmesan.

**stir fry** – toss into your fav stir fry to warm through before serving.

**hummus** - use instead of or as well as chickpeas in a different take.

**soup** – delicious in both chunky and smooth veggie soups.

**pizza** – especially good on pizza with blue cheese and mozzarella.

roast~veg~frittata



This frittata, baked in the oven, is one of my go-to dinners when I'm feeling like something vegetarian. A good baked frittata is an essential for quick, easy meals. They're also a brilliant way to use up leftover bits and pieces hanging around the fridge.

# ROAST VEG FRITTATA

serves 2

2 handfuls roast veg ([recipe here](#))

4 eggs, lightly beaten

large handful grated cheese such as cheddar

1. Preheat oven to 200C (400F) and place a baking tray on the middle shelf.
2. Line a 20cm (8in) spring form pan with baking paper & grease generously with olive oil or butter. Or grease a small oven-proof frying pan.
3. Place veg in the prepared tin. Pour over the beaten egg & scatter over the cheese. Season.
4. Place on the preheated tray and bake until golden and puffy and the center feels firm and springy, 10-15 minutes.

video



# ROAST VEG FRITTATA

## do ahead 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.

## variations for fun

**larger frittata** - use 8 eggs and a 28cm (10in) pan to serve 4. Increase baking time slightly. Around 20 minutes.

**plain frittata** – skip the additional ingredients and double the amount of eggs.

**single serve frittata** – Bake in a large ramekin instead of the frying pan OR just make yourself an omelette in a fraction of the time.

**dairy-free** – replace the cheddar with a handful of thyme leaves.

**short on time?** – replace roast veg with a drained can of chickpeas.

## problem solving guide

**too runny** – Probably not baked through the centre. Pop it back in the oven for a little longer.

**leaking watery fluid** – Woops. When eggs are overcooked you get a phenomenon called syneresis where the protein loses the ability to hold water so you get watery fluid weeping out. Not the nicest but it won't hurt you if you eat it. Next time cook it less.

**frittata sticking to the pan** – Unfortunately one of the downsides of this method is the egg likes to stick to the pan. So it's important to grease well and line the pan with baking paper. Foil tends to stick worse than baking paper for some reason.

**don't have a spring form pan?** – A cake tin with a removable base will work or even an ovenproof dish. Just make sure you line the base and sides and leave some paper overhanging so you can lift it out when it's done.

## serving suggestions

Great on its own. Or with a green salad or wilted greens. Also good sliced and served as a sandwich filling.

warm roast veg salad



This salad was inspired by Moro, a fabulous Middle Eastern restaurant in London. With warm roast veg and chickpeas contrasting a creamy nutty tahini yoghurt dressing, it's the kind of thing I could eat every day.

# WARM ROAST VEG SALAD

serves 2

2 large handfuls roast veg ([recipe here](#))  
1 can chickpeas (400g / 14oz), drained  
3 tablespoons natural yoghurt  
1 tablespoon tahini  
3 sprigs parsley

1. Heat a little oil in a frying pan on a medium heat. Add veg and chickpeas and cook, stirring occasionally.
2. Meanwhile, mix tahini and yoghurt in a small bowl. Taste and season.
3. When the chickpeas and veg are hot, transfer to a serving platter or two plates.
4. Drizzle over dressing and sprinkle with parsley leaves.

video



# WARM ROAST VEG SALAD

## do ahead potential?

Great, although best to dress and add the parsley at the last minute. Leftovers will keep for 1-2 weeks in the fridge.

## variations for fun

**carnivore** – brown some sliced chorizo in the pan before heating the veg.

**vegan / dairy-free** – use a lemon tahini dressing instead of the yoghurt. Mix 2 tablespoons each tahini, lemon juice and water.

**no roast veg handy?** – replace with grilled peppers and eggplant from the deli or from a jar.

**different herbs** – replace parsley with mint, coriander (cilantro) or even baby spinach leaves.

**hot!** – add a sliced red chilli in with the veg to warm.

**no chickpeas?** – replace with other canned beans or lentils or with 2 large handfuls of torn sourdough bread.

## problem solving guide

**dry?** – drizzle over extra yoghurt and tahini.

**bland** – season with salt and pepper and possibly a little chilli.


**can't find tahini?** – replace with almond or other nut butter. Peanut butter could be used at a stretch but try to find one without sugar added. OR use lemon juice instead to make a super fresh, zesty dressing.

## serving suggestions

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



*caramelised onions*



Onions are one of the biggest gifts to cooks on a budget because they pack amazing flavour for their tiny price tag. These onions may seem like a bit of work, but you'll be well rewarded with a super versatile condiment.

Feel free to halve or quarter this recipe if you don't feel like chopping up so many onions.

# BALSAMIC ONIONS

makes heaps  
1.5kg (3lb) onions  
6 tablespoons cheap balsamic vinegar

1. Chop onions in half, lengthwise. Cut off the top and tail and peel the skins. Slice onions into thin half moon shapes.
2. Heat about 6 tablespoons oil in a large pot and fry the onions, covered over a medium low heat until the onions are super soft. About 40 minutes.
3. Remove the lid and add balsamic and cook the onions, uncovered on a medium heat until the onions are well browned and caramelised. Another 15-20 minutes.
4. Taste & season.

video

# Balsamic Onions

## do ahead potential?

Will keep for a few months in the fridge. Longer if you store in sealed, sterilized jars.

## variations for fun

**different vinegar** – by all means replace the balsamic with a cheaper vinegar. Malt vinegar would be lovely just start with about 3 tablespoons and add from there.

**thyme** – if you have access to a garden with fresh thyme, a few sprigs add a lovely fragrance.

**rosemary** – if you have access to a garden with fresh rosemary, a few sprigs add a lovely fragrance.

**onion jam** – for something sweeter and more chutney like, add in about 1/4 cup brown sugar with the balsamic.

## problem solving guide

**too bland?** Add in a little more vinegar and salt. And keep cooking until you have lovely caramelized flavours.

**bitter** - this means you've either burnt the onions too much or the vinegar is overpowering. Try adding a little white sugar to balance but it may not help the situation if it's gone too far.

**watery eyes** – the hardest part is definitely chopping the onions. Pop a slice of bread in your mouth to hang down while you chop the onions. It's weird but I'll guarantee you no tears every time..

**short on time** – try slicing the onions in the food processor and try a higher heat for the first cooking stage, just keep a super close eye on them to make sure they don't burn too much.

## serving suggestions

Makes a great accompaniment to pretty much all meat and poultry. Also great with hard cheese or as a dip.



balsamic~onion~soup



Onion soup can be such a wonderfully hearty vegetarian meal. Traditionally it's served with melted cheese on toast, but I've kept things lighter and quicker here by just throwing on a handful of grated cheese and letting it melt into the soup on its own.

# BALSAMIC ONION SOUP

serves 2

2 cups balsamic onions

(1/2 quantity of the recipe over here)

2 cups chicken or vegetable stock

large handful cheddar cheese, grated

1. Bring onions and stock to the boil. Simmer for 2 minutes. Taste. Season.
2. Divide soup between 2 bowls. Top with cheese.

video

# BALSAMIC ONION SOUP

## do ahead potential?

Wonderful but the cheese is best added at the last minute. Will keep in the fridge for a few weeks.

## variations for fun

**healthier** – add in a few handfuls of sliced kale or baby spinach. Simmer until just wilted.

**vegan** – skip the cheese and add a can of white beans or chickpeas in to simmer with the stock.

**more substantial** – serve with crusty bread and butter. Or toast some sourdough and rub with garlic and place in the bottom of the bowl before pouring soup over.

**freshly made onions** – finely slice 750g (1.5lb) onions. Cook in oil, covered until super soft. Add 3 tablespoons cheap balsamic vinegar and cook lid off until thickened and reduced.

## problem solving guide

**too sweet** – that's the onions, remember to season with salt or try a splash of soy sauce.

**onions crunchy** – that means your balsamic onions weren't cooked enough. Simmering for longer will help soften them now.

**bland** – be generous with the seasoning and try a splash of soy sauce.

## serving suggestions

Best in shallow bowls so there is lots of surface area for the cheese.

bangers & quick mash



It's hard to go past the classic combo of pork sausages and creamy mashed potatoes. But peeling and boiling spuds takes time. Here we're using canned white beans instead for a super-quick mash that's actually more healthy as well.

# BANGERS + QUICK MASH

serves 2

4 thick pork sausages

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

4-6 tablespoons balsamic onions to serve ([recipe here](#))

1. Cover sausages with water in a medium saucepan. Simmer gently for 10 minutes, drain.
2. Pan fry the cooked sausages in a little oil until just browned all over.
3. Meanwhile, mash drained beans in the saucepan you used for the sausage simmering, adding a little olive oil if needed.
4. Serve mash on plates, topped with sausages & balsamic onions.

video



# BANGERS + QUICK MASH

## do ahead potential?

The onions can easily be prepared ahead and reheated. As can the mash and sausages. You could also simmer the sausages until cooked then cool and refrigerate and save the browning step until you're ready to serve.

## variations for fun

**vegetarian / vegan** – Skip the poaching step and replace the sausages with mushrooms or tofu and pan fry these until well browned.

**fun** – try different types of sausages.

**different mash** – replace white beans with canned chickpeas or lentils.

**healthier** – serve on a bed of baby spinach leaves for some instant greens.

## problem solving guide

**too bland** – Season with extra salt & pepper.

**don't feel like poaching the sausages** – I know it's a hassle but it really makes a difference to the flavour and especially texture of your sausages. Trust me, it's worth the effort.

## serving suggestions

Great on its own or with a green salad.

balsamic~onion~burgers



Everyone loves a good burger and the thing is they're one of the most affordable meat based dishes. So perfect for cooks on a budget. If you can't be bothered with the onion, the burgers are lovely with just the peas for both sauce and side.

# BURGERS + BALSAMIC ONIONS

serves 2

400g (14oz) ground beef  
2 large handfuls frozen peas  
2 knobs butter

squeeze lemon juice

balsamic onions, to serve [recipe HERE](#)

1. Heat a frying pan or skillet on a super high heat for at least 3 minutes. You want it smoking hot. Meanwhile divide beef into two and shape into burger patties.

2. Sprinkle a fine layer of fine salt onto the pan and slide the burgers on top. Cook for 4 minutes then turn, adding a little more salt.

3. Meanwhile, heat a little oil in a medium pan and add the peas. Cook covered on a high heat for about 4 minutes or until peas are hot.

4. Once the burgers are turned, cook for another 4 minutes or until burgers are how you like them.

5. When the peas are hot, add the butter then roughly puree with a stick blender or mash with a fork. Season with salt, pepper and lemon juice.

video

7. Serve burgers on a bed of mashy peas with balsamic onion.



# BALSAMIC ONION BURGERS

## do ahead potential?

You could mash the peas in advance and cook the burgers but it will take just as long to reheat as the initial cooking time.

## variations for fun

**vegan / vegetarian** – make lentil burgers by draining a can of lentils and roughly mashing with a fork. Mix with 2 large handfuls soft bread crumbs and form into 2 patties, using more bread if the burgers feel too wet. Fry in oil until golden on both sides (about 3 minutes a side).

**chicken burgers** – use good quality chicken mince instead of the beef. Serve with a dollop of mayo or aioli instead of the onion.

**traditional burgers** – cook salt crusted burgers as above but serve on a burger bun with ketchup and a little mayo and some crisp lettuce.

**chilli burgers** – serve with chilli oil or your favourite hot sauce instead of the onion.

**freshly made onions** – finely slice 750g (1.5lb) onions. Cook in oil, covered until super soft. Add 3 tablespoons cheap balsamic vinegar and cook lid off until thickened and reduced.

## problem solving guide

**bland?** Give it a touch more salt & pepper.

**burgers dry** – if your minced beef is too lean, you'll get dry burgers. Fatty beef tends to be cheaper, so next time choose the best value.

**burgers too rare** – next time flatten the burgers more so they cook in the allotted time. Or pop them back in the pan until you're happy. Always a good idea to cut into a burger to check. It's the best way to learn.

**too salty** – be careful with the salt in the pan for the salt crust, it can be sary to overdo it. For now, wipe the burgers with a damp cloth, ot just cut off the salt outsides. Next time be more sparing with the salt.

## serving suggestions

A quick dinner in one. Although I'd be tempted to serve a green salad on the side as well.

# MODULE 4. THE ART OF ADAPTATION

"How to cook with what you have using  
adaptable 'template' recipes. "

# ADAPTATION MODULE VIDEOS

## Module 4 Video

All the material in the next few pages is covered in this video:



**Prefer to listen on your ipod?** [CLICK HERE](#) to download the audio in mp3. (you may need to right click and 'save link as')

# 8 TIPS FOR MASTERING THE ART OF COOKING WITH ADAPTABLE TEMPLATE RECIPES

## **1. Trust your instincts**

The one thing I wish I realized earlier in my cooking career is that even if you don't have much experience as a cook, all those years of eating three or so meals a day mean that we all have an amazing natural catalog of food knowledge in our heads.

So please don't underestimate your natural food instincts. After all, you've been eating for a long time. If you think something is going to be delicious, trust yourself, it probably will be.

I can honestly say, there aren't many times that I think of trying something and it ends up not working. 90% of the time it ends up even better than I could imagine.

## **2. Pay attention to the classic flavour combinations.**

There's a whole wealth of food knowledge out there. So there's no need to go reinventing the 'flavour' wheel each time you step into the kitchen. Some examples include bacon and eggs, tomato and basil, goats cheese and beetroot, fish and lemon, chocolate and hazelnuts, honey and almond, apple and cinnamon... You get the idea.

Whenever you're eating and come across a good flavour combo, make a mental note.

## **3. Start with less.**

Remember in cooking it's always easy to add more than it is to take away. By focusing on starting with less ingredients or less courses you give yourself a chance to get it right and then build on your success.

## **4. Read the whole recipe before you start, including the variations.**

In the kitchen it's super important to know where you're heading and how you're going to get there. With template recipes this is even more important because you're in charge. You're not blindly following the recipe. So take control and make some decisions.cooking.

# 8 TIPS FOR MASTERING THE ART OF COOKING WITH ADAPTABLE TEMPLATE RECIPES

[continued]

## **5. Develop a 'vision' or picture of the end dish in your mind before you start cooking.**

You need to know where you're going to get there with the least amount of hassle and fuss. So after you read the template recipe it's important to decide which variation or path you want to follow.

## **6. Be prepared to taste and season.**

I'm convinced that the ability to taste and season – to add whatever needs adding – is THE most important skill. It's the key difference between a great cook and an OK or mediocre cook. So every time you step into the kitchen be prepared to have a little taste and ask yourself... 'Could this taste better? What does it need or what is it lacking?'

## **7. Take mistakes as a 'learning experience'.**

Cooking is a natural process and no one can or should expect to get it right every time.

I recently went to a talk by Rene Redzepi, chef at Noma in Copenhagen currently the best restaurant in the world. One of the biggest messages he tells his chefs is that 'failure IS an option'. So if the best chef in the world expects things to go wrong from time to time then surely we home cooks should expect the same.

## **8. Have faith in 'Clancy's Law of Cooking'.**

You've probably heard of the great Irish philosopher Murphy and his favourite law, 'if anything can possibly go wrong, it will go wrong'. When I was little, my Dad used to tell us that 'Clancy's Law' was that 'Murphy was an optimist'.

Fortunately, I seem to have inherited more of my Mum's outlook on life and philosophy. So I've invented 'Clancy's Law of Cooking'. It runs along these lines...

**"If you think something is going to taste delicious,  
it probably will."**

# THE SECRET TO PLAYING THE 'WHAT'S IN THE FRIDGE' Game

The art of adaptation is a skill I believe that anyone can learn. It's something that with a little practice, and a willingness to risk the odd failure, all cooks can master. And the good news is that you can take baby steps.

One of the things that really helped me move from being a 'follow-the-recipe' cook to being more 'free-style' in the kitchen is a game I like to play. I call it the 'what's-in-the-fridge game' and you've probably guess what it involves. Yes, it's all about just cooking with what you have in the house.

## The rules of the game

### **1. You can't duck out to the shops to pick up an ingredient.**

It all has to be things you already have in the house and garden.

### **2. There is no need to eat a failure.**

If it doesn't work out, be nice to yourself, order in some Thai food, or make something else to eat.

## Begin with the end in mind

For me this is the most important step in inventing a new dish. I always take the time to survey the ingredients on hand and then imagine what I'm going to cook. Until I have a picture in my mind, I don't start cooking. Sure the picture can change, but it's really important to know where you're heading before you start.

# THE SECRET TO PLAYING THE 'WHAT'S IN THE FRIDGE' Game [continued]

## Learn the classic flavour combinations

I recently saw a demonstration by the pastry chef from cutting edge New York restaurant, wd~50. And one of the things that surprised me the most was his comments that he tends to avoid 'out-there' flavour combinations. His logic was that you didn't need to reinvent the wheel and that there's a reason that the classics are classic. Wise words.

Here are a few of my favourite combos to get you thinking:

- § tomato & basil
- § bread & cheese
- § beans & dill
- § lamb & mint
- § peanut butter & jelly (or honey!)
- § lime & chilli & coriander
- § fennel & fish
- § zucchini & mint
- § chicken & tarragon
- § salmon & dill
- § fish & lemon
- § apple & cinnamon
- § strawberries & balsamic vinegar
- § chocolate & mint
- § chocolate & orange

## Remember to keep it simple

Apart from burning things, I find my biggest kitchen failures occur when I get carried away and add too many elements to a dish. And end up with a muddled mess. Since I started cooking with 5 ingredients, this isn't such a big problem for me but it's where I see beginners making mistakes. So keep reminding yourself that 'less is more'.

# 5 easy TRICKS FOR ADAPTING TO CHANGES IN YOUR SCHEDULE

They say there are only two certainties in life. Death and taxes. But I would argue in the modern world we should include a third. Change.

Whether you're someone who thrives on change or a self professed 'change phobic' we need to face the fact that there will be changes to our schedule. This means we can set ourselves up for success so that when plans change we are able to adapt with the minimum of effort and stress.

Here are 5 tips for adapting to schedule change...

## **1. Anticipate the change.**

Take it as a given that there will be change. Then try and gauge how much volatility you need to accommodate on a regular basis. Over time you'll notice patterns that will help you plan for the most common disruptions.

For example, in our house there are two things that commonly happen at the last minute. The most common is my Irishman having to travel at the last minute and he away for one or two nights.

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

## **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 easy TRICKS FOR ADAPTING TO CHANGES IN YOUR SCHEDULE

[CONTENTS]

In the case of unexpected visitors, I usually get at least 24 hours notice so I know there will be enough time for someone to drop by the supermarket or go to the butcher to get whatever we need. So it usually works out fine.

### **3. Don't choose all perishable or short shelf life foods.**

By including some produce which will last for longer than a week like cabbage, cauliflower, zucchini, cucumber, carrots, celery, broccoli etc it maximizes your flexibility because it doesn't matter if you leave them for the next week. Same goes for protein. Look out for cryovaccated meat, tofu, halloumi, or frozen protein sources. Canned and dry legumes and lentils also add a comfortable margin of safety.

### **4. When unexpected changes do happen, perform a little 'home food preservation'.**

When your plans change, have a quick look in the fridge to see if there is anything that is going to go bad before you'll have a chance to eat it. It only takes a few minutes but can make a massive difference to your waste levels.

Think about whether you can freeze the ingredient for later. Or whether partially cooking, or doing a little 'mise en place' will help prolong its life.

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

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

warm dinner salad



When the weather is cooler - and even when it isn't - I love a warm salad like this. It's light and fresh but the warm ingredients ensure it feels substantial enough for dinner.

# WARM DINNER SALAD

per person

1 large handful main ingredient, sliced

1/2 tablespoon acid

1/2 teaspoon soy sauce, optional

1-2 handfuls salad leaves, washed and dried

small handful highlight ingredient

1. Heat a little oil in a pan and cook highlight ingredient over a medium heat until cooked to your liking.
2. Meanwhile, combine acid, soy and 1 1/2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil in a medium bowl. Taste and season.
2. Toss leaves gently in the dressing. Place leaves on a serving plate.
3. Top dressed leaves with the warm main ingredient and scatter over the highlight ingredient.

video



# WARM DINNER SALAD

## variations for fun

main ingredient – mushrooms, chicken breasts, chicken thighs, steak, lamb fillet, roast veg, eggplant (aubergine), halloumi, tofu, cooked or canned lentils, cooked quinoa, canned chickpeas, canned beans.

acid – Sherry vinegar, rice wine vinegar, lemon juice, lime juice, red/white wine vinegar, champagne vinegar, balsamic.

soy-free – skip the soy sauce and be more generous with the salt. Or try a dash of fish sauce instead.

leaves – pretty much anything you like. Watercress, baby spinach, all lettuce, rocket (arugula), basil, parsley, mint, lovage, baby kale, baby cavolo nero, brussels sprouts leaves.

highlight ingredient – shaved parmesan, goats cheese, marinated feta, ricotta, finely sliced ripe grapes, shaved pear, roast almonds or other nuts, seeds, toasted breadcrumbs.

## 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

Wonderful as a light dinner on its own.

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 .

# QUICK STIR FRY

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. 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.

2. 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.

3. Return the aromatics and protein to the pan. Add the sauce. Stir fry for another few seconds or until everything is hot. Taste. Season.

4. Remove from the heat. Serve sprinkled with the garnish / highlight.

video



# QUICK STIR FRY

## variations for fun

**protein -minced (ground) meat** – beef, chicken, lamb, turkey, pork, veal, buffalo.

**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!

**protein - tender cuts of meat, finely sliced across the grain** – steak, eye fillet of beef (fillet mignon), lamb fillet or backstraps, pork fillet, pork shoulder, chicken breast, chicken thighs.

**veggie protein** – tofu, cashews, almonds, setian, eggs (cook as an omelette in the base of the wok then slice and stir through at the end), cooked or canned lentils, cooked or canned beans.

**fresh veg** – use one or a combo of zucchini, carrots, red capsicum (red bell peppers), bok choy, choy sum, other asian greens, spinach leaves, green beans, snow peas (mange tout), shaved cabbage, broccoli, broccolini, cauliflower, sugar snap peas, fennel, witlof (belgian endive), asparagus.

**cooked veg** – root veg are best pre-cooked – either simmered or roasted in bight sized chunks. Try beets, parsnip, swedes, sweet potato, pumpkin.

**saucses (asian)** – My go-to stir fry sauce is just soy or tamari (a gluten-free soy). Other times I use oyster sauce, fish sauce, hoisin sauce or sriracha (chillili sauce).

**saucses (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.

**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.

# QUICK STIR FRY

## 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.

**to dry** – try adding a little more oil or sauce or both.  
serving suggestions

## serving suggestions

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

grilled kebabs + 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.

# KEBABS + SAUCE + SALAD

per person

200g (7oz) protein or veg

1 teaspoon - 1 tablespoon marinade ingredient

sauce, to serve

salad leaves, to serve

1. Cut protein or veg into bight sized cubes and place in a small bowl with the marinade. Or for ground meat mix with the marinade ingredient.

2. Heat an overhead grill (broiler) on a very high heat.

3. Thread protein or veg onto 2 bamboo skewers. If using ground meat form into 'sausages' with your hands first.

4. Cook for 3-4 minutes on the first side, until browned. Turn then cook for another 3-5 minutes or until just cooked.

5. Serve skewers with sauce drizzled over. And salad on the side.

video



# GRILLED KEBABS + SAUCE + SALAD

## do ahead potential?

OK. Most kebabs work best when fresh but can be served cold wrapped in fresh flat bread with the sauce. Will keep in the fridge for a week or so.

## variations for fun

**protein** – Ground meat – just form into ‘sausages’ with your hands and thread onto the skewers. Tender cuts of meat like pork fillet, lamb fillet, pork neck, beef fillet, steak, chicken breasts or thighs. Fish fillets can also be used. Tofu. Setian. Chorizo, squid, prawns (shrimp).

**veg** - looking for veg which will cook in a relatively short amount of time AND hold its shape on the skewer. Zucchini, red capsicum ( bell peppers), mushrooms, Or used cooked veg such as sweet potato, pumpkin, potatoes, parsnips, celeriac, fennel.

**marinade ingredient** – soy sauce, lemon juice, lime juice, sherry or rice vinegar. Spices can also work here (1/2 – 1 teaspoon per person + 1 tablespoon oil) smoked paprika, ground cumin, ground coriander seed, curry powder, garam marsala.

**sauces** – hummus, pesto, herb & nut sauce, hoisin sauce or sriracha (chilli sauce). Even ketchup or BBQ sauce. For more sauce ideas see [10 delicious 5 minute sauces](#).

**salad** – pretty much any washed salad leaves including baby spinach, rocket (arugula), radicchio or mixed leaves. Also try leafy herbs like parsley, mint, coriander (cilantro) and basil.

## problem solving guide

**protein dry** – it's important not to overcook the protein as it easily dries out. Best to err on the side of slightly undercooked.

**bland** – be generous with the seasoning. Next time try a different sauce.

**short on time?** – skip the threading onto the skewers and just stir fry the cubes of meat until just cooked and serve drizzled with the sauce.

**skewers burning** – bamboo skewers will burn unless soaked in water first. I tend not to worry about it. You could remove the skewers before serving or invest in a set of metal skewers.

## serving suggestions

Serve the skewers and sauce with the salad on the side. For a more substantial meal, serve with fresh pita bread.

pan fried *protein* + sauce + salad



You may recognize this image from our Chilli Chicken with Hummus from an earlier module. This is a great example of how you can take a specific recipe and translate it into a general template. Feel free to do this with any of your favourite recipes.

# Pan FRIED PROTEIN + Sauce

per person

approx 150-250g (5-9oz) protein

1/2 teaspoon flavouring, optional

3-4 tablespoons sauce

2 large handfuls washed salad leaves

1/2 lemon

1. Heat a frying pan or skillet on a very high heat.
2. Trim fat from the protein and bash with your fist to even out the thickness, if needed. Rub with a little olive oil and sprinkle with flavouring, if using. Season.
3. Sear with the oiled side down for 2-4 minutes. Turn and cook for another 2-3 minutes or until protein is cooked through.
4. Smear sauce over the base of 2 plates. Top with chicken and serve with leaves and salad on the side.

video



# Pan FRIED PROTEIN +sauce +sALAD

## do ahead potential?

Pretty good. Can be eaten cold or the protein reheated. Will keep in the fridge for 4-5 days.

## variations for fun

**veggie 'protein'** - I've used halloumi in the picture. Tofu or setian would also work well here. Or think about pan frying some precooked beans or lentils until they are just cooked and serving with the sauce and salad. Field or portabello mushrooms are great here too.

**carnivore protein** – for pan frying tender cuts are best. And preferably not too thick as it can be difficult to get the middle cooked without completely burning the outsides. Steak, lamb cutlets or lamb chops, pork cutlets or pork chops, chicken breasts, chicken thigh fillets. Fish fillets work really well too.

**flavouring** – crushed garlic, chilli powder, dried chilli flakes, fresh chilli, smoked paprika, curry powder, ground coriander, ground cumin, fennel seeds, pepper, rosemary, thyme, lemon zest, bay leaves.

**saucers** – hummus, pesto, natural yoghurt, ricotta, ketchup, BBQ sauce, mayo, aioli, for recipes check out my [10 delicious 5 Minute saucers](#).

## problem solving guide

**too bland** – Season with salt & pepper. Try some more chilli.

**too dry** – Add a little more olive oil or serve with more sauce. If the protein is very dry it means it's been overcooked. Next time get it out of the pan earlier.

**protein pink** – Means it's not cooked properly. Just pop back in the pan and cook for another few minutes. Next time consider being a bit more aggressive with your bashing to make sure the protein is thinner and will cook more quickly.

**flavouring burning** – this can happen with this method – I like to think of it as adding a 'charred' flavour. If it tastes bitter though, you've gone too far. Next time try adding the flavouring after the protein is cooked or add it half way through cooking.

## serving suggestions

Either serve protein on a bed of sauce or serve sauce on top.



*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.

# KETCHUP 'BAKED' LEGUMES

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.

video



# KETCHUP 'BAKED' LEGUMES

## do ahead potential?

Brilliant! Reheats really well. Also freezes well. Should keep in the fridge for about 2 weeks.

## variations for fun

**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.

## 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.

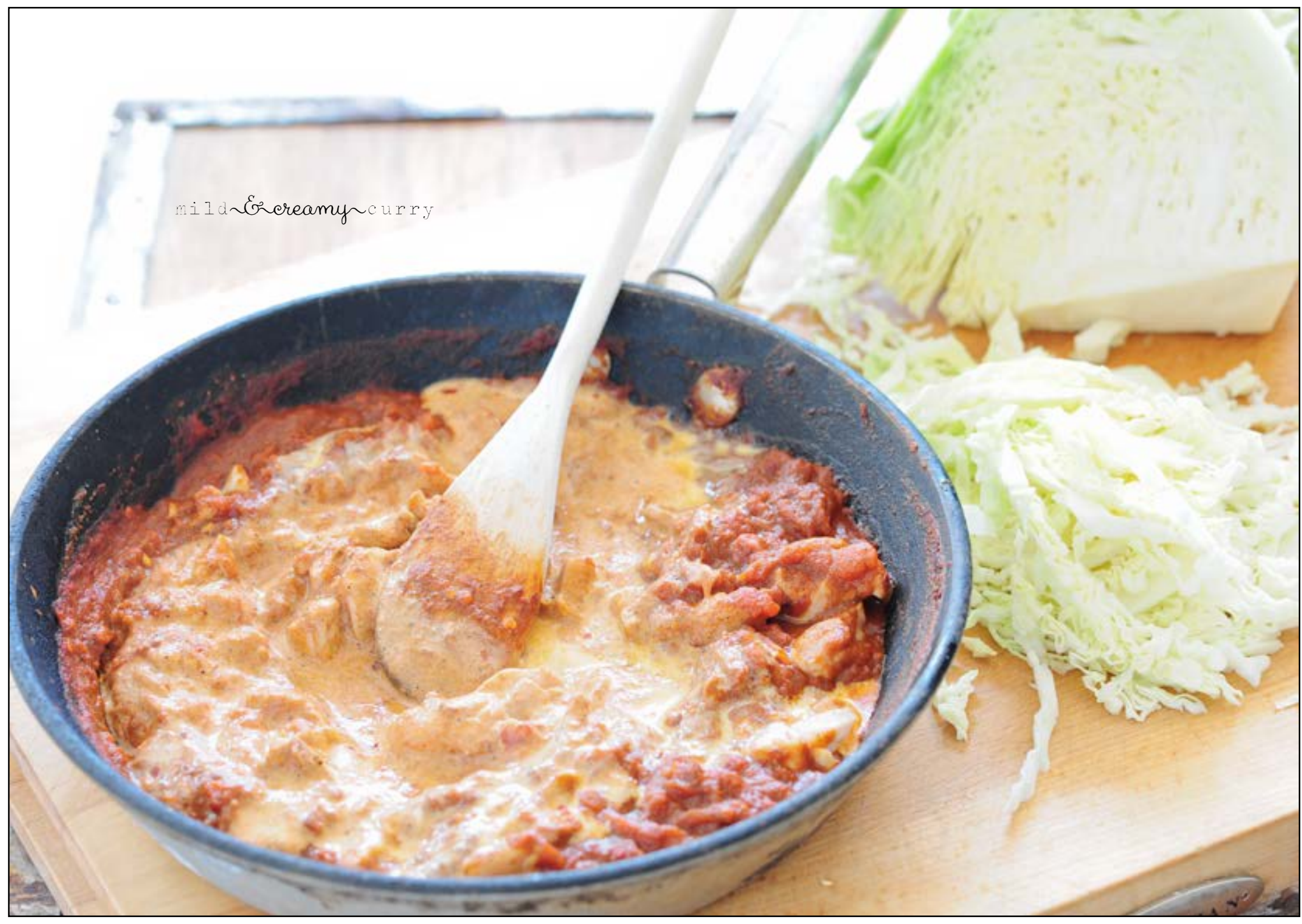
**too sweet** – Next time try a different brand of ketchup, for now add a little more salt or some soy sauce to season.

**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.

*mild & creamy curry*



This is one of my all time favourite curries. It's very loosely based on the great 'British' curry house favourite - butter chicken.

# + MILD CREAMY 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.

video



# MILD + CREAMY CURRY

## do ahead 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.

## variations for fun

**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 stabilize yoghurt so it can be heated but it's a pain to do.

**no tomatoes?** – allergic or don't have any. Just replace with 1/2 cup chicken or vegetable stock and expect a less thick curry. You might find it needs a squeeze of lemon or lime to make up for the acidity in the tomatoes.

## problem solving guide

**too hot** – Next time use less chilli, but for now, increase the cream to tame the heat. Or serve with natural yoghurt and cucumber.

**grainy sauce texture** – I suspect it's to do with the quality of the garam marsala spice blend and how fine it is ground. Simmering the sauce for longer could help soften the texture. The best solution is to find a good source of spices or to grind your grainy garam marsala in a coffee grinder.

**tough meat** – With currys and other sauce based dishes, there are 2 approaches to getting tender meat:

1. Use higher quality cuts such as breast. Chop them into small pieces, cook them quickly over a high heat until just cooked through, add the sauce and only cook at a gentle simmer so the sauce cooks but the meat doesn't overcook.
2. Go for the long slow simmer for an hour or so to cook the meat until it is almost falling apart. This is better suited to cheaper cuts like chuck steak or lamb shanks

**too bland** – Spices lose their flavour intensity as they age. Time to buy some fresh garam marsala for next time. But for now you could add a little more spice.

## serving suggestions

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

*bigrass* salad



The most frequent thing I make for dinner when the weather is warmer is what I like to call a 'big-ass salad' - a name I stole from Leo Babauta of Zen Habits fame. I love having something light and quick up my sleeve. There are literally thousands of variations of this salad so it's something you won't get bored with either.

# BIG-ass SALAD

per person

*1/2 tablespoon acid*

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

*large handful main ingredient*

*small handful highlight ingredient*

1. Combine acid and 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil in a medium bowl. Season.
2. Toss leaves gently in the dressing using clean hands.
3. Top salad with your main and highlight ingredients.

video



# Big-ass SALAD

## do ahead 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.

## variations for fun

**acid** – sherry vinegar, rice wine vinegar, lemon juice, lime juice, red/white wine vinegar, champagne vinegar, balsamic.

**leaves** – pretty much anything you like. Watercress, baby spinach, all lettuce, rocket (arugula), basil, parsley, mint, lovage, baby kale, baby cavolo nero, brussels sprouts leaves.

**main ingredient** – avocado, smoked chicken, tuna, salmon, cottage cheese, ricotta, sardines, smoked salmon, prosciutto, cooked bacon, boiled eggs, parmesan, goats cheese.

**highlight ingredient** – roast almonds, brazil nuts, pinenuts, diced red onion, halved cherry tomatoes, finely sliced ripe grapes, shaved pear, other nuts, seeds.

## 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.

smooth~veggie~soup



One of the tricks to a great veggie soups is to resist the urge to use stock or bullion. The key is letting the vegetables speak for themselves. I hate to admit it but I picked up this trick from Gordon Ramsay. I know, people always surprise you.

# SMOOTH VEGGIE SOUP

per person

250g / 1/2lb vegetables (500g / 1lb)

1 1/2 cups water or other liquid

2-3 tablespoons butter

squeeze lemon juice, optional

1. Pop your kettle on to boil or bring the liquid to boil in a saucepan. Chop vegetables into bight sized pieces.
2. Place veg and boiling water in a medium saucepan. Bring to the boil. Cover.
3. Simmer for about 10-15 minutes or until veg are tender. Hard veg like pumpkin, carrots or parsnip will take more like 30 minutes depending on how small you chop them.
4. Add butter. Puree with a stick blender until you have a lovely smooth soup.
5. Taste and season with salt, pepper and a generous squeeze of lemon if you think it needs freshening up.

video



# SMOOTH VEGGIE SOUP

## variations for fun

**broccoli soup** – use 1 head broccoli per person and just simmer in the water. Serve straight up OR top with fresh goats cheese.

**cauliflower** – replace the broccoli with frozen peas or finely sliced fresh veg. Snow peas, sugarsnap peas, celery & carrots are all good.

**mushroom** – roast mushies (200C/400F) until brown and soft, about 30 minutes. Simmer as per the recipe.

**other veg** – carrots, peas (frozen or podded), pumpkin, sweet potato, parsnip, .

**zucchini** – use zucchini as the veg. Great with pesto on top.

**tomato & basil** – replace the veg with a can of tomatoes reduce the water to 3/4 cup per person. Leave in the butter, it's softens the acidity of the soup. Serve with a handful or torn basil leaves on top.

**dairy-free** – replace the butter with tahini, coconut milk, avocado or almond meal.

**butter alternatives** – a dollop of pesto, or serve with a drizzle of cream or yoghurt, curry paste, coconut milk, ground almonds, parmesan cheese, goats cheese.

**water alternatives** – vegetable or chicken stock. Canned or pureed tomatoes.

## variations for fun

**herby** – add fresh herbs as you puree or sprinkle on top before serving. Basil, mint, parsley & thyme are all great with veg.

**richer** – add more butter OR add in some cream, sour cream or yoghurt after you've pureed the soup.

**thicker soup** – add a handful of couscous to simmer with the veg.

**higher protein / more substantial** – halve the amount of veg and add 1/2 can lentils or beans. Or used your own home cooked legumes. OR when the soup is pureed, bring back to a simmer then remove from the heat and stir in a lightly whisked egg. Stand for a few minutes for the egg to cook.

**carnivore** – use chicken stock instead of the water and add a handful or shredded cooked chicken meat after pureeing. Bring back to a simmer before serving.

**fiery** – add 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon dried chilli flakes.

**curry veg soup** - add 1-2 teaspoons curry powder per person to simmer from the beginning.

**dairy-free** – replace the butter with tahini, coconut milk, avocado or almond meal.

# SMOOTH VEGGIE SOUP

## **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 10-15minutes with the lid off to help reduce the soup. OR try stirring in a few tablespoons of almond meal or some canned beans or lentils Or some couscous to thicken up.

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

**lumpy** – it's important to wait until the veg are cooked and tender before trying to puree as hard veg will not puree properly. You can keep simmering for another 5-10 minutes and having another go at pureeing. OR just change the name to 'chunky veggie soup'.

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

## **serving suggestions**

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

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.

# CHUNKY VEG SOUP

serves 2

*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.

video



# CHUNKY VEG SOUP

## do ahead potential?

Brilliant! Reheats really well. One of those things that improves with age.

## variations for fun

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

**liquid** – chicken stock, vegetable stock, fish stock, white wine, red wine, tomato puree, canned tomatoes, water.

**vegetables** – I used zucchini in the photo. parsnips, sweet potato, pumpkin, brussels sprouts, fennel, peas, sugar snap peas, snow peas, cabbage, beets, asparagus, jerusalem artichokes, broccoli, cauliflower, red capsicum (bell peppers), bok choy, asian greens, spinach, silverbeet or any combination of these. Legumes are also great here.

**flavouring** – I skipped this because I was using the pesto which packs a big flavour punch.

**highlight ingredient** – I used pesto. Hummus is good too or other sauces. Yoghurt, sour cream, guacamole. Goats cheese, parmesan, ricotta. Croutons or small slices of bread with melted cheese. Crispy bacon pieces, finely sliced salami or prosciutto.

## 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.

# 10 DELICIOUS 5 MINUTE SAUCES

## 1. hummus

In a food processor whizz 1 can chickpeas with 1 clove garlic and 3 tablespoons each of lemon juice, tahini and chickpea canning liquid.

### VARIATIONS

**white bean hummus** – replace chickpeas with canned white beans.

**lentil hummus** – replace chickpeas with 1 can lentils or home cooked lentils (250g / 9oz).

**vegetable hummus** – replace chickpeas with 250g / 9oz cooked vegetables. Great with roast pumpkin, roast sweet potato, carrots or even steamed broccoli or cauliflower.

**no tahini?** – replace with extra virgin olive oil or other nut butter such as cashew or almond butter.

## 2. natural yoghurt

This is seriously the easiest sauce ever. Take a good quality full fat yoghurt and season generously with salt and pepper.

### VARIATIONS

**lemon / lime yoghurt** – add in the zest of a lemon or lime.

**vegan** – use a good quality coconut yoghurt (recipe on Stonesoup).

**chilli** – add in 1-2 finely diced fresh chillies or some dried chilli powder.

**herby** – stir in a handful of chopped herbs such as basil, coriander (cilantro), thyme, mint or parsley.

# 10 DELICIOUS 5 MINUTE SAUCES

## 3. cheats aioli

Finely chop or crush a clove garlic. Stir through 6-8 tablespoons good quality commercial mayo (or make your own – recipe here)

### VARIATIONS

**lemon / lime yoghurt** – add in the zest of a lemon or lime.

**vegan** – use a good quality commercial vegan mayonnaise.

**chilli** – add in 1-2 finely diced fresh chillies or some dried chilli powder.

**herby** – stir in a handful of chopped herbs such as basil, coriander (cilantro), thyme, mint or parsley.

## 4. pesto

In a food processor whizz a large bunch basil leaves with 1-2 cloves garlic, large handful pinenuts, large handful grated parmesan, and 3-4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil. Taste and season, adding more parmesan or oil as needed. Sometimes I add a splash of lemon juice for freshness.

### VARIATIONS

**winter pesto** – replace basil with flat leaf parsley and replace pinenuts with roasted almonds.

**vegan** – replace the parmesan with extra nuts such as brazil or almonds.

**asian pesto** - replace basil with coriander (cilantro), replace pinenuts and cheese with 2 large handfuls roasted cashews. Consider adding in a splash of lime juice as well.

# 10 DELICIOUS 5 minute sauces

## 5. smoky BBQ sauce

Add 1-2 teaspoons smoked paprika to 1/2 cup commercial BBQ sauce. Taste and add more if needed.

### VARIATIONS

**hot smoky BBQ sauce** – add in a little dried chilli powder or flakes.

**home made BBQ sauce** – make a big batch and keep in the pantry (recipe here)

## 6. cashew nut sauce

In a food processor whizz 200g (7oz) cashew nuts with 1-2 cloves garlic, 1/2 cup water and 2 tablespoons sherry vinegar or white wine vinegar. When you have a smooth creamy sauce stop and taste. Season as needed.

### VARIATIONS

**budget** – swap some or all of the nuts for torn chunks of rustic bread. Sourdough is great.

**nut-free** – replace nuts with cooked or canned legumes such as cannellini beans, butter beans or chickpeas. You might need a little more or less vinegar.

**no sherry vinegar?** – no problem. Use lemon juice or other wine vinegars. Rice vinegar is great.

**different nuts** – pine nuts, almonds, walnuts, pecans, peanuts (or use peanut butter with less water). So many options.

# 10 DELICIOUS 5 MINUTE SAUCES

## 7. tahini lemon sauce

A great sauce to have up your sleeve when you're looking for something creamy and dairy-free. Combine 2 tablespoons each of lemon juice, water and tahini. Taste and season.

### VARIATIONS

**almond sauce** – replace tahini with almond butter

**thicker sauce** – halve the water.

**thinner sauce** – double the water.

## 8. quick satay sauce

For each person, mix 3 tablespoons peanut butter, 1 teaspoon thai red curry paste, 1-2 teaspoons soy sauce and 2 teaspoons oil per person.

### VARIATIONS

**no thai curry paste?** – replace with 1-2 small red chillies, finely chopped and deseeded if you prefer a milder sauce.

# 10 DELICIOUS 5 MINUTE SAUCES

## 9. buttermilk dressing

Whisk 1 tablespoon dijon mustard & 6 tablespoons buttermilk together until smooth. Taste & season.

### VARIATIONS

**thicker sauce** – increase the mustard to 2 tablespoons.  
Serve with roast or BBQ chicken or drizzled over roast eggplant (aubergine).

**dairy-free / vegan** – replace the buttermilk with 1 tablespoon sherry vinegar or lemon juice and 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil.

## 10. grown up ketchup

Add 1 teaspoon dried chilli and 1 teaspoon soy sauce to 1/2 cup commercial ketchup. Taste and add more if needed.

MODULE 5.  
HOW TO STAY  
INSPIRED  
+MOTIVATED

"Favourite sources of Inspiration  
+Do-ahead Dinners +5-minute Dinners."

# INSPIRATION MODULE VIDEOS

## Module 5 Video

All the material in the next few pages is covered in this video:



### **Prefer to listen on your ipod?**

[CLICK HERE](#) to download the audio in mp3.  
(you may need to right click and 'save link as')

# 11 FAVOURITE SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

This week we're talking inspiration and motivation – some of my favourite topics. I personally believe that you can find inspiration anywhere and for me that's especially true when it comes to cooking. So I'm sharing my own sources of inspiration and motivation.

## 1. Cookbooks

What can I say, my favourite books tend to be cookbooks. I've been rediscovering my local library this year which is a great inexpensive way to explore new authors. Here are a few of my alltime favourites.

**Tender Volume 1. A cook and his vegetable patch** by Nigel Slater  
His words alone are enough to keep me enchanted for hours, but Nigel Slater's recipes are also some of my all-time favourites.

**River Cottage Veg Everyday** by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall I just adore English chef Hugh and his River Cottage TV series. His passion for growing food and cooking is infectious. This is one of his latest books and easily my favourite.

**A year in my kitchen** by Skye Gyngell A wonderful book of cooking by the seasons from an Australian chef living and cooking in London.

**Moro** - by Sam & Sam Clarke Another London chef book but this time focusing on Moroccan and Spanish cuisine – simply love all their books but this first one has the most classic dishes.

**The Bourke Street Bakery Cookbook** – by Paul Allam & David McGuinness My go to book for all things bread, pastry and sweet treats.

**Danks Street Depot** – by Jared Ingersoll A wonderful little Sydney cafe, I've pretty much cooked my way through this book and had some wonderful results.

# 11 FAVOURITE SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

## 2. Eating out

I often get inspired to cook new things from dishes I eat at restaurants. And it's a great excuse to try new places in the name of 'research'.

## 3. Travel

OK. So I know we can't all just pack up and head off to Morocco for a month. But when you are planning a trip, it can be an added bonus if you visit somewhere with an interesting food culture. Some of my most enlightening food moments have happened away from home.

## 4. Food Blogs

My current favourite food blogs:

[101 cookbooks](#) – for healthy vegetarian recipes and the occasional sweet treat.

[What Katie Ate](#) – her recipes definitely aren't minimalist but the photography is truly inspired.

[Orangette](#) – as much for her writing as her recipes.

[Sprouted Kitchen](#) – wonderful photography AND recipes

## 5. Food Websites

While google can be useful, I find I get much more inspired by searching on specific websites for whatever I'm looking for.

[Australian Gourmet Traveller](#) – still my all time favourite food magazine

[Nigel Slater](#) – the man is a food writing god.

[Nigel Slater's column in the Guardian](#) – for when you need more St. Nigel.

[Jamie Oliver](#) – like him or not. You have to agree that for a chef jamie writes some really wonderful recipes.

[Donna Hay](#) – sometimes the cuteness and perfectness of it all annoys me – but still some great recipes.

# 11 FAVOURITE SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

## 6. Google

What did we do before Google? I tend to search Stonesoup first then I'll do a general google search if I can't find what I'm after.

## 7. Play the what's in the fridge game

Although we covered it in the art of adaptation, I still believe that my best creations come from when I just make something up from whats on hand.

## 8. The supermarket or farmer's market

If you struggle to get inspired, why not make a little promise to yourself to buy and use one new ingredient this week?

## 9. Stonesoup!

One of the reasons I started blogging was to document my favourite recipes and creations. 7 years later, Stonesoup contains a massive collection of recipes. I just use the search function in the side bar to find what I'm looking for. I should point out that there's also a search box on the SYDD site... it's just hidden in the nav menu at the bottom of every page.

## 10. Try a radical Dietary Change

Try going veggie for a month or have an experiment to see what it's like for people that are coeliac or intolerant to dairy. Even a week can be enough to give to a different perspective and break you out of your current food rut.

## 11. Explore foods you think you don't like.

As we age and experience different things our taste buds change. So you may surprise yourself when you try something you hated in childhood with your adult taste buds. Trying something prepared in a different way can make a massive difference as well. When I was little I HATED my mum's boiled brussels sprouts with a passion. But the first time I tried pan fried brussels I was hooked.

3 THINGS  
YOU SHOULD  
'NEVER' DO  
IF YOU  
WANT TO  
STAY  
INSPIRED +  
MOTIVATED

We all go through phases in life where we aren't very inspired. Where everything seems like too much effort. When we're stuck in a rut. Although it is rare, even I – someone who adores cooking, get a little 'over it' from time to time.

The good news is there are precautions you can take to keep these uninspired moments as infrequent as possible.

**1. Don't follow the 'recipe' every single time**

As you've hopefully come to appreciate from the variations on Stonesoup and in Solve Your Dinner Dilemma, there are always countless ways to vary every recipe. Even small changes like substituting mint for parsley can keep a favourite dish becoming bored.

**2. Don't be complacent**

If you find yourself stuck in a rut or completely uninspired remember it's all about your attitude. You are the only one who can change your situation for the better and this is a good thing. You can make a difference if you want to!

**3. Don't play it safe**

Rene Redzepi, chef at Noma, currently rated best restaurant in the world spoke in Melbourne earlier in the year and I was lucky enough to attend. One of the things I found most surprising was his attitude to failure. He is constantly reminding his chefs that if they aren't failing then they aren't trying hard enough. And that it's only when we embrace the possibility of failure that we allow ourselves the freedom and space to cook really delicious food.

Surely if it's good enough for the best chef in the world, it's good enough for your kitchen too!

warm butterbean salad



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

# WARM BUTTER BEAN SALAD

serves 2

- 1 can butter beans (400g / 14oz), drained*
- 1 clove garlic, finely sliced*
- 1 sprig rosemary, leaves picked*
- 1 tablespoon sherry or wine vinegar*
- 4 large handfuls washed salad leaves*

1. Heat a little oil in a small pan. Fry beans, garlic and rosemary on a medium high heat, stirring every now and then.
2. Meanwhile combine vinegar with 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil in a large bowl. Season and toss in the leaves to coat.
3. When the beans are browned, scatter over the leaves and sprinkle with sea salt flakes.

video



# WARM BUTTER BEAN SALAD

## do ahead potential?

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

## variations for fun

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

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

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

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

## problem solving guide

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

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

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

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

## serving suggestions

Great as a simple supper on its own.

pear & parmesan salad



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

# PEAR + PARMESAN SALAD

serves 2

- 1 tablespoon sherry, rice or other wine vinegar
- 1 pear, finely sliced
- 4 large handfuls rocket (arugula)
- 2 large handfuls shaved parmesan
- 2 small handfuls shelled pistachios

1. Whisk vinegar with 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil. Taste and season.
2. Toss pear and rocket in the dressing. Divide between 2 plates.
3. Serve with parmesan and pistachios sprinkled over.

video



# PEAR + PARMESAN SALAD

## do ahead potential?

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

## variations for fun

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

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

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

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

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

## problem solving guide

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

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

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

## serving suggestions

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

~pesto~couscous



The beauty of couscous lies in how quickly and easily it cooks. Just pour over boiling water and stand for a few minutes - it doesn't get much easier than that! It also helps that it's super comforting and filling as well.

# PESTO COUSCOUS

serves 2

1 punnet cherry tomatoes, halves

1 cup couscous

small bunch flat leaf parsley, leaves picked

large handful shaved parmesan

4-6 tablespoons pesto

1. Bring your kettle or some water to the boil.
2. Combine tomatoes and couscous in a heat-proof bowl. Season generously. Pour over 1 cup boiling water and 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil.
3. Cover with cling film. Stand for 2-3 minutes.
4. Fluff couscous with a fork and toss in parsley. Serve with parmesan and pesto on top.

video



# PESTO COUSCOUS

## do ahead potential?

Will keep for a week or so in the fridge but the parsley will wilt.

## variations for fun

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

**nut-free** – replace pesto with basil oil.

**vegan / dairy-free** – Use a vegan pesto (whizz a bunch of basil, 1 clove garlic and 2 large handfuls of nuts until finely chopped then stir in 6-8 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil) and replace the parmesan with sliced almonds or brazil nuts.

**different herbs** – use mint or basil as well as or instead of the parsley. Baby spinach or other salad leaves could also be used.

## problem solving guide

**too bland?** – Give the couscous a little more seasoning – a splash of lemon juice may help. Next time try a different brand of pesto.

**crunchy couscous** – stand a little longer or add some more boiling water to soften – be careful a little will go a long way.

## serving suggestions

Great as a meal on its own.



tabbouleh fried egg

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

# TABBbouLEH FRIED EGG

serves 2

1 tablespoon lemon juice

250g (9oz) cooked brown rice (from a packet is great)

1 bunch mint, leaves picked

2-4 eggs

4-6 tablespoons natural yoghurt

1. Heat a small frying pan on a medium high heat. Meanwhile combine lemon juice with 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil. Season.

2. Toss rice and mint into the dressing.

3. Add a generous glug of oil to the hot pan. Crack eggs into the oil.

4. Fry eggs for about 2 minutes or until the whites are no longer 'snotty'. Spooning a little hot oil over the top can help.

5. Serve eggs on a bed of the brown rice salad with yoghurt on top.

video



# TABBouleH FRIED EGG

## do ahead potential?

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

## variations for fun

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

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

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

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

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

## problem solving guide

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

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

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

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

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

## serving suggestions

A great one dish meal.

greengoddesssalad



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

# GREEN GODDESS SALAD

serves 2

2 tablespoons rice wine or sherry vinegar

2 handfuls snow peas (mange tout)

1 avocado

1/2 bunch flat leaf parsley

small handful shelled pistachios

1. Combine vinegar with 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil in a large bowl. Season.

2. Trim and string snowpeas. Then finely slice them into julienne strips (think long and skinny).

3. Toss snowpeas in the dressing.

4. Halve avocado and scoop flesh into the salad.

5. Roughly chop parsley toss in.

6. Scatter over pistachios.

video



# GREEN GODDESS SALAD

## do ahead potential?

This is one of the few salads that is OK after a night in the fridge. Although the avocado may start to brown. Leave the pistachios until the last minute so they keep their crunch.

## variations for fun

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

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

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

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

## problem solving guide

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

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

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

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

## serving suggestions

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



thai beef salad

It's hard to go past a good Thai beef salad when you're after something fresh and light for dinner.

# THAI BEEF SALAD

serves 2

3 tablespoons lime juice

3 tablespoons fish sauce

2 lebanese cucumbers

200g (1/2lb) rare roast beef

1 bunch mint, leaves picked

1. Combine the zest of one lime, lime juice, fish sauce and 3 tablespoons peanut oil in a medium sized bowl.

2. Halve cucumbers lengthwise and chop into little half-moons. Add to the dressing.

3. Tear the beef into bite sized pieces and add to the dressing.

4. Add mint leaves and toss gently.

video



# THAI BEEF SALAD

## do ahead potential?

This can easily be prepared ahead and kept in the fridge until you're ready to eat. If I was making in advance I'd just pop the mint leaves on top and wait until serving before tossing them into the dressing to avoid them wilting.

## variations for fun

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

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

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

**different herbs** – feel free to use any combination of mint, basil, flat leaf parsley or coriander (cilantro).

**warm salad** – replace the cold beef with 2 steaks – sear until cooked to your liking then slice and use as above.

**hot / more authentic** – add in a few finely sliced fresh red chillies.

## problem solving guide

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

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

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

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

## serving suggestions

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

apricot chicken



I've based this on one of my Mum's classic recipes. But rather than using a super-sweet combo of apricot nectar and french onion soup, I've given it a more grown-up vibe with tomatoes, onion and juicy dried apricot.

# APRICOT CHICKEN

serves 4

4-8 chicken pieces on the bone  
2 onions, peeled & chopped  
1 can tomatoes (400g / 14oz)  
4 small sweet potatoes  
200g (7oz) dried apricots.

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F).
2. Place chicken, onions, tomato, sweet potato, apricots and 1 1/2 cups water in an oven proof pot. Season cover with a lid or foil.
3. Cook for 1 hour.
4. Remove the lid or foil and cook uncovered for another 15-30 minutes or until sweet potato is tender and chicken is golden and cooked.

video



# APRICOT CHICKEN

## do ahead potential?

Brilliant – either reheat in a hot oven or on the stove. Will keep in the fridge for a week or so. Can be frozen as well.

## variations for fun

**vegan / vegetarian** – replace chicken with firm tofu sliced into chunks. Be generous with the seasoning.

**herby** – lovely with a few sprigs of rosemary or thyme.

**spicy** – add in a few sliced red chillies or a teaspoon of dried chilli powder.

**less sweet** – halve the amount of apricots.

## problem solving guide

**tough chicken** - this is usually a sign of overcooked chicken. Not much you can do now but check earlier next time.

**watery sauce** – if your sauce hasn't reduced down enough, either pop in the oven with the lid off for half an hour or so, or remove the chicken and simmer, uncovered until you're happy. Be careful though, I often think there's too much sauce but when I go to serve the amount of sauce is perfect, or I'm wishing I had a little more sauce lying around.

**too sweet** – balance the apricots with generous seasoning. A splash of soy sauce will help too.

**bland** - make sure you're generous with the salt. A little tomato paste may help as well.

**dry** - It can be easy for the dish to dry out. Best to keep an eye on it and add a little water if you think it's looking too dry.

## serving suggestions

A meal in a bowl. If you need some greens to go with either serve on a bed of baby spinach or sauteed greens or sprinkle with plenty of flat leaf parsley.



*spanish beef stew*

I've used beef cheeks in the video. In case you're wondering yes it is the meat from the actual cheeks of the cow - one of my favourite cuts for slow cooking. But please feel free to use your favourite 'stewing' cuts such as chuck or blade.

# SPANISH BEEF STEW

serves 4

1kg (2lb) beef stewing steak, chopped into chunks  
2 red onions, peeled & diced  
4 tablespoons tomato paste  
1-2 cups red wine  
2 tablespoons smoked paprika

1. Place beef, onions, tomato paste, wine and paprika in a slow cooker or oven proof dish.
2. For the slow cooker, cover and cook on auto for 10-11 hours or until beef is meltingly tender.
3. For the oven, add an extra cup of wine, cover and bake at 120C (250F) for 4-6 hours or until beef is meltingly tender. Add in a little water if the beef starts to dry out.
4. Taste, season and serve hot.

video



# SPANISH BEEF STEW

## do ahead potential?

Absolutely! Like all slow cooked dishes, this will improve with a little time sitting in the fridge. Will keep in the fridge for a week or more.

## variations for fun

**vegan / vegetarian** – replace beef cheeks with 4 large field mushrooms.

**olives** – serve with a handful of green olives scattered over the top.

**pork** – replace beef with 1kg (2lb) pork neck or pork shoulder.

**short on time** – increase the oven temp to 180C (350F) and reduce the cooking time to about 2 hours.

**no smoked paprika?** - skip the smoked paprika or use a little regular paprika instead. Two teaspoons of cayenne pepper would work instead.

**lamb** - replace beef with 4 large lamb shanks.

## serving suggestions

I like to serve in bowls with the sauce, topped with a little fresh parsley and crusty bread & butter on the side to scoop up the juices. For an even more spanish vibe, serve with bread that has been rubbed with the flesh of a ripe tomato and a little olive oil. For a slow carb serving option, try serving on a bed of cauliflower or white bean mash.

## problem solving guide

**tough meat** -this means you haven't cooked your meat for long enough. If you can, best to pop back in the slow cooker or oven for at least another half hour or longer.

**bland** – make sure you're generous with the salt. A little more tomato paste may help as well.

**watery sauce** – if your sauce hasn't reduced down enough, either pop in the oven with the lid off for half an hour or so, or remove the beef and simmer, uncovered in the slow cooker on high for about an hour. An additional tablespoon of tomato paste may help things.


**bitter flavours** – either your smoked paprika is to blame or you've burnt some of the dish. A difficult one to fix but adding a little butter or olive oil may mellow out any bitterness.

**dry** - if you're cooking in the oven it can be easy for the dish to dry out Best to keep an eye on it and add a little water if you think it's looking too dry.

**onion crunchy** – in the slow cooker, onions can take longer to cook than the meat. I don't worry if they're a little bit crunchy but if it bothers you, remove the meat and simmer the sauce for 1/2 an hour or until the onions are tender. Return the meat to the pan and reheat before serving.



chilli~con~carne



It took my years to learn to love 'Chilli'. My red kidney bean phobia was the problem. As soon as I got the 'kidney' association out of my mind, it was all sunshine and roses for me and chilli.

# CHILLI CON CARNE

serves 4-5

750g (1 1/2lb) ground (minced) beef  
2 cans tomatoes (400g / 14oz) each  
2 teaspoons dried chilli flakes  
1 tablespoon cumin seeds or ground cumin  
2 cans red kidney beans (400g / 14oz) each, drained

1. Place beef, tomato, chilli and cumin in a slow cooker or oven proof dish.
2. For the slow cooker, cover and cook on auto for 11-12 hours or until the beef is meltingly tender.
3. For the oven, add in a cup of water, cover and bake at 120C (250F) for 6-8 hours or until beef is meltingly tender. Add in a little water if it starts to dry out.
4. Add beans and cook for another 1/2 hour or until everything is hot.
5. Taste, season and serve hot.

video

# CHILLI CON CARNE

## do ahead potential?

Absolutely! Like all slow cooked dishes, this will improve with a little time sitting in the fridge. Will keep in the fridge for a week or more.

## variations for fun

**vegan / vegetarian** – for a vegetarian chilli, replace beef with 3 cans lentils but add these in at the end with the beans rather than at the beginning.

**pork** – replace beef with minced (ground) pork.

**short on time?** – increase the oven temp to 200C and reduce the cooking time to 1-2 hours.

## problem solving guide

**tough meat** -this means you haven't cooked your meat for long enough. If you can, best to pop back in the slow cooker or oven for at least another half hour or even longer.

**watery sauce** – if your sauce hasn't reduced down enough, either pop in the oven with the lid off for half an hour or so, or remove the beef and simmer, uncovered in the slow cooker on high for about an hour. An additional tablespoon of tomato paste may help things.

**too spicy** – be careful if cooking for people with sensitive taste buds. Best to add less chilli up front and serve with more chilli on the side for people to adjust the heat to their preferred level.

**bland** - make sure you're generous with the salt. A little tomato paste may help as well. And a dash more chilli will keep the hot heads happy.

**dry** - if you're cooking in the oven it can be easy for the dish to dry out Best to keep an eye on it and add a little water if you think it's looking too dry.

## serving suggestions

I like to serve in bowls with a green salad on the side and a decadent dollop of sour cream on top. Feel free to serve with tortillas or corn chips for dipping into the meat. And a little guacamole on the side will add to the mexican vibe. Also lovely on a bed of mashed white beans or cauliflower rice.



~osso~buco



Osso buco is a classic Italian meat stew that is traditionally made with sliced veal shanks. I find most butchers will sell you beef shanks and call it 'Osso buco' but I actually prefer beef here. If you can't find Osso buco at your butcher just substitute your favourite stewing cut of meat. Lamb shanks are good here too.

# OSSO BUCO

serves 2

4 pieces of osso buco or beef shank

8 baby carrots

4 tablespoons tomato paste

1 cup white wine

1 head garlic

1. Place beef, carrots, tomato paste, wine and garlic in a slow cooker or oven proof dish. No need to peel the garlic, just break into individual cloves.

2. For the slow cooker, cover and cook on auto for 11-12 hours or until the beef is meltingly tender.

3. For the oven, add in an extra cup of wine, cover and bake at 120C (250F) for 6-8 hours or until beef is meltingly tender. Add in a little water if it starts to dry out.

4. Taste, season and serve hot.

video

# OSSO BUCCO

## do ahead potential?

Absolutely! Like all slow cooked dishes, this will improve with a little time sitting in the fridge. Will keep in the fridge for a week or more.

## variations for fun

**vegan / vegetarian** – try slow cooked eggplant. Slice 2 medium eggplants into rounds about 1cm (1/2in) thick. Cook as per the beef.

**veal** - replace beef with veal osso buco. You may need to allow 2 pieces of veal per person.

**pork**- replace beef with about 1kg (2lb) pork belly, sliced into 4 pieces or use 1kg (2lb) of diced pork shoulder.

**short on time?** – increase the oven temp to 180C and reduce the cooking time to about 2 hours – be careful it doesn't dry out.

**alcohol-free** – replace the wine with water, beef or chicken stock or half verjuice/half water.

**red wine** – more traditional – replace the white wine with red.

**can't find osso buco?** - no problem. Just substitute in about 1kg (2lb) chuck or stewing steak. Lamb shanks would also work well here.

## problem solving guide

**too oily?**- skim some of the excess oil from the top with a tablespoon OR allow to cool in the fridge and remove solidified fat before reheating and serving.

**tough meat** - this means you haven't cooked your meat for long enough. If you can, best to pop back in the slow cooker or oven for at least another half hour or even longer.

**watery sauce** – if your sauce hasn't reduced down enough, either pop in the oven with the lid off for half an hour or so, or remove the beef and simmer, uncovered in the slow cooker on high for about an hour. An additional tablespoon of tomato paste may help things.

**bland** - make sure you're generous with the salt. A little more tomato paste may help as well.

**dry** - if you're cooking in the oven it can be easy for the dish to dry out Best to keep an eye on it and add a little water if you think it's looking too dry.

## serving suggestions

I like to serve in bowls with a green salad on the side. If I'm feeling fancy I do serve it with some gremolata on top. Just finely chop together 1 clove garlic, a few sprigs of flat leaf parsley and the zest of a lemon for an instant burst of freshness. Another great idea is to shred the meat into fine pieces and discard the bones then serve on a bed of spaghetti or parpadelle as something a bit more exotic than a bolognese sauce. Parmesan cheese is good here too.



Ratatouille is such a wonderful vegetarian option if you're looking for something hearty and filling. I was recently talking to a friend of mine and her kids have renamed ratatouille in their house as 'rat chunks' which I thought rather cute. Feel free to make this in the slow cooker - will take about 8 hours on low or 4 hours on high.

# RATATOUILLE

*serves 4-6*

*2 onions*

*2 medium eggplant (aubergine)*

*2 red capsicum (peppers)*

*2 zucchini (courgettes)*

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

1. Preheat oven to 150C (300F).
2. Chop all veg into chunks and place in a large oven-proof dish. Drizzle very generously with extra virgin olive oil.
3. Cover and bake for 2 hours.
4. Remove the lid, stir well then continue to bake for another 2 - 2 1/2 hours or until all the veg are tender and the sauce has reduced. Taste season.

video

# RATATOUILLE

## do ahead potential?

Absolutely! Like all slow cooked dishes, this will improve with a little time sitting in the fridge. Will keep in the fridge for a week or more.

## variations for fun

**carnivore** – a little ground or minced beef would help keep the carnivores happy. But to be honest this dish is so satisfying they may not notice the lack of meat ;)

**herbs** -thyme or rosemary added at the beginning will add some lovely fragrance. Or freshen it up with a handful of fresh basil leaves or parsley scattered over at the end.

**hot** – add a little fresh or dried chilli.

**higher protein** – a few chunks of tofu cooked in with the veg will help. Or a drained can or two of white beans or some cooked lentils.

**short on time?** – increase the oven temp to 200C (400F) – should halve the cooking time. Be careful it doesn't dry out too much in step 4.

## problem solving guide

**too watery** – just keep cooking with the lid off until the sauce is how you'd like it to be.

**bland** – season with more salt and pepper or try a little tomato paste or soy sauce.

**veggies hard** – it's important to make sure all the veg are well cooked. So be sure and test them thoroughly and if you think they aren't done – keep cooking. Especially important for the eggplant.

## serving suggestions

Serve anywhere you'd normally serve a meat ragu or stew. Lovely with pasta or zucchini or carrot noodles or served over a big bowl of baby spinach leaves. Wonderful as a one bowl meal on its own.

YOUR  
ingredient  
SUBSTITUTE  
CHEAT SHEET

# 7 TIPS FOR INGREDIENT SUBSTITUTION

These days I hardly think twice about swapping different ingredients when I'm cooking but I wasn't always this confident. I remember how frustrating and limiting it used to feel not knowing what would work. The good news is that you can develop your substitution confidence. Here are 7 tips to make your journey as easy and pain-free as possible.

## **1. There are no rules**

The only result we're after is something that tastes delicious, it doesn't matter how you get there.

## **2. Look for similar ingredients**

The easiest place to start. The more similar ingredients are the more likely your substitution will be successful.

## **3. Look for similar functions**

For example, say you're making a salad that calls for roasted almonds and you need to avoid nuts. What function are the almonds playing in the salad? If they're there to make the salad more filling and substantial, maybe you could try some avocado chunks or goats cheese. If they're there for textural interest maybe some crispy bacon pieces would work or some finely diced red capsicum (bell pepper).

## **4. Trust your instincts**

You've got all those years of eating behind you so even if you aren't experienced in substitution you know what tastes good to you.

## **5. Remember Clancy's 'Law of Cooking'**

"If you think it's going to taste delicious it probably will!"

## **6. Everyone makes mistakes**

We all have a failures. Take it as a learning experience and keep trying.

## **7. Practice makes perfect**

Seriously, the more you experiment, the better you'll get!

# SOLVE *your* DINNER DILEMMA INGREDIENT SUBSTITUTES

## protein

**tender cuts** - chicken breasts = chicken thigh fillets = beef fillet = steak = pork fillet = pork chops = lamb fillet = lamb cutlets = fish fillets = whole fish

**slow cooking** - stewing steak = beef cheeks = beef ribs = lamb shanks = lamb shoulder = pork ribs = pork shoulder

**veggie mains** - eggs = tofu = seitan = legumes = mushrooms = eggplant = quinoa

**soft cheese** - ricotta = goats cheese = cottage cheese = blue cheese = brie = camembert

**hard cheese** - parmesan = cheddar = guryere = swiss

**legumes** - chickpeas = white beans = cannellini beans = lentils = butter beans = black beans

## accompaniments

**starchy** - pasta = polenta = potatoes = rice = bread

**low GI (healthier)** = quinoa = lentils = beans = vegetables

## sauces

**asian** - fish sauce = soy sauce = oyster sauce = hoisin sauce

**tomato** - canned tomatoes = tomato puree (passata) = tomato paste (+water) = tomato ketchup

**hot** - tabasco = chilli based sauces = dijon mustard = hot english mustard = horseradish

**creamy** - mayonnaise = hollandaise = yoghurt = coconut milk = cream = tahini = nut based sauces = satay

**fresh** - pesto = anything herb based = tapenade

**liquids** - stock = wine = water = tomato puree = coconut milk

## vegetables

**leafy herbs** - parsley = mint = coriander (cilantro) = basil = rocket (arugula) = sorrell

**woody herbs** - thyme = rosemary = sage = oregano = lemon grass = lemon thyme = kaffir lime leaves

**leafy veg** - spinach = chard = silverbeet = collard greens = kale = cavolo nero = beet tops = cabbage

**root veg** - potato = sweet potato = parsnip = beets = turnip = celeriac = swede = rutabaga

**brassicac** - broccoli = cauliflower = cabbage = brussels sprouts.

**crunchy veg** - celery = snow peas = shaved raw veg

**green veg** - zucchini = peas = beans = broad beans = broccoli

**colourful** - tomatoes = red peppers (capsicum) = beets = radicchio = carrots = radish = eggplant (aubergine)

**aromatic veg** - onions = celery = carrots = garlic

**salad veg** - lettuce = radicchio = rocket (arugula) - leafy herbs (above) = endive = witlof = beet tops

## seasonings

**hot** = fresh chilli = chilli powder = chilli flakes = chilli sauce = chilli oil = black pepper = spicy paprika

**salt** - sea salt flakes = soy sauce = miso paste = olives = capers = anchovies = fish sauce

**spices** - cumin = coriander = smoked paprika = fennel seeds

**curry** = curry powder = curry paste = ground cumin = chilli powder

**acid or sour** - lemon juice = lime juice = sherry vinegar = rice vinegar = champagne vinegar = red wine vinegar = white wine vinegar = balsamic vinegar = natural yoghurt = tamarind

**sweet** = balsamic vinegar = fresh fruit = dried fruit = sugar = stevia = carramelised onion = vanilla = cinnamon = chocolate = caramel = honey, sweet wine (port, muscat)

# RECIPES BY *cuisine*

## MODERN

Smooth Veggie Soup  
Chunky Veg Soup  
Beet & Tomato Soup  
Bangers & Quick Mash  
Burgers Balsamic Onions  
Rice & Greens  
Warm Butter Bean Salad  
Pear & Parmesan Salad  
Green Goddess Salad  
Warm Dinner Salad  
Warm Salmon Salad  
Big Ass Salad  
Chicken & Broccolini Salad  
Warm Roast Veg Salad  
Pea & Lentil Salad  
Pantry Cauliflower Cheese  
Apricot Chicken  
Lemon Steaks with Broccoli  
Pan Fried Protein +Sauce  
Green Spinach Lentils  
Creamy Coconut Lentils

## ITALIAN

Prosciutto Baked Salmon  
Pesto Couscous  
Pasta with Greens  
Roast Veg Frittata  
Osso Buco  
Pasta with Prosciutto  
Hot Cheesy Chickpeas  
Noodles with Parmesan Peas

## FRENCH

Balsamic Onion Soup  
Ratatouille  
Warm Onion & Lentil Salad  
Pea & Parsley Baked Eggs

## ASIAN

Thai Chicken Soup  
Chicken with Asian Slaw  
Salmon, Lime & Chilli Salad  
Quick Veg Curry  
Broccoli Pantry Curry  
Quick Veggie Satay  
Curried Scrambled Eggs  
Thai Beef Salad  
Vietnamese Beef Salad  
Quinoa Biryani  
Chicken & Broccoli Stir Fry  
Quick Stir Fry  
Mild & Creamy Curry  
Egg Fried Lentils

## SPANISH / MEXICAN

Spanish Beef Stew  
Chilli Con Carne  
Ketchup Baked Legumes

## MIDDLE EASTERN

Quinoa & Grilled Veg Salad  
Tabbouleh Fried Egg  
Chickpea & Yoghurt Salad  
Hummus Charred Broccoli  
Chilli Chicken with Hummus  
Grilled Kebabs +Sauce  
Egg Fried Quinoa

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR



THANKYOU for making it this far! This is the part where you get to find out a bit more about the brains behind 'How to Love Your Waistline and Your Food'.

I'm Jules Clancy and am first and foremost a food lover who adores her veggies. The type of girl who plans her holidays around restaurant reservations.

Cooking and simplicity are my big loves. So I am constantly on the lookout for ways to make my cooking less complicated and time consuming without sacrificing flavour or wholesomeness.

I have degrees in both food and wine science but I like to think I'm not a nerd, really. In 2010, I packed in my day job as a chocolate biscuit designer for Australia's largest biscuit company to become a full time blogger.

A few years ago, I founded the Stonesoup Virtual Cookery School 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 Irish man in particular].

If you haven't already done so, I'd love it if you became a regular reader of my blog. Just pop over to [www.thestonesoup.com](http://www.thestonesoup.com) and sign up for my FREE weekly email newsletter. You'll get more delicious healthy meals in minutes delivered to your inbox each week.

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