



*tired & hungry*

# DINNERS



a simple approach to **real food** with minimal effort

For my (expanding) family xx

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*module*  
ONE

# REAL FOOD INGREDIENTS

10 Minute Suppers

# MODULE 1 VIDEO/ AUDIO

## MODULE 1. VIDEO

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

## MODULE 1. AUDIO

[CLICK HERE](#) to download the audio file as an mp3. (You may need to 'right click' and 'save link as').

NOTE: The video and audio files cover the written content on the next pages.

# WHY REAL FOOD?

## WHY REAL FOOD?

**NOTE:** *The written content below is the same as that contained in the audio and video versions.*

The story goes something like this...

Once upon a time people ate food. We grew our own. We lived on farms or small rural communities. We made most things from 'scratch'. Hardly anything came in a packet.

Life was good.

Then over time. Things got complicated. We moved to the cities. We had to rely on other people to grow our food. Supermarkets became more and more popular. Hardly anyone made things from scratch. Pretty much everything came in a packet. Many of these packets had fancy 'health claims' like 5 vitamins, 99% fat-free.

Food didn't taste or satisfy like it used to.

We got fat. We got sick.

While there is still so much that modern nutrition science doesn't understand. There are a few things that everyone agrees with. Even if the reasons underlying the principles aren't completely understood.

## WHY REAL FOOD...

1. More vegetables you eat = healthier you.
2. Less processed food you eat (the more 'real food') = healthier you.
3. The more closely your food resembles what grows in nature (the more 'whole food') = healthier you.

Because our modern food chain has been inundated with highly processed 'food-like substances', the term 'real food' has become popular to differentiate what our ancestors just called 'food'.

# TOP 10

## MY TOP 10 ESSENTIAL 'CHEAT' INGREDIENTS FOR MAXIMUM FLAVOUR.

Just because I love real food, doesn't mean I feel the need to make every meal completely from scratch. I love using 'cheats' where I can to add a load of flavour without having to up my ingredient numbers.

Here are my top 10 top 12...

### 1. PESTO.

Is there anything pesto doesn't go with? Well, apart from ice cream. I prefer to make my own during the summer when basil is at its best and keep in the freezer in ziplock bags ready for use. When I do buy pesto I tend to find the ones from the chiller section a bit fresher tasting than something in a jar. But both have their place.

To make your own, I love this [Traditional Pesto](#), or for a dairy-free super delicious alternative try my [Sicilian Nut Pesto](#).

Of for some more 'out there' options try my [Beet Pesto](#), [Mint & Almond Pesto](#), [Carrot Top Pesto](#), [Addictive Broad Bean Pesto](#) or [Chunky Cashew Pesto](#).

## 2. HUMMUS

Hummus is so versatile. If you're not familiar it's a puree of chickpeas, lemon juice, garlic and tahini (ground sesame seeds). It tastes way better than it sounds!

I used it mostly as a cross between a sauce and a side like this [Spiced Chicken & Hummus](#). But it's also brilliant as a dip or a snack.

There are some pretty good commercial hummus options out there. Just avoid anything labelled 'low fat'.

It's also super easy to make your own. I just whizz a drained can of chickpeas in the food processor with a clove of garlic and 3 tablespoons each lemon juice and tahini. Or for a proper recipe see my [Home Made Hummus](#). Or for some different hummii try this [Lentil Hummus](#), [Roast Butternut Hummus](#) or [Sweet Potato Hummus](#).

## 3. PARMESAN CHEESE

I always have a big hunk of parmesean in the fridge. Usually it's proper parmigiano reggiano but if I'm feeling a bit broke I do opt for grana padano. It's packed with 'umami' flavours that add complexity and savoury goodness to way more than just your spaghetti bolognese.

If I were going to choose a second cheese, creamy ricotta which doubles as a sauce and side would be my second choice. Or a good goats cheese.

## 4. SOY SAUCE

Could I make soy sauce at home? Probably but it's starting to stretch the friendship on the 'real food' front. But there's nothing better for adding salty complexity to a dish.

It's my go to sauce for a stir fry or anything asian inspired. My second choice would be fish sauce and then oyster sauce but soy really is the king here.

These days I buy tamari or gluten-free soy. If you're not keen on eating soy the best 'paleo' friendly alternative is coconut aminos

## 5. SPICES + SPICE BLENDS

The world of spices has a lot to offer! If you focus on a few key spice blends they need not take up loads of space in your pantry.

My favourites are a good [Curry Powder](#) for spice with some heat, Garam Masala for milder Indian flavours, Ras el Hanout for Moroccan dishes, Baharat for a Lebanese vibe, Cajun spice for you guessed it and a good chilli powder or dried chilli flakes for instant heat.

## 6. CURRY PASTES

There are some brilliant commercial curry pastes out there. I rarely make my own from scratch these days.

I always have a Thai Green Curry Paste and Thai Red Curry Paste in the house. I then rotate others such as Laksa Paste, Penang Curry.

A word of caution. Some brands like to load up on sugar (especially for Thai curries) so check the ingredients list and even compare sugar levels in the nutrition info when choosing which curry paste to bring home.

For Indian curries I usually rely on dried spices instead of curry pastes but there are some good ones out there if you want to explore. (and maybe I should!). A good place to start would be Chicken Tikka or Tandoori paste for milder flavours. Then you can work your way up to a super hot Vindaloo.

## 7. CHILLI OIL OR HOT SAUCE

Speaking of heat, now I'm cooking for a sensitive toddler and a chilli-loving Irishman I always have a hot sauce or some home made [chilli oil](#) on the go. This way I can serve the sauce at the table and let my Irishman load up so everyone is happy.

## 8. LEMONS OR LIMES

My Irishman and I have a running joke that we'll always be fine as long as there are lemons (for me) and loo paper (for him) in the house. I can't remember the last time we even came close to running out of either and we've been living together for over 6 years!

But in terms of adding instant freshness and also moistness to food, it's hard to go past a good squeeze of lemon or lime.

These days when I'm cooking food in the oven or on the BBQ I often include a halved lemon because the cooking process really releases the juices and makes a rediculously simple AND tasty sauce.

## 9. SAUSAGES

Sausages might seem a bit of an unusual inclusion but if you're a meat eater, a well made sausages with fennel and red wine can really make the most amazing meal. The trick is to find a good butcher who makes their bangers in house and then explore all the flavour combos they offer.

## 10. GRILLED VEG FROM THE DELI

A good deli will stock loads of veg in their antipasto section that are brillant for adding extra veg without any effort. Look for grilled zucchini, peppers, eggplant, sun or semi dried tomatoes, mushrooms and artichoke hearts. My super market also stocks grilled eggplant and peppers in jars which will keep in the pantry indefinitely.

## 11. SAUERKRAUT / FERMENTED VEG

I said top 10 but couldn't resist throwing in one more!

In the last few years I've really gotten into fermenting my own veg. Apart from the probiotic health benefits I love being able to pull a jar of something out of the fridge to plonk on the table as an extra veg. We have them for breakfast lunch and dinner, but not every day.

If you're keen to try your own, it's really easy but does take a bit of prep. Check out my [simple sauerkraut](#) and [fermented carrots](#) for starters. I love that I can control how 'funky' I let them get. But a warning... it's addictive!

Of course these days there are also some great commercial krauts, kimchi and fermented veg. Just look for ones in the chiller section that still contain some active culture.

## 12. MAYONNAISE!

I LOVE my mayo and pretty much eat it at least 5 times a week. I love it with my eggs for breakkie, as a quick dressing for a tuna or salmon salad at lunch AND often use it as a quick sauce for BBQ or pan fried fish or meat at dinner.

Because I eat so much mayo, I make my own so I know the quality of the oil being used. And the eggs. And recently I've figured out how to pasteurise my egg yolks so I can enjoy home made mayo while I'm pregnant!

Check out my [go-to mayo recipe](#).

# RESOURCES

WANT TO GO DEEPER INTO THE WORLD OF REAL FOOD?

**Books:**

'Food Rules' by Michael Pollan (and his other books)

'Nourishing Traditions' by Sally Fallon

**Blogs:**

[100 Days of Real Food](#)

[Summer Tomato](#)

# WHAT NEXT?

## WHAT NEXT?

It's 'homework' time!

But don't worry this homework project is going to result in deliciousness... I'd be surprised if your dog didn't at least try to eat it.

Your homework?

1. Check out the module 1. recipes.
2. Choose only 1 recipe and commit to making it in the next week. Check out the video (or read the instructions fully), add the ingredients you need to your shopping list.
3. Then make sure you buy the ingredients and one night (or day) cook up a storm.



# 10 MINUTE SUPPERS

warm grilled veg salad



Grilled veg from the deli or supermarket are brilliant to have on hand for adding instant veg with practically no prep. Here we're quickly warming them in a pan before teaming with creamy ricotta for a light dinner. If you're super hungry, checkout the variations for ideas on how to make this more substantial.

# WARM GRILLED VEG SALAD



ENOUGH FOR: 2

TAKES: 10 minutes

150g (5oz) grilled eggplant from the deli

OR use a jar

150g (5oz) grilled peppers from the deli

OR use a jar

1 tablespoon sherry or wine vinegar

1/2 cup ricotta

1 bag salad leaves

1. Place a medium frying pan on a medium high heat. Add eggplant and peppers to the pan and cook, turning once or twice until everything is warm.

2. Meanwhile, combine vinegar with 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil in a medium bowl. Season with salt and pepper and whisk.

3. Toss salad leaves in the dressing.

4. When the grilled veg are warm, spread ricotta over 2 plates. Top with dressed salad and finish with the grilled veg.

## VARIATIONS

**dairy-free / vegan** – replace ricotta with hummus.

**different cheese** – crumble over a salty feta instead. Or use a soft goats cheese or shavings of Parmesan. Also good with pan fried Halloumi instead of the ricotta.

**carnivore** – serve with pan fried or grilled chicken breast or thigh fillets.

**more substantial / carb lovers** – serve with pita or other flat bread. Toss in some cooked short pasta with the veg. Or add canned or cooked white beans or chickpeas to warm with the veg.

**more veg** – add sun dried tomatoes, artichokes and/or mushrooms from the deli. Or for fresh veg add cherry tomatoes, cucumbers, sprouts or grated carrot.

**cook your own veg** – try these roast peppers or eggplant or grilled zucchini.

**paleo (grain, legume & dairy-free)**  
– replace ricotta with avocado chunks.

VIDEO

# WARM GRILLED VEG SALAD...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too oily** – veg from the deli can be quite oily or vinegary. Have a little taste before using and if you think they need it, drain on paper towel before using.

**dry** – some ricottas can be more dry and crumbly than creamy. If you find the dish too dry just drizzle over a little extra virgin olive oil.

**bland** – easy... You need more salt!

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**grilled eggplant/ grilled peppers** – unopened jars will keep in the pantry. Opened will keep in the fridge for a few weeks. Can be frozen.

**sherry or wine vinegar** – keep it in the pantry.

**ricotta** – in the fridge in the packaging it was purchased in.

**salad leaves** – store sealed bag in the fridge. If buying loose leaves, wash and spin dry in a salad spinner then wrap loosely in paper towel and place inside plastic bag. Push out most of the air and seal. Store in the fridge.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Lovely on its own as a light meal. Or serve as a side to grilled or roast meat or chicken. Brilliant with lamb chops.



warm smoked fish salad



I'm always on a mission to try and eat more fish. While it can be tricky to get good quality fresh fish where I live, smoked fish is much easier to find. In the video I've used hot smoked salmon but any smoked fish will do. In fact my favourite fish for this dish is smoked rainbow trout. And big note, I forgot to add the almonds in the video and photo but this salad is much nicer with them!

# WARM SMOKED FISH SALAD



ENOUGH FOR: 2

TAKES: 10 minutes

300g (10oz) smoked trout / salmon

2 tablespoons lemon juice

1 bag salad leaves

handful sliced almonds (optional)

1. Heat a frying pan on a medium high heat. If your fish isn't very oily add a little oil but I usually don't. Add the fish and pan fry until just warmed through. Around 2-3 minutes on each side.

2. While the fish is cooking, make the salad. Whisk together lemon juice and 2 tablespoons olive oil in the bottom of a medium salad bowl. Season well. Toss in the salad leaves.

3. When the fish is cooked add almonds to the pan to warm through and lightly toast.

4. To serve, divide the salad between two plates. Top with fish and almonds.

## VARIATIONS

**vegetarian** – replace fish with [fried eggs](#) or pan fried halloumi cheese.

**vegan** – replace fish with mushrooms fried in some olive oil. Or try sliced smoked tofu.

**carnivore** – replace fish with pork or lamb chops or make a steak and salad instead.

**more substantial / carb lovers** – toss in cooked pasta, cooked brown rice or cooked quinoa with the salad leaves. You could also increase the amount of fish. Or serve with crusty bread and butter on the side.

**more veg** – toss in chopped raw salad veg like cucumber, sprouts, snow peas, cherry tomatoes and/or carrot.

**nut-free** – just skip the almonds.

**fresh fish** – just pan fry fresh fish fillets in a little oil. Allow an extra few minutes to cook through.



VIDEO

# WARM SMOKED FISH SALAD...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too dry** – serve with lemon halves. Or drizzle over a little more oil. Next time try a different brand or type of smoked fish. A dollop of mayo will also help.

**too salty** – smoked fish can be pretty salty. Next time use a different brand or soak fish in water for 1/2 hour before cooking. Remember to drain well and pat dry before cooking.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**smoked trout / salmon** – freeze it.

**lemon** – whole lemon will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.

**salad leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.

**sliced almonds** – keep them in the pantry.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great on it's own as a light dinner. Or see the more substantial variations above.





chickpea 'chilli'

I love a good chilli con carne but sometimes a veggie chilli is what you need to hit the spot. Traditionally chillies are made with black beans or red kidney beans but to be honest I prefer to break with tradition and use my favourite legumes. The humble chickpea!

# CHICKPEA 'CHILLI'

ENOUGH FOR: 2-3

TAKES: 10 minutes

1 jar tomato pasta sauce (500g / 1lb)

2 cans chickpeas (400g / 14oz, each)

1-2 teaspoons dried chilli flakes or powder  
sour cream, to serve

1 bunch flat leaf parsley or coriander (cilantro), to serve

1. Place pasta sauce in a medium saucepan on a high heat. Add chickpea and chilli and bring to a simmer.
2. Simmer for 2 minutes.
3. Taste. Season with salt and extra chilli if needed.
4. To serve, divide chickpeas and sauce between 2-3 bowls. Top with generous dollops of sour cream and finish with coriander leaves.

## VARIATIONS

**dairy-free / vegan** – use a cashew based sour cream, hummus or chopped avocado instead of the sour cream.

**paleo** – for vegetarians replace chickpeas with diced roast root veg or for carnivores replace chickpeas with ground (minced) beef.

**hot!** – use more chilli or find a super hot blend.

**different tomatoes** – you could use canned tomatoes or tomato passata (puree) instead. Don't try it with concentrated tomato paste.

**smoky** – add a teaspoon or two of smoked paprika.

**other spice** – a little ground cumin is also commonly used in chillies.

**more substantial / carb lovers** – serve with warm tortillas or steamed rice.

**more veg** – soften an onion before adding the tomato. Add chopper bell peppers (capsicum) and/or sliced zucchini or okra and simmer until tender.



VIDEO

# CHICKPEA 'CHILLI' ...

## VARIATIONS

**different herbs** – if you're not into cilantro (coriander) try flat leaf parsley, mint or baby spinach.

**different legumes** – try cooked or canned red kidney beans, black beans, cannellini or other white beans, lentils or a combo of any of the above.

**tiny person-friendly** – serve the chilli powder / flakes at the table for everyone to add their own. Or serve your favourite hot sauce or this chilli oil at the table.

**carnivore** – add some spicy sausage like chorizo.

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**bland** – use more salt and/or chilli. A squeeze of lemon or lime may also help.

**too watery** – simmer for longer to reduce or use less tomato sauce.

**too hot** – if you've added too much chilli the best way to tone it down is by dilution so add more chickpeas and/or tomato sauce. Extra sour cream or a good drizzle of olive oil at the table can help.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**tomato pasta sauce / chickpeas / dried chilli flakes or powder** – keep them in the pantry.

**sour cream** – in the fridge will last a few weeks.

**flat leaf parsley** – tends to be the most long lasting of the leafy herbs. Should keep for a few weeks in the fridge if wrapped in a plastic bag. For longer periods pop it in the freezer – it will wilt but will still be useable in this dish.

**coriander** – best to use for another meal. Can be frozen but will wilt when defrosted.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Lovely on its own.





spiced chicken & hummus

This is a twist on one of my all time favourite go-to minimal effort meals. In the past I've used ground beef but I was surprised how much I enjoyed this lighter chicken version. Don't be alarmed if you're not familiar with the spice blend baharat. There are plenty of tasty alternatives in the variations below.

# SPICED CHICKEN & HUMMUS



ENOUGH FOR: 2

TAKES: 10 minutes

450g (1lb) minced (ground) chicken

2 teaspoons baharat or ground cumin

handful sliced almonds (optional)

8-10 tablespoons hummus

1 bag baby spinach, to serve

1. Heat a large frying pan on a high heat. Add a few tablespoons oil and the chicken. Cook chicken, breaking up as you go until the chicken is no longer pink and nicely browned.

2. Toss in the spice and cook for another 30 seconds or so. Taste and season with salt and more spice, if needed.

3. To serve, divide hummus between 2 plates. Top with spiced chicken, almonds (if using) and baby spinach.

## VARIATIONS

**no baharat** – you can order this delicious lebanese spice blend online or just substitute ground cumin on its own. Another favourite alternative is equal parts ground cumin, ground coriander and smoked paprika.

**vegetarian / vegan** – replace chicken with the same weight of cooked lentils. Or try cooked chickpeas. or replace chicken with grilled veg such as eggplant, zucchini and peppers.

**home made hummus** – whizz a drained can of chickpeas with 3 tablespoons lemon juice, canning liquid (or water) and tahini. Add a crushed clove of garlic if you like.

**more substantial / carb lovers** – serve with pita bread, warm tortillas, couscous or cooked brown rice.

**paleo** – serve with sweet potato hummus or make a sauce of equal parts tahini, lemon juice and water to drizzle over.

**more veg** – lovely with grilled veg such as eggplant, zucchini and peppers. You could also soften an onion before cooking the chicken and toss in a few handfuls of halved cherry tomatoes.

**hot!** – toss in a few chopped chillies to cook with the chicken.

**different meat** – lovely with ground beef or lamb.

VIDEO

# SPICED CHICKEN & HUMMUS...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**dry** – minced chicken does tend to be pretty low fat. Balance this with a big drizzle of extra virgin olive oil.

**bland** – use more spice and/or salt. A splash of lemon or lime juice at the table can also bring things to life.

**too much spice** – difficult to fix! Best strategy is dilution so try serving with more hummus or salad. Next time be more cautious when adding the spice.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**minced (ground) chicken** – freeze it.

**baharat or ground cumin / sliced almonds** – keep them in the pantry.

**hummus** – will keep in the fridge for a few weeks. Can be frozen.

**baby spinach** – either pop them in the freezer or wilt down in a covered pot with a little olive oil. This way they'll keep in the fridge for a few weeks.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Lovely on its own or with warm pita bread or tortillas.





crispy *fried egg* salad

Eggs are one of my favourite sources of protein. And while I tend to stick to eggs for breakfast most days, sometimes it's nice to give them some airtime at dinner. To be honest the photo doesn't do this dish justice. When you get the edges of your whites perfectly crispy a fried egg becomes an amazingly texturally complex ingredient.

# CRISPY FRIED EGG SALAD



ENOUGH FOR: 2

TAKES: 10 minutes

1 tablespoon mustard

1 tablespoon sherry or wine vinegar

1 bag salad leaves

1/2 cup oil

4 eggs

1. First get your salad ready so as soon as the egg is cooked you're good to serve. Combine mustard, vinegar, a pinch of salt and 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil in a medium bowl. Mix well.
2. Toss the leaves in the dressing.
3. Heat the oil in a large frying pan on a medium high heat. When the oil is shimmering and hot add the eggs one at a time.
4. Fry eggs without turning spooning the hot oil over the yolks to help cook them. They're done when the whites are no longer transparent or 'snotty' looking.
5. Quickly remove eggs and drain on some paper towel.
6. Divide salad between two plates and top with the eggs. Add salt and pepper at the table.

## VARIATIONS

**cooking oil** – I use rice bran oil for frying because it has a high smoke point (so is stable at higher temps. Other good options are clarified butter (ghee) or coconut oil. Extra virgin olive oil is not great for high temp cooking but brilliant in salad dressings.

**vegan / egg-free** – replace eggs with chunks of avocado and roasted almonds.

**more substantial / carb lovers** – serve with hot buttered sourdough toast. Or roast veggies.

**more veg** – toss in raw veg such as cherry tomatoes, snow peas, cucumbers or chopped red capsicum (bell peppers) or grilled veg like eggplant, mushrooms or zucchini.

**carnivore** – *cook some bacon until crispy and then cook the eggs in the bacon fat. Or you could serve with prosciutto.*



VIDEO

# CRISPY FRIED EGG SALAD...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**eggs rubbery** – you've overcooked them. Next time watch them more closely and get them out a little bit before you think the white is 100% set.

**eggs not crispy** – either not enough oil or temp not hot enough.

**bland** – eggs really benefit from using salt. So be generous!

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**mustard / sherry or wine vinegar / oil** – keep them in the pantry.

**salad leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimey.

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

A great quick dinner.



pepper steak with ricotta



I've never been a huge pepper steak fan until I tried this trick! Instead of adding the pepper before cooking and risking it getting burnt and bitter tasting, we add the freshly ground goodness as soon as the steaks are cooked. Much fresher and pepperier!

# PEPPER STEAK WITH RICOTTA



ENOUGH FOR: 2

TAKES: 10 minutes

2 steaks

1-2 tablespoons freshly ground pepper

8 tablespoons ricotta

1 tablespoon sherry or wine vinegar

1 bag salad leaves

1. Heat a frying pan or your BBQ on a very high heat. Rub steaks with a little oil. Season with salt and sear for 4 minutes on the 1st side.

2. While the steaks are cooking, whisk vinegar with 2-3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil and a little salt in the bottom of a medium salad bowl. Toss in the salad leaves.

3. Turn steaks. Sprinkle pepper on the cooked side. Keep cooking for another 2-3 minutes or until steaks are cooked to your liking.

4. To serve, divide ricotta between two plates. Top with steaks (pepper side up) and serve salad on the side.

## VARIATIONS

**vegetarian / vegan** – try [mushroom 'steaks'](#) or [eggplant 'steaks'](#). And see dairy-free options for vegans.

**dairy-free** – just skip the ricotta or replace with [mashed potato](#) or hummus.

**more substantial / carb lovers** – serve with [easy home fries](#) or [mashed potato](#) or [roast spuds](#).

**different meat** – also great with lamb chops.

**more veg** – serve with frozen peas cooked in a little butter. Or add different raw veg to the salad.



VIDEO

# PEPPER STEAK WITH RICOTTA...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too peppery** – next time use less pepper. For now try scraping the pepper off and discarding.

**too dry** – sounds like overcooked steaks. Add more ricotta this time and next time, be prepared to take them off the heat earlier.

**setting off the smoke alarm!** – it's important to use a pan that will fit the steaks snugly because any extra surface area is a chance for juices from the steak to accumulate and burn >> smoke problem. Also be sparing with the oil you use. Best alternative is to cook the steaks on a BBQ outside.

**tough steaks** – if they aren't overcooked (see too dry) you can blame your butcher! Next time try a different cut or a different butcher.

**bland** – more salt and if that doesn't fix it, blame your butcher.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**steaks** – freeze them.

**ground pepper / sherry or wine vinegar** – keep them in the pantry.

**ricotta** – in a sealed tub it usually has a shelf life of a few weeks in the fridge. If in an opened container, will only keep for a few days so use for another meal or freeze.

**salad leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Lovely on its own.





tuna, tomato & zucchini salad

Canned tuna is one of my all time favourite quick ingredients. I especially love Italian style tuna packed in olive oil because it tends to have more flavour and isn't as dry as tuna in spring water or brine.

# TUNA, TOMATO & ZUCCHINI SALAD



ENOUGH FOR: 2

TAKES: 10 minutes

1 can tuna (200g / 7oz)

1 punnet cherry tomatoes (250g / 1/2lb)

2 medium zucchini

2 tablespoons lemon juice

1 bunch flat leaf parsley, leaves picked

1. Place tuna and oil from the can in a medium frying pan on a medium high heat. Add tomatoes and cook, stirring every now and then until the tomatoes have broken down and everything is hot.

2. While the sauce is cooking grate the zucchini using your food processor or a box grater. Toss in a bowl with the lemon juice, parsley and a tablespoon extra virgin olive oil. And a little salt.

3. Divide zucchini salad between two plates and top with the tuna sauce when it's ready.

## VARIATIONS

**vegetarian / vegan** – replace tuna with extra cherry tomatoes and a very generous glug of olive oil. You might like to serve with some sliced almonds or other nuts to make it more substantial. Or vegetarians might like it with shaved Parmesan. You could also replace tuna with poached or boiled eggs.

**carnivore** – replace tuna with sliced or crumble spicy sausage or minced (ground) beef.

**more substantial** – toss in torn chunks of sourdough bread in with the zucchini and add a little more lemon and oil. Or toss in cooked noodles or pasta.

**more veg** – grate other veg with the zucchini like carrot, beets, cauliflower and/or broccoli. Toss in baby spinach.

**different herbs** – also good with mint or basil.

**different fish** – try canned salmon or sardines. You could use fresh tuna – just chop into bite sized pieces and cook in a little oil until browned all over.



VIDEO

# TUNA, TOMATO & ZUCCHINI SALAD...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**bland** – more salt and lemon juice.

**dry** – if your zucchini are on the larger side you might need some extra lemon juice and olive oil.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**tuna** – keep it in the pantry.

**cherry tomatoes** – either halve and cook in the oven for about 30 minutes (180C / 350F) OR just cook in a pan with a little olive oil. In either case store in an airtight container in the fridge for a few weeks. Or freeze the cooked tomato for longer periods.

**zucchini** – will keep for 2 weeks or longer in a plastic bag in the fridge. To keep it even longer, cook sliced zucchini in a little butter until just soft then store in an airtight container in the fridge.

**lemon** – whole lemon will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.

**flat leaf parsley** – tends to be the most long lasting of the leafy herbs. Should keep for a few weeks in the fridge if wrapped in a plastic bag. For longer periods pop it in the freezer – it will wilt but will still be usable in this dish.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great on its own. Also makes a tasty filling for sandwiches or wraps.





module  
TWO

# MINIMIZING CLEAN UP

One Pot / One Bowl Wonders

# MODULE 2 VIDEO/ AUDIO

## MODULE 2. VIDEO

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

## MODULE 2. AUDIO

[CLICK HERE](#) to download the audio file as an mp3. (You may need to 'right click' and 'save link as').

NOTE: The video and audio files cover the written content on the next pages.

# 7 GOLDEN RULES

# RULES

## 7 GOLDEN RULES OF A SPEEDY CLEANUP

**NOTE:** *The written content below is the same as that contained in the audio and video versions.*

As much as I LOVE cooking, I really can't stand the whole cleanup process. I'm not kidding, I really don't enjoy it.

My dishwasher is my most valued piece of kitchen equipment. More than my chef's knife!

So much so that a few weeks ago when my dishwasher kept giving me error messages and I really thought my life was over.

There were tears. It wasn't pretty.

Thankfully, the next morning I figured out how to clean the filter and the crisis was averted.

But I'm still always thinking about ways to make cleaning up as speedy and painless as possible.

## HERE ARE MY 'GOLDEN RULES' ...

### 1. USE LESS EQUIPMENT.

If you ignore all the other rules and just focus on this one, you'll be well ahead in the cleanup game. The more complicated your meal, the more pots you're likely to generate. Another reason I love simplicity!

But there are plenty of tasty meals out there that only need one pot or pan or bowl. And to help you out, the recipes for this module are strictly one pot (or one bowl) affairs. So follow them and you can consider this rule 'ticked'.

### 2. USE LESS INGREDIENTS.

The more ingredients you get out of the pantry and fridge, generally the more bottles and jars than need 'putting away' at the end of the meal. Makes sense right?

So you know you're in good hands with my '5 ingredients' focus.

### 3. PREVENT MESS WHERE POSSIBLE.

Prevention is better than a cure for diseases right? Same goes for cleaning up.

My favourite examples:

Use the BBQ to cook outside.

Pop it in the oven instead of cooking on the stove top.

Line the grill with foil.

Line baking trays with baking paper or foil.

### 4. CONFINE YOUR COOKING SPACE.

If you have a tiny kitchen, it can be a blessing as there's only so much space you can mess up! Now that I have a fairley big kitchen I've found if I let myself I can end up with mess covering every surface.

So these days I try and confine the space I use to one (smallish) area. Makes a huge difference come cleanup time!

### 5. REUSE.

Instead of reaching for a clean bowl, spoon, pot whatever, get in the habit of first checking what you already have in use. A quick rinse and you're good to go.

## 6. 'STACK' AS YOU GO.

If possible, leave your dishwasher open while you cook. As you finish with items, pop them straight in the 'dish' instead of staking them in the sink. This saves so much double handling.

Unfortunately if you have a toddler in the house like I do, an open dishwasher is just an invitation to unstack and distribute dirty dishes all over the house. A lesson I've learned the hard way!

## 7. DON'T DELAY!

The longer dirty pots and plates are sitting out, the crustier and more difficult to clean they get. And if you live in Sydney, the more likely they'll attract cockroaches. Ick!

And if you're having a dinner party, dirty dishes are 10x more disgusting the next morning when you have a hangover. I've learned the hard way to stay up and get the kitchen clean before going to bed.

Unfortunately my Irishman doesn't agree... he's more of the Homer Simpson school of thought... 'don't do today what you can put off until tomorrow!'

# CLEANUP FUN?

## 2 EASY WAYS TO MAKE CLEANUP FUN.

I know what you're thinking... Cleanup fun? Sure Jules...

Honestly, even though I really hate cleaning up, I've come to appreciate this time of day.

Like most things in life, the level of pain or enjoyment has more to do with your mindset and approach than it does with the actual task at hand...

### 1. TURN CLEANUP TIME INTO 'ME TIME'.

As soon as dinner is over, Fergal and his dad head off for bath time which means 15-20 minutes of peace for me!

Most nights I grab my phone and headphones and turn on my current audiobook or a favourite podcast. Then set about cleaning up while I listen to something interesting. I've come to really love this time. So much so that I often find myself wiping down things that don't strictly need attention.

### 2. TURN CLEANUP TIME INTO 'WE TIME'.

Many Hands make light work, and there's nowhere where this is more true than in the kitchen! Sometimes you'll need to direct the hands, like when you have children or guests.

But it's a great time to 'catch up' with whoever is helping you... Whenever we have guests (not that often these days) one of my favourite parts of the evening was 'disecting' the conversation with my Irishman while we cleaned up. Always lots of laughs!

# CLEAN AS YOU GO

## WHY 'CLEAN AS YOU GO' ISN'T ALWAYS THE BEST APPROACH.

OK so as we've covered in the 'golden rules' normally I am a fan of 'cleaning as you go'.

BUT!

There are times when it's not the best approach.

### LIKE WHEN YOU...

#### 1. ARE SUPER TIRED OR STRESSED.

If you're struggling to find the energy to cook, you don't need the extra pressure to be on top of the cleaning as well. Leave it and focus on getting the food cooked. You don't want to accidentally burn dinner and create even more mess.

#### 2. NEED TO FOCUS.

If you're trying something new. Or are just struggling to concentrate (hello pregnant ladies!). As above, it's best to concentrate on getting things done properly and avoid mishaps and extra cleaning later.

#### 3. HAVE A CLINGY TODDLER.

I know. Sometimes wouldn't it be lovely to have an extra pair of hands to hold the baby and stir the pot? You definitely don't need the extra pressure to clean as you go. So let yourself off the hook and save it for later.

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SUBHEADLINE

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#### 4. HAVE A CLEANING FAIRY.

We've all wished for one. But if you are lucky enough to have someone who loves to clean. I know, weird but they do exist. So leave it to the expert who is probably going to do a much better job than you anyway...

#### 5. ARE ENTERTAINING.

Cooking for company can be a tough gig. Make life easy for yourself and focus on your guests and food. The cleanup can wait. You don't want to spend the evening tied to the sink and missing out on all the laughs (or juicy gossip!).

# 11 KITCHEN TIME SAVERS

## 11 KITCHEN TIME SAVERS.

Some of these are built in to the recipes in the program. Others we've touched on already, but I thought it would be helpful to have a list of my favourite time savers in the one place...

### 1. POP EVERYTHING IN THE OVEN.

One of my favourite type of meals. They can take an hour or more but it's mostly not active time.

Just pop everything in the oven. Set your timer and do other things while dinner cooks itself. Love it! Look out for the recipes in Module 3 for plenty of tasty 5-ingredient examples.

### 2. ONE POT WONDERS.

As we've covered one of the best tricks for minimizing cleanup is to use less dishes to begin with. Which is why I love meals that can be made in one pot. See the recipes below!

### 3. USE DIRECT HEAT COOKING TECHNIQUES.

The best way to get food cooked quickly is to use a high, direct heat. Think things like pan frying, stir frying and BBQing.

Most of the recipes in module 1 follow this tip and all the 'flash in the pan' recipes in Module 4 do.

#### 4. RECIPES WITH FEW INGREDIENTS.

You know I have a 'thing' for 5 ingredients. Generally the less ingredients you use the less time it takes to get them out, prep them and put any leftovers away. No brainer if you're short on time...

#### 5. COOK WITH GAS OR INDUCTION.

I do love the instant heat of gas, however our new house has an induction stove top. And while my one is slightly slower to heat up, I love that it's super easy to clean. So when we do rennonovate our kitchen, I'll be sticking with induction.

If your kitchen only has electric, you might like to think about investing in a portable gas burner, especially if you like cooking with a wok.

#### 6. USE A FAN FORCED OVEN (IF YOU HAVE ONE)

My country kitchen is blessed with a fan forced oven and cooks things significantly more rapidly than my sad old oven in Sydney.

#### 7. MAKE TECHNOLOGY YOUR FRIEND.

Food processors can grate, slice or puree things in a fraction of the time it would take using an old grater or a mortar and pestle. I love mine for making cauliflower 'rice' or 'couscous'.

We'll be going much deeper on kitchen equipment in the next module.

#### 8. REUSE EQUIPMENT AS YOU GO.

As mentioned in the 'golden rules', rinsing that bowl or spoon in front of you rather than reaching to the cupboard for a clean one definitely saves on cleaning up time.

#### 9. FOCUS.

One of my biggest time wasters is when I try and do something else while I'm cooking. Not only do I end up not getting either task done particularly well, I often burn something and have to start again. Much better to be in the moment and get it done right the first time.

#### 10. ASK FOR HELP.

If you have access to one, employ a kitchen slave. Not only do many hands make light work – it's also an opportunity to relax and catch up with your loved ones.

#### 11. PRACTICE.

Like pretty much all activities practice makes perfect and much quicker. The more often you cook, the speedier you'll become. Especially when it comes to things like knife skills.



# ONE POT WONDERS



mushroom scrambled eggs

Eggs are such a brilliant source of protein. And they cook so quickly! Don't fall into the trap of leaving eggs just for breakfast. They make a brilliant minimal effort dinner.

# MUSHROOM SCRAMBLED EGGS

ENOUGH FOR: 2

TAKES 15 minutes

3-4 tablespoons butter

450g (1lb) mushrooms, sliced if large

4-6 eggs

shaved parmesan, to serve

1 bag salad leaves, to serve

1. Melt HALF the butter in a medium frying pan on a medium high heat. Add mushies and cook, stirring every now and then until the mushrooms are browned and soft.
2. Divide cooked mushies between two dinner plates.
3. Melt remaining butter in the pan and reduce the heat to medium. Add the eggs quickly (you might like to break them all into a bowl first). Cook stirring constantly until the eggs are no longer 'snotty'. Remove from the heat and place on top of the mushies.
4. To serve scatter over parmesan shavings and pop salad leaves on the side.

## VARIATIONS

**'dressed salad'** – will take an extra bowl but whisk 1 tablespoon vinegar or lemon juice with 2-3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil in the base of a salad bowl. Season generously with salt and toss in your salad leaves.

**carnivore** – serve with crispy bacon or finely sliced prosciutto.

**vegan / egg-free** – try this [scrambled tofu](#) instead and serve with the mushies.

**more veg** – toss chopped salad veg such as tomato, carrot, cucumber, snow peas in with the salad leaves.

**herby** – add a few sprigs of thyme to the mushies.

**carb lovers / more substantial** – toss in a drained can (or home cooked) lentils, beans or chickpeas to warm with the mushies. Or serve with hot buttered toast.

**dairy-free / paleo** – use coconut oil or other oil instead of the butter. And replace parmesan with chopped chives or some finely sliced almonds.



VIDEO

# MUSHROOM SCRAMBLED EGGS...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**bland** – remember to season both the mushies and eggs generously. They both love salt! Also consider using the dressed salad variation.

**dry** – usually from overcooked eggs. If you have a little cream you can drizzle that over or some extra virgin olive oil. Next time be prepared to remove the eggs from the pan a little before you think they're cooked as they will actually keep cooking.

**watery** – if you've really overcooked your eggs they'll start to weep water. Not much you can do now. It won't hurt you to eat them. Next time be prepared to remove the eggs from the pan a little before you think they're cooked as they will actually keep cooking.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**butter** – will keep in the fridge for weeks.

**mushrooms** – keep in the fridge in a brown paper bag. Once cooked will keep for weeks. And can be frozen raw or cooked.

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

**parmesan** – wrap in waxed paper or baking paper and store in the fridge in a sealed paper bag or airtight container. Will keep for months. Can be frozen if you're going away.

**salad leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Lovely on its own for breakfast, lunch or dinner.





sausages, peas & parmesan



OMG these are three of Fergals favourite things to eat. And since there aren't a lot of veg or meats he enjoys at the moment, I've been coming up with new ways to combine sausages and peas. Sometimes it's just plain like this but other times I toss in some cooked sweet potato or (gluten-free) pasta.

# SAUSAGES, PEAS & PARMESAN

ENOUGH FOR: 2

TAKES: 15 minutes

4 sausages, crumbled

2 handfuls frozen peas

lemon juice

grated parmesan to serve

1. Heat a little oil in a pan on a medium high heat. Remove sausages skins and discard skins. Crumble the meat into the pan in bite sized chunks.
2. Stir fry the sausage chunks until well browned and just cooked through.
3. Add peas and cook for a few more minutes until the peas are defrosted.
4. When the peas are hot, remove from the heat and stir in a squeeze of lemon juice to freshen things up.
5. To serve, divide everything between two plates and top with parmesan.

## VARIATIONS

**vegetarian / vegan** – replace sausage with cooked lentils or crumbled tofu.

**herby** – toss in some mint or parsley leaves before serving.

**more veg** – toss in trimmed snow peas, sugar snap peas or halved cherry tomatoes and see the herby section. Chopped red capsicum (bell pepper) is also lovely – although Fergal doesn't agree!

**carb lovers / more substantial** – toss in cooked pasta, rice or sweet potato chunks.

**paleo / dairy-free** – just skip the parmesan or replace with roasted pine nuts or sliced almonds.

**different meat** – use minced meat (ground meat), chopped boneless chicken, pork or finely sliced steak instead of the sausages.



VIDEO

# SAUSAGES, PEAS & PARMESAN...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too dry** – serve with a good drizzle of extra virgin olive oil. Or some mayo. Next time use different (higher fat) sausages.

**bland** – use more salt, parmesan and/or lemon.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**sausages** – freeze them.

**frozen peas** – will keep in the freezer for months.

**lemon** – whole lemon will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.

**parmesan** – wrap in waxed paper or baking paper and store in the fridge in a sealed paper bag or airtight container. Will keep for months. Can be frozen if you're going away.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Serve on it's own.



pea & hummus soup



Frozen peas are such a brilliant vegetable. I'm so glad both Fergal and my Irishman love them. They're especially good in soups made without stock because you get all the sweet bright pea flavours. So quick and good!

# PEA & HUMMUS SOUP

ENOUGH FOR: 2

TAKES: 15 minutes

450g (1lb) frozen peas

4-6 tablespoons hummus

1. Bring 2 1/2 cups water to the boil in a medium saucepan.
2. Add peas then bring back to a simmer.
3. Remove from the heat and puree the soup using a stick blender. Or a regular blender / food processor.
4. Add hummus. Puree and taste. Season generously with salt. Serve.

## VARIATIONS

**chunky** – don't puree or only puree a little.

**no hummus** – replace with pesto or use sour cream.

**paleo** – replace hummus with a dairy-free pesto.

**more veg** – soften an onion, carrot and celery in the pot before adding the water. Add finely sliced snow peas just before serving.

**more substantial / carb lovers** – it's a fairly light meal so consider serving with crusty bread and butter. Or toss in some cooked pasta, cooked beans or lentils to the pureed soup and bringing back to a simmer before serving.

**carnivore** – serve with a few handfuls of cooked chicken or pork sausage.



VIDEO

# PEA & HUMMUS SOUP...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**bland** – use more salt to season. A splash of lemon juice or more hummus can help.

**too watery** – this isn't the thickest soup. If you prefer thicker, add some cooked pasta or legumes for now. Next time try using more peas and hummus or reducing the water to 2 cups.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**frozen peas** – will keep in the freezer for months.

**hummus** – will keep in the fridge for a few weeks. Can be frozen.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Lovely as a simple supper. Or with crusty bread and butter.





chorizo & spinach

So this recipe began life as a simple combo of chorizo and that currently fashionable green, kale. But I've recently been developing a new appreciation for good old spinach so it made sense to use this more humble green instead. This super-low effort meal uses convenient frozen spinach to avoid the washing and chopping, but fresh spinach is nicer (less slimy) if you have the extra time.

# CHORIZO & SPINACH

ENOUGH FOR: 2

TAKES: 15 minutes

2-4 chorizo, sliced

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

2 tablespoons lemon juice

handful pine nuts (optional)

1. Heat a large frying pan on a medium high heat. Add a little oil and cook chorizo for about 3-4 minutes on each side or until well browned and cooked through.
2. Push chorizo to the side of the pan and add the spinach. Cook for a few more minutes or until the spinach is just hot.
3. Remove from the heat and stir in lemon juice. Taste and season with salt and more lemon as needed.
4. To serve divide between two plates and top with pine nuts (if using).

## VARIATIONS

**vegetarian** – replace chorizo with fried or poached eggs. Sprinkle with a little hot sauce or smoked paprika to make it less breakfasty.

**vegan** – replace chorizo with smoked tofu or grilled red peppers or both. Increase the nuts to help make it more filling.

**more substantial / carb lovers** – use as a filling for warm tortillas or wraps or toss in your favourite cooked pasta. OR serve on a bed of hummus or mashed potato. Also good with crusty bread and butter.

**no chorizo?** – use another spicy sausage instead.

**too hot** – use mild chorizo or plain sausages instead.

**more veg** – soften an onion and chopped red capsicum (bell pepper) in the pan before adding the chorizo. Feel free to double the amount of greens you use.

**fresh veg** – use a large bunch of spinach, kale, collard greens or silver beet (chard) instead. Wash and remove tough stalks and chop leaves into thick ribbons. Allow to cook in the chorizo fat until just wilted. Or baby spinach is also fine if you can't be bothered chopping.

**nut-free** – skip the pine nuts or replace with crumbled soft goats cheese or dollops of ricotta.

VIDEO

# CHORIZO & SPINACH...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too hot!** – next time use milder chorizo. For now dilute with more spinach if you have it or serve with a glass of milk or some natural yoghurt for cooling the tongue.

**bland** – more salt and/or lemon.

**too dry** – sounds like overcooked chorizo or chorizo without enough fat. Drizzle with a little extra olive oil or serve mayo at the table.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**chorizo** – freeze it.

**frozen spinach** – will keep in the freezer for months.

**lemon** – whole lemon will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.

**pine nuts** – keep them in the pantry.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Good on it's own.





fast roast *fish with* broccoli

This is one of my fave ways to cook fish because it's super quick. AND it doesn't stink out the whole house which often happens when you have an open plan.

# FAST ROAST FISH WITH BROCCOLI

ENOUGH FOR: 2

TAKES: 15 minutes

2 bunches broccolini or 2 small heads broccoli

2 thick fish fillets

2 lemons, halved

mayonnaise (optional), to serve

1. Preheat your oven to 250C (480F). Chop broccoli / broccolini into bite sized pieces.
2. Line a baking tray with paper or foil and top with the broccoli / broccolini. Top with fish and lemon and drizzle over a little oil. Scatter with sea salt flakes.
3. Bake for 5 minutes then check the fish. Thinner fillets may be cooked but most will need longer. I usually allow 10 minutes total cooking.
4. When the fish is just cooked, divide fish, broccoli and lemon between two plates. Serve with mayo (if using).

## VARIATIONS

**vegetarian / vegan** – instead of the fish toss a drained can (or home cooked) chickpeas or white beans in with the broccoli. Serve with vegan mayo if you prefer. OR just serve broccoli, lemon and mayo on a bed of steamed brown rice and with a handful of pine nuts or almonds.

**egg-free** – skip the mayo or use a vegan mayo. Or drizzle with tahini instead.

**carb-lovers / more substantial** – simmer some baby potatoes until just tender. Drain and toss in with the broccoli to roast under the fish. Or serve on a bed of mash.

**carnivore** – replace fish with chicken thigh or breast fillets. Expect the cooking time to increase to the 15-20 minute mark.

**more veg** – serve with a green salad.



VIDEO

# FAST ROAST FISH WITH BROCCOLI...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**broccoli too crunchy** – remove the fish and pop the tray back in the oven for another 5-10 minutes. Next time use a larger tray for less crowding and cut the broccoli smaller so it cooks faster. And make sure your tray is on the middle shelf in the oven so it's getting enough heat.

**too dry** – the cooked lemon makes a lovely sauce but if you want more, serve with the mayo.

**fish dry** – overcooked fish! For now just use some mayo. Next time use thicker fillets or check earlier.

**bland** – don't forget the salt and lemon.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**broccolini / broccoli** – will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for about 2 weeks or sometimes a little longer. Can be frozen (if you have time chop before freezing so it will defrost quickly in the pan).

**fish fillets** – freeze them.

**lemons** – will keep for a few weeks at room temp or for much longer in the fridge.

**mayonnaise** – unopened in pantry or in fridge once opened and it will keep for months.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Lovely on its own.



quick *beef* ragu



While I love to slow cook a ragu for hours and hours, sometimes you just need dinner quickly. The solution? Use lots of butter to soften the acidity of the tomatoes for almost instant deliciousness.

# QUICK BEEF RAGU

ENOUGH FOR: 2

TAKES: 15 minutes

4 beef sausages

1 can tomatoes (400g / 14oz)

4 tablespoons butter

1 bag baby spinach / baby kale

parmesan shavings (optional)

1. Heat a little oil in a large frying pan on a high heat. Remove beef sausage from the casings and add to the pan.
2. Cook beef, stirring until well browned, broken up and cooked through.
3. Add tomato and butter and simmer for a few minutes until everything is hot.
4. Taste and season with salt if needed.
5. To serve, divide baby spinach between two bowls. Top with ragu and scatter with parmesan (if using).

## VARIATIONS

**different meat** – feel free to use plain minced beef, pork, chicken or veal or a combo.

**vegetarian / vegan** – replace beef with cooked lentils or chopped mushrooms. Or both! Vegans will need the dairy-free option.

**dairy-free / paleo** – skip the parmesan or replace with grated brazil nuts or sliced almonds. Replace the butter with lashings of extra virgin olive oil.

**more veg** – after browning the beef, soften a diced onion, carrot and stick of celery in the pan before adding the tomato. Mushrooms are also lovely here. Serve a green salad on the side. Or serve on a bed of zucchini or carrot noodles.

**more substantial / carb-lovers** – serve with cooked spaghetti or your fave garlic bread.

**no canned tomatoes** – use a jar of tomato puree or your fave commercial tomato pasta sauce.



VIDEO

# QUICK BEEF RAGU...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too salty** – use different sausages next time and/or unsalted butter. For now the only trick is to dilute it so serve with extra baby spinach and skip the parmesan.

**bland** – use more salt and/or parmesan.

**too acidic** – add more butter or some olive oil to balance the tomato.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**beef sausages** – freeze them.

**can tomatoes** – keep it in the pantry.

**butter** – will keep in the fridge for weeks.

**baby spinach / baby kale** – either pop them in the freezer or wilt down in a covered pot with a little olive oil. This way they'll keep in the fridge for a few weeks.

**parmesan** – wrap in waxed paper or baking paper and store in the fridge in a sealed paper bag or airtight container. Will keep for months. Can be frozen if you're going away.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Lovely on it's own.





chicken satay curry

Normally satay is a peanut based spicy sauce served alongside grilled meat and veg. It's super delicious but I often miss having a curry sauce. So this version, while not exactly authentic, it does give you spicy peanutty goodness with loads of sauce!

# CHICKEN SATAY CURRY

ENOUGH FOR: 2

TAKES: 15 minutes

4 tablespoons red curry paste

4 tablespoons peanut butter

1 can coconut milk

450g (1lb) chicken thigh fillets, chopped

1 bag baby spinach

1. Place curry paste, peanut butter, coconut milk and chicken in a medium saucepan.
2. Bring to a simmer and cook gently for 5 minutes or until the chicken is just cooked through. If you're not sure, cut into a piece of chicken to make sure there are no pink bits.
3. Stir in the baby spinach to wilt with the sauce. Taste. Season with salt if needed. Serve in bowls.

## VARIATIONS

**move veg** – serve on a bed of cauliflower or broccoli 'rice' (grated raw cauliflower). OR simmer chopped veg like carrots, red capsicum (bell pepper), baby corn, snow peas, frozen peas in the sauce. Or toss in some zucchini or carrot 'noodles'.

**vegetarian / vegan** – chopped firm tofu works really well instead of the chicken. OR replace chicken with chopped cauliflower florets or button mushrooms (and adjust cooking time to suit the veg).

**carb lovers / more substantial** – serve with steamed rice or toss in cooked noodles.

**no curry paste?** – make your own using this recipe or use another curry paste. Or replace the curry paste with a few chopped red chillies and season well with soy sauce or fish sauce.

**nut-free** – just skip the peanut butter and change the name to 'red curry'.

**paleo** – use almond butter instead of peanut butter (which is technically a legume and not strictly paleo)

**no coconut milk** – replace with chicken stock and stir in some regular cream at the end.

**different meat** – also good with pork fillet or steak. Or chicken breast fillets.



VIDEO

# CHICKEN SATAY CURRY...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too hot!** – next time use less curry paste – or try a milder brand. For now the only fix is to dilute with more coconut milk.

**bland** – use more curry paste or season with salt. A splash of lime juice (or lemon) can freshen things up if you have it.

**chicken tough** – it's been over cooked. Can't fix it now but next time simmer for less time, or at a lower heat, OR use larger pieces of chicken.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**red curry paste** – keep in the pantry until open. Once open keep it in the fridge.

**peanut butter / coconut milk** – keep them in the pantry.

**chicken thigh fillets** – freeze them.

**baby spinach** – either pop them in the freezer or wilt down in a covered pot with a little olive oil. This way they'll keep in the fridge for a few weeks.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

In deep bowls with spoons and forks.





*module*  
THREE

MINIMAL  
EFFORT  
EQUIPMENT  
& TECHNIQUES

Do Other Things while Dinner Makes Itself

# MODULE 3 VIDEO/ AUDIO

## MODULE 3. VIDEO

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

## MODULE 3. AUDIO

[CLICK HERE](#) to download the audio file as an mp3. (You may need to 'right click' and 'save link as').

NOTE: The video and audio files cover the written content on the next pages.

# 3 EQUIPMENT ESSENTIALS

## THE 3 PIECES OF TIME-SAVING EQUIPMENT YOU REALLY NEED.

**NOTE:** *The written content below is the same as that contained in the audio and video versions.*

A few years ago I rented an apartment on Mulberry Street in Soho and spent a month pretending to be a New Yorker.

It was so much fun! But as you can imagine, my little kitchen was minimalist to say the least. It was really eye opening to discover how little I needed to be able to cook for my Irishman and myself for the month.

Sure we were eating out a great deal (so many options!) but we did enjoy quite a few nights in.

Here's the critical '3' pieces of equipment that made it onto my essentials list...

### 1. SHARP KNIFE.

Cooking without a sharp knife is no fun for anyone. And really slows down any prep work. The existing knife in the apartment we so bad I ended up buying a cheap cooks knife to last the month. Money well worth spending.

For longer term I would have invested in a better quality knife and a good sharpening system as well.

I don't normally like to recommend brands of equipment or ingredients but I will make an exception for my knife sharpener. I have a nifty until called the Furi 'Fingers' and it's by far the easiest and best sharpening system I've ever come across.

## 2. CHOPPING BOARD.

Nothing fancy, but big enough to be able to chop a whole bunch of kale is perfect. For carnivores, having another plastic chopping board to use for raw meat is beneficial but not critical.

## 3. FRYING PAN WITH LID

As we'll cover in techniques, being close to the heat source is the quickest way to get food cooked. So pan frying and stir frying are my go-to methods. Which means you need a frying pan!

If you're usually cooking for 1 or 2 a small to medium pan will be best. For larger families a larger pan will help.

Make sure the sides are high enough so you could make a small batch of soup if you felt the urge. No other pot required!

A lid allow you to use the pan for braising things like greens.

Best to get a pan with ovenproof handles so you can also use it to cook in the oven.

# 26 EQUIPMENT TRAPS

## 26 KITCHEN EQUIPMENT TRAPS TO AVOID...

IT would be easy to spend a life time and a rather large fortune in many kitchen ware stores these days. They can be tempting! So I've pulled together a list of equipment that I avoid to help guide you on keeping it simple.

BUT this is just my opinion!

If there's a piece of equipment on this list that you find indispensable or you love for some reason... Please keep it. It's reason there's a saying about one mans trash being anothers treasure!

### 1. MICROWAVE OVEN

I've gone with and without a microwave over the years and I've decided that while it can be helpful for defrosting things at the last moment and possibly melting chocolate, that's not enough to justify all the space they take up. I haven't had a microwave since 2008 and haven't missed it one bit. But if you're using yours every day by all means give it pride of place.

### 2. STAND MIXER

For creaming butter and sugar I use my food processor which seems to work fine. If you're a die hard baker or pavlova maker a stand mixer might be worth the cost and the space but for the rest of us mortals it's not.

### 3. ICE CREAM MACHINE

It's no secret that I LOVE my ice cream. And I did once have a huge ice cream machine. But as soon as I discovered how to make ice cream by just pureeing frozen fruit in the food processor with a little cream, I got rid of the big space waster.

### 4. KNIFE SETS

While they can look totally styling, and it can be handy to have a couple of good knives in the house if there's more than one of you cooking at a time – there aren't many people that actually need 7 knives of varying sizes. Save your money and invest in one excellent sharp cooks knife for each cook in the house and spend the rest on a good sharpening system – like the furi fingers. If you're a fan of rustic sourdough loaves, a bread knife is the only other one you'll need.

### 5. BREAD MACHINE

This trend should be well and truly past but I can't imagine there are many people out there who actually get much use out of their bread machine. If you have an oven and a pair of strong arms to knead you have everything you need to make excellent bread – and it won't be in a weird square tall loaf shape.

### 6. RICE COOKER

OK OK. If you're cooking rice once a week or more – skip this point. But for the rest of us what's wrong with a good saucepan with a lid?

### 7. PASTA MAKER

I am guilty here. I go through phases of making pasta but it's never more than once every 6 months. If I had my time again I'd be struggling to justify my shiny, Italian designed pasta machine. Fresh pasta is pretty readily available to buy now and it's not that expensive. If I feel like making ravioli I could always use chinese wonton wrappers or cut down some fresh store bought lasagne sheets to size. And if I really wanted to channel my inner Italian nonna – I could always use a rolling pin or make something designed to be formed by hand.

### 8. TOASTED SANDWICH PRESS

When I was in college I had a little breville toasted sandwich maker in my room and pretty much used it every day. I found that there was usually something in the uni dining room that could be half edible if put between a couple of slices of bread and given a whirl in the 'jaffel' maker. Roasted vegetables were a big favourite. I'd also use it to 'fry' an egg on the odd occasion. Since then I've hardly used one. If I want to make a toasted sandwich I employ my trusty frying pan and cook one side at a time, squashing down as I go. I find that toasted sandwiches may take a little longer this way but are just as delicious – even a little crispier because the steam is escaping as you cook – not being trapped.

## 9. ANY OTHER 'SINGLE PURPOSE' SMALL APPLIANCES

Juicers, deep fryers, hot dog warmers, popcorn makers, milkshake machines, chocolate 'fountains'. No explanation needed really.

## 10. WOK

Even though I'm guilty of owning a wok, I tend to do my stir frying in my large frying pan. Of course, if you are cooking lots of Asian food a wok might be a better option than a frying pan.

## 11. GRIDDLE PAN

Before I had a BBQ I got myself one of those cool cast iron pans with the ridges in the middle. I know some people swear by them but I always found myself with a kitchen full of smoke waving a tea towel in front of the the fire detector. I'm pretty sure I didn't use the griddle pan ever again once I had the BBQ option. Sold the poor thing on ebay. Great decision.

## 12. SAUCEPAN SETS

Unless you're cooking for a large family, you probably don't need multiple pans in various sizes. I find it's better to invest in your pots individually, as needed.

## 13. CAKE TINS AND TART SHELLS IN EVERY SHAPE AND SIZE

Along with little ramekin-like pots, and white plates and wine glasses this is probably my weakest link in the minimalist kitchen.

## 14. ANYTHING THAT IS ONLY TO BE USED ON 'SPECIAL' OCCASIONS

I grew up with multiple dinner sets and crystal glasses that were only used on a handful of occasions. Life is too short people if it's good enough for Christmas day it should be good enough for a random rainy Tuesday.

## 15. MORTAR & PESTLE

Call me a mad scientist but I loved owning a mortar & pestle as much as I love saying 'mortar' and 'pestle'. The truth is that it didn't get used often because it was a pain to clean – so I got rid of mine.

## 16. ANYTHING PURELY ORNAMENTAL

Useful kitchen equipment can be beautiful and decorative in its own right – I love my jar of stainless steel utensils sitting on the windowsill. But it's a working display.

## 17. A COFFEE GRINDER FOR GRINDING SPICES

Unless you're a hardcore curry head I think it's better to just buy quality pre-ground spices in small amounts so that you're buying fresh. If you're in Australia I love [herbies.com.au](http://herbies.com.au).

## 18. EXPENSIVE COFFEE MACHINES

I always thought that when I moved to the country I'd invest in a proper espresso machine so I'd still be able to have decent coffee. And then I discovered the Aeropress – a nifty little utensil for making seriously good coffee. And best of all it takes up hardly any space and only costs about \$50.

## 19. SINGLE USE UTENSILS

Apple corer, egg frying rings, lemon juicer, nut cracker, strawberry dehuller (no- I didn't fall for that one) there are thousand upon thousands of little kitchen gadgets that may make life a little easier every now and then but in the scheme of things aren't worth the clutter. Although confession time... I do own a garlic press that I love and use all the time.

## 20. ELECTRIC CARVING KNIFE

OK so I used to have one and it did come in handy. But then I started keeping my cooks knife sharp and found that I usually couldn't be bothered digging through the drawer to find the blades and the base and put it all together. So I got rid of it.

## 21. MANDOLINE

OK I'm not about to throw out my mandoline because I do use it frequently. But is it essential? definitely not – a sharp knife and a bit of patience will usually do just as good a job.

## 22. KITCHEN BLOWTORCH

Here's another one that I actually have access to because my Irishman loves his gadgets. If you adore creme brulee it might be worth your money and space. If you are going to invest go for a for a real 'blokey', full-strength blow torch rather than a dainty kitchen model.

## 23. BAMBOO STEAMERS

They were cheap. I used them exactly twice during my pork bun steaming frenzy in 2003. And I haven't missed them since they were donated to charity.

## 24. MULTIPLE SIZES OF WINE GLASSES

Sure, it can be nicer to drink white wine from a smaller glass, or even go crazy with different shapes for different grape varieties, but I prefer to keep it simple at home.

## 25. PAELLA PANS

They look so cute, but seriously, unless you are Spanish or desperately trying to become so, a large frying pan will do the trick.

## 26. TAJINE DISHES

I used to have a few tajine dishes from a trip to Morocco. The theory is they allow steam to swirl in the conical lid and condense back into the tajine. It's a subtle difference I can't detect. So I now make my tajines in a cast iron pot.

# 8 TECHNIQUES

## 8 'MINIMAL EFFORT' COOKING TECHNIQUES.

Like most things in life, the amount of energy and time you spend cooking is really up to you. And how you approach it.

Here are my favourite ways to 'cook smarter not harder'...

### 1. OUTSOURCE THE PREP.

There are no prizes for preparing every morsel of food from scratch. Unless of course that how you want to spend your time (then go for it!).

But for the rest of us, outsourcing some of the prep work can mean the difference between a home cooked meal OR not!

Some of my favourite examples are:

- \* Prewashed salad leaves
- \* Frozen peas (no podding!)
- \* BBQ chicken
- \* Grilled veg from the deli / supermarket
- \* Sauces such as pesto, mayo, hummus.
- \* Scrubbed potatoes
- \* Frozen greens such as spinach – no washing or chopping.
- \* minced (ground) meat or prechopped meat.

## 2. AVOID / MINIMIZE THE PREP.

OK so if you do need to prep an ingredient, ask yourself 'is there a way to avoid or minimize this prep?'

One of my biggest time and energy savers is that I don't peel things. A quick scrub or rinse and my carrots, beets or spuds are good to go.

A bonus of this is the extra nutrients often found in or close to the skins. Plus less waste!

The only exception is onions. I've tried not peeling them and even in slow cooked dishes the papery skins remain, well, papery!

## 3. USE SMALL PIECES

The smaller the piece of food, generally the quicker it will cook. So sometimes if I'm in a hurry, I'll spend a few extra minutes chopping my meat or veg into bite sized pieces so I save time in the cooking process.

Other favourites options here are to use minced (or ground) meat or to 'bash' out my meat or chicken into thinner pieces so it gets tenderized and cooks quicker.

## 4. TRY 'UN-COOKING'

Un-cooking? Huh?

Not all meals need heat to be delicious.

Especially in the warmer months, think of ways to toss together a salad using raw or precooked ingredients instead of having to cook.

## 5. PAN FRYING

The closer you are to the heat, the quicker things cook. We're talking physics here but don't be afraid. Food science can be your secret weapon. Check out the recipes in module 4 – a flash in the pan for loads of minimal effort examples.

## 6. STIR FRYING

Similar to pan frying but worthy of a special mention because rather than letting the food sit and turning, you're keeping it on the move.

## 7. ROASTING

Cooking food in the oven is a favourite of mine because you don't need to constantly keep an eye on it. I love the concept of 'doing other things while dinner makes itself' and am really excited about sharing the recipes in this module which all fit that description.

If you work away from home, a slow cooker with a timer can be a good, safe alternative. And you might like to checkout the 'slow' cooking short course here at the SVCS.

But personally I prefer the flavour of food cooked in the oven.

## 8. BULK IT.

It's not very often that doubling or even tripling a recipe will take double or triple the amount of time. It's usually only a tiny bit of extra work for a LOT of benefit.

If you only take away one technique from this training, this it the one to keep. I'm always on the lookout for ways to cook in bulk because I know how much time and effort it saves down the track.



DO OTHER  
THINGS WHILE  
DINNER MAKES ITSELF



chickpea *stuffed* sweet potato

I've never been the biggest sweet potato fan. But that's another thing that becoming a parent has changed! Fergal loves sweet potato so much that I pretty much roast a batch once a week. Of course it was only a matter of time before sweet potato made it into the adults dinners. This is one of my fave ways to eat it... stuffed with savoury goodness.

And I don't peel the sweet potato. I serve in their skins but usually don't eat them.. although they are perfectly edible.

# CHICKPEA STUFFED SWEET POTATO

ENOUGH FOR: 2

TAKES: 1 hour

2 medium sweet potatoes

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

3 tablespoons tahini

3 tablespoons lemon juice

1 bag baby spinach, to serve

1. Preheat your oven to 200C (400F). Rinse or scrub the sweet potato and place on a baking tray. Bake for 50 minutes – 1 hour or until the sweet potato is super tender.
2. If you want your chickpeas warm, pop them in a pan with a little olive oil on a medium heat for a few minutes.
3. To make the sauce mix the tahini, lemon juice and 3 tablespoons water in a small bowl.
4. To serve divide sweet potato between two plates. Cut down the middle, leaving the bottom intact and spread the sides to allow room for the stuffing.
5. Stuff sweet potatoes with the chickpeas. Drizzle over sauce. Season well. Serve with baby spinach on the side.

## VARIATIONS

**hot** – serve with hot sauce or [chilli oil](#).

**carnivore / paleo** – brown some minced (ground) beef or lamb in a pan and use instead of the chickpeas.

**more veg** – soften an onion and some garlic before warming the chickpeas. You could also warm some grilled veg with the chickpeas like zucchini, eggplant (aubergine) or peppers. Brown some sliced mushrooms and use with the chickpeas. Or add raw chopped salad veg to the baby spinach.

**no tahini?** – use other nut butter like almond, peanut or cashew. Or replace tahini and lemon with natural yoghurt.

**spicy** – sprinkle chickpeas with a teaspoon of baharat (lebanese spice blend), raw el hanout (moroccan spice blend) or ground coriander.

**carb lovers / more substantial** – use larger sweet potatoes or serve with flat bread or warm tortillas on the side.



VIDEO

# CHICKPEA STUFFED SWEET POTATO...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**bland** – sweet potato needs lots of salt. And try more lemon juice to freshen things up.

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

**sweet potato crunchy** – pop back in the oven for an extra 5-10 minutes.

**sweet potato burned** – try removing the burned bits as best you can. Next time cook for less time, or use larger sweet potatoes, and make sure your oven shelf is in the middle (not up the top).

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**sweet potatoes** – will keep for months in the pantry in a brown paper bag or sack.

**chickpeas** – keep them in the pantry.

**tahini** – I keep mine in the pantry but will keep longer in the fridge if open.

**lemon** – whole lemon will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.

**baby spinach** – best to use for another meal. Can be frozen but will wilt when defrosted.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Lovely on its own as a veggie main.



roast pesto chicken & baby veg



There's something so tasty about roast veg. Every time I cook something like this, I'm kicking myself that I don't do it more often. The real winner in this dish is the roast fennel such a delight and so different from the raw version.

# ROAST PESTO CHICKEN & BABY VEG

ENOUGH FOR: 2

TAKES: 60 minutes

1 bunch baby carrots, trimmed

2 bulbs fennel, sliced

1 bunch baby beets, trimmed and quartered.

6 chicken drumsticks

6 tablespoons pesto, to serve

1. Preheat your oven to 200C (400F).
2. Place carrots, fennel slices, and beets in a baking tray large enough to hold in a single layer. Top with chicken and lots of salt. Drizzle with a little oil.
3. Bake for 30 minutes. Turn chicken and stir the veg.
4. Then bake for another 15 – 20 minutes or until the chicken is cooked through and the veg are tender.
5. To serve, tumble the chicken and veg between two plates. Top with pesto.

## VARIATIONS

**dairy-free** – use a dairy-free pesto like this sicilian nut pesto.

**vegetarian / vegan** – skip the chicken and add some extra veg or serve with a handful or two of toasted almonds or pine nuts for extra protein.

**more substantial / carb lovers** – this is a pretty substantial meal but feel free to serve with mashed potato. Or toss in a drained can of chickpeas or your favourite beans. You could also serve with steamed brown rice.

**no pesto** – lovely with mayo or hummus instead.

**different meat** – you could use chicken thigh or breast fillets or some good quality sausages. Remove these as they are cooked, probably around the 30 minute mark and keep warm while the veg keep cooking.

**adult veg** – feel free to use large beets and carrots – just chop down so they cook in about the same amount of time.

**more veg** – really you need more?! Serve with a green salad or add more veg to the roasting pan. Parsnips, chopped potatoes, sliced sweet potato, sliced red capsicum (bell peppers) are all good.



VIDEO

# ROAST PESTO CHICKEN & BABY VEG...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too dry** – drizzle with a little oil or serve more pesto.

**chicken tough / dry** – overcooked chicken symptoms! Next time check the chicken earlier but for now see the too dry solutions.

**crunchy veg** – undercooked veg! Next time use a bigger pan so they can spread out and cook more quickly. Or consider chopping into smaller pieces to help speed up the cooking process.

**bland** – don't forget the salt.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**baby carrots** – keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for weeks. Can be frozen if you're leaving town!

**fennel** – will keep for a few weeks in a plastic bag in the fridge.

**baby beetroot (beets)** – will keep in the fridge in a plastic bag for weeks. Can be frozen if needed.

**chicken drumsticks** – freeze them.

**pesto** – commercial jars of pesto will keep for months in the pantry. Fresh pesto will keep in the fridge for a few weeks. Cover with olive oil to prevent exposure to air and browning reactions.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Lovely on its own.



the 'pizza' baked frittata



Eggs are the best source of protein out there but I often leave them to have for breakfast and forget about dinner egg options. Baked frittatas are the key to making eggs more dinner friendly. I love the pizza-inspired flavours of this recipe but feel free to play around with it.

# THE 'PIZZA' BAKED FRITTATA

ENOUGH FOR: 2

TAKES: 20 minutes

6 eggs

handful grated parmesan + shavings to top

1 punnet cherry tomatoes (250g / 9oz), halved

handful basil leaves (optional)

1 bag salad leaves

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Grease and line a 20cm (8in) springform pan or skillet.
2. Crack eggs into a bowl and stir in the grated cheese. Season with salt. Pour the egg mixture into the prepared pan. Top with cherry tomatoes cut side up and scatter over extra parmesan shavings.
3. Bake for 12-15 minutes or until the eggs are just set and no longer runny.
4. Slice frittata in two and serve with basil leaves on top (if using) and salad on the side.

## VARIATIONS

**dressed salad** – whisk together 1 tablespoon sherry or wine vinegar with 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil. Season and taste. Toss in the leaves to dress.

**dairy-free** – just skip the cheese or replace with a handful of sliced almonds sprinkled over the top.

**carnivore** – add some cooked shredded chicken or cooked sliced sausages or salami to the egg mixture before baking.

**carb-lovers / more substantial** – serve with bread and butter on the side or add a few handfuls of cooked short pasta or drained canned chickpeas to the egg mixture. The frittata also makes a lovely sandwich filling.

**no basil** – just omit it or serve with a dollop of pesto on top. Or replace with other herbs such as chopped chives, flat leaf parsley or thyme.

**more veg** – add grilled veg to the egg mixture such as eggplant, red peppers (capsicum), mushrooms or zucchini. Or add chopped raw veg to the salad such as radish, cucumber, carrot or snow peas.



VIDEO

# THE 'PIZZA' BAKED FRITTATA...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**watery** – there can be a fair bit of liquid from the tomatoes. Keep cooking a little longer.

**rubbery** – overcooked eggs! Next time get out sooner but for now adding more cheese or a dollop of pesto can help.

**egg leaking from the pan** – if your springform pan doesn't seal properly egg can leak out. If you think it might happen to you, best to pop an oven proof tray under the pan to catch any spillage. Next time use another pan without leaks.

**bland** – use more parmesan and/or salt.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

**parmesan** – keeps for longer in a chunk so only grate when you're cooking. I wrap in waxed paper or baking paper and then keep in an airtight container or a sealed ziplock bag. I prefer this over just wrapping in cling wrap because the air in the container allows the cheese to breathe and not sweat but the container / plastic bag prevents from drying out in the dry fridge air. Either way will keep for months.

**cherry tomatoes** – either halve and cook lovely on its own with the salad or as part of an Italian inspired meal. Cook in the oven for about 30 minutes (180C / 350F) OR just cook in a pan with a little olive oil. In either case store in an airtight container in the fridge for a few weeks. Or freeze the cooked tomato for longer periods.

**basil** – make basil oil by packing washed and dried leaves in a clean jar and covering with extra virgin olive oil. Or you can freeze the leaves, they'll wilt but will still be delicious.

**salad leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Lovely on its own with the salad or as part of an Italian inspired meal.





italian sausage supper

Now that I'm a parent, I really appreciate meals like this where I just pop everything in the oven and set the timer. Sausages are a favourite thing to cook this way and I especially love the italian simple flavours here. Make sure you chop your spuds into small enough pieces so they'll cook in the allotted time.

# ITALIAN SAUSAGE SUPPER



ENOUGH FOR: 2

TAKES: 60 minutes

4 thick italian sausages

2-4 medium potatoes, scrubbed and halved or quartered

1 lemon, halved

2-4 sprigs rosemary (optional)

1 bag salad, to serve

1. Preheat your oven to 200C (400F). Place sausages and spuds in a baking tray large enough to hold them in a single layer.
2. Drizzle with a little oil and roast for 30 minutes.
3. Stir and add the rosemary (if using) and lemon halves. Roast for another 15-20 minutes or until everything is cooked and well browned.
4. To serve divide everything between two plates and add salad leaves.

## VARIATIONS

**vegetarian / vegan** – replace sausages with halved eggplant or a few handfuls of mushrooms. Be generous with the oil.

**carb lovers / more substantial** – use more spuds! Or serve with crusty bread and butter.

**more veg** – add sliced onion, fennel, sweet potato, baby carrots or chopped beets.

**dressed salad** – whisk together 1 tablespoon sherry or wine vinegar with 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil. Season and taste. Toss in the leaves to dress.

**different herbs** – use thyme or sage instead.

**fishy** – replace sausages with 2 fish fillets. Cook the spuds for 30 minutes then add the fish and expect to take 10-15 minutes depending on the thickness.



VIDEO

# ITALIAN SAUSAGE SUPPER...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**dry** – the lemon is really needed here – it's your sauce! But feel free to add a dollop of mayo or pesto. Or a drizzle of peppery extra virgin olive oil.

**spuds crunchy** – undercooked spuds... never nice. If you have time, remove the sausages and lemon and pop the spuds back in the oven until they're cooked through.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**sausages** – freeze them.

**potatoes** – will keep for months in the pantry in a brown paper bag or sack.

**lemons** – will keep for a few weeks at room temp or for much longer in the fridge.

**rosemary** – will keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for weeks. Also freezes well.

**salad leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Lovely on it's own or as part of an Italian meal.





tomato & basil 'lentilotto'

I'm so glad I came up with the idea of using red lentils instead of rice in a risotto inspired dish. It's my go-to pantry meal these days. Not only is it just as comforting and lovely as risotto, it's also healthier because the lentils have more protein and fibre than rice. It's also much less work because the lentils naturally go all oozy with cooking and don't need the constant stirring. Win win win!

# TOMATO & BASIL 'LENTILOTTO'

*ENOUGH FOR: 2*

*TAKES: 30 minutes*

*200g (7oz) red lentils*

*2 cups chicken or veg stock*

*2 handfuls sun dried tomatoes*

*large handful grated parmesan*

*handful basil leaves (optional) to serve*

1. Preheat your oven to 220C (450F).
2. Place lentils, stock and tomatoes in an oven proof dish. Drizzle with olive oil, season with salt. Cover and bake for 25 minutes or until lentils are tender and the stock had been absorbed.
3. Stir in parmesan and serve with basil leaves (if using) on top.

## VARIATIONS

**no stock?** – replace with 2 cups tomato puree or passata (not tomato paste) or your favourite commercial tomato pasta sauce.

**no sun dried tomatoes** – just skip them or replace with halved cherry tomatoes or grilled red peppers.

**vegan / dairy-free** – skip the parmesan and serve with finely grated brazil nuts or chopped pine nuts on top.

**carnivore** – brown a few crumbled sausages in the pan before adding the lentils and stock.

**short on time** – bring up to a simmer on the stove top before covering and cooking in the oven. Should only take 15 minutes in the oven this way.

**more substantial / carb lovers** – this make 2 modest serves. Big appetites might like to double the recipe. Or serve with your favourite garlic bread.

**more veg** – soften an onion before adding the lentils and stock. Add other veg to the pot with the tomatoes like grilled peppers, grilled zucchini, grilled eggplant or cooked mushrooms. Serve with a green salad with extra raw veg added to the salad such as grated carrot, grated beets, sliced snow peas, cucumber or sliced radish.



VIDEO

# TOMATO & BASIL 'LENTILOTTO' ...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**watery** – simmer on the stove top uncovered to reduce the stock.

**lentils hard** – keep cooking in the oven or simmer on the stove top until they go nice and soft.

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

**bland** – use more parmesan. Next time use a more flavoursome stock.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**red lentils / stock** – keep them in the pantry.

**sun dried tomatoes** – unopened jars will keep in the pantry for months. If opened or from the deli keep in the fridge for a few weeks (or longer). Can be frozen.

**parmesan** – wrap in waxed paper or baking paper and store in the fridge in a sealed paper bag or airtight container. Will keep for months. Can be frozen if you're going away.

**basil** – make basil oil by packing washed and dried leaves in a clean jar and covering with extra virgin olive oil. Or you can freeze the leaves, they'll wilt but will still be delicious.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Lovely with a green salad on the side.



moroccan meatloaf



When I was at boarding school I swore I was never going to have meatloaf ever again. And then one night, many years later I was planning on making meatballs but didn't have the time or energy to roll into individual balls and so I decided a meatloaf was the only answer. Luckily it tasted a whole world better than my childhood memories!

# MOROCCAN MEATLOAF

ENOUGH FOR: 2

TAKES: 60 minutes

4 teaspoons ground coriander (1/2 for meat, half for sauce)

450g lamb or beef mince (ground)

75g (3 oz) almond meal or soft bread crumbs

1 jar passata or puree (3 cups)

4 tablespoons butter

1. Preheat your oven to 200C (400F).
2. In a bowl or the base of a baking dish combine HALF the coriander with all the meat and almond meal or bread crumbs. Add a little salt. Using your hands form into a 'loaf' shape.
3. Place tomato passata / puree around the loaf. Add the remaining coriander to the sauce and top with the butter.
4. Bake for 45 minutes to 1 hour or until the meat is cooked through.
5. Slice and serve the meat with the sauce.

## VARIATIONS

**different spice** – try baharat, ras el hanout or ground cumin instead.

**vegetarian** – these flavours are lovely with baked eggplant. Halve a large eggplant lengthwise. Place in a dish cut side up. Scatter over the spice and almond meal to make a crust and pop the tomato passata and butter around the sides.

**carb-lovers / more substantial** – serve on a bed of cooked couscous, quinoa or even cooked spaghetti.

**more veg** – soften an onion then mix in with the meat. Feel free to add chopped zucchini, red capsicum (bell peppers) or eggplant to the sauce. Serve with a green salad.

**meatballs** – form the meat mixture into golf ball sized shapes and cook in the sauce. Will take 30-45 mins.

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



VIDEO

# MOROCCAN MEATLOAF...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**loaf falling apart** – next time compact the loaf more firmly together with your hands. And make sure you don't stir too early on in the cooking process.

**bland** – be generous with the seasoning. Next time use better quality meat.

**sauce too acidic or sharp?** – add a few tablespoons of olive oil or butter for extra richness.

**loaf browning too much** – cover with foil and cook until done.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**ground coriander / almond meal or soft bread crumbs / passata or puree** – keep them in the pantry.

**lamb or beef mince (ground)** – freeze it.

**butter** – will keep in the fridge for weeks.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Needs a green salad or some tabouleh to serve.





fast roast salmon & peppers

Red bell peppers, or capsicum as we call them here in Australia are such an underrated vegetable. They seem so common place, boring almost but when you roast them quickly like in this dish, they transform into a complex sauce. It's almost a bit of kitchen magic!

# FAST ROAST SALMON & PEPPERS

ENOUGH FOR: 2

TAKES: 15 minutes

2 red capsicum (bell peppers), sliced

2 salmon fillets

1 lemon, halved

1 bag salad leaves

1. Preheat your oven to 250C (480F).
2. Line a baking tray with paper or foil for easier cleanup. Scatter over sliced capsicum (peppers) and top with salmon fillets.
3. Tuck in the lemon halves and drizzle with a little oil, bake for 10 minutes or until the fish is cooked to your liking.
4. To serve, divide salmon and peppers and the lovely cooking juices between two plates. Add salad leaves on the side and squeeze over hot lemon.

## VARIATIONS

**different fish** – feel free to use any fish fillets or plate sized whole fish for this recipe. Use your judgement in adjusting the cooking time. Thinner fish may only take 5 minutes and larger whole fish up to 20 minutes or even a little longer. Just keep checking regularly until you're happy.

**carnivore** – replace fish with fresh pork sausages. Allow an extra 5-10 minutes to cook the sausages through.

**vegetarian / vegan** – replace salmon with an eggplant chopped in half and flesh scored. Allow an extra 5-10 minutes for the eggplant to cook. Serve the roast veg with a dollop of mayo, pesto or hummus.

**more veg** – add more veg to the pan such as sliced fennel, boiled potatoes, sliced zucchini or eggplant (as in the vegetarian option). Or consider adding more veg to the salad.

**carb-lovers / more substantial** – serve with steamed potatoes or mash.

**no oven** – soften the peppers in a frying pan with a little olive oil over a medium high heat. Remove from the pan then cook salmon about 4 minutes each side.



VIDEO

# FAST ROAST SALMON & PEPPERS...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**dry** – overcooked fish. Next time check earlier on. For now a little mayo or a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil can help. And don't forget the lovely lemon juices.

**fish not cooked through** – pop back in the oven if you're not happy. I like my salmon a little 'rare' in the middle but you can always cook yours for longer.

**bland** – a good sprinkle of sea salt flakes will bring everything to life. Next time try getting your fish from a different supplier or try a different type of fish. Farmed salmon can be pretty tasteless.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**red capsicum (bell peppers)** – keep in the fridge for a few weeks. For longer grill and store in an airtight jar under oil. Or freeze them.

**salmon fillets** – freeze them.

**lemons** – will keep for a few weeks at room temp or for much longer in the fridge.

**salad leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Lovely on its own.





NO  
EXTRA TIME  
PREPARATION

A Flash in the Pan

# MODULE 4 VIDEO/ AUDIO

## MODULE 4. VIDEO

[CLICK HERE](#) to view the video for Module 4.

## MODULE 4. AUDIO

[CLICK HERE](#) to download the audio file as an mp3. (You may need to 'right click' and 'save link as').

NOTE: The video and audio files cover the written content on the next pages.

# THE ART OF 'NO EXTRA TIME' PREP

## HOW TO MASTER THE ART OF PREP WITHOUT SPENDING EXTRA TIME IN THE KITCHEN...

**NOTE:** *The written content below is the same as that contained in the audio and video versions.*

The preparation or 'prep' part of cooking isn't the most exciting. If you think about it that's where the apprentices start... Here's 100kg potatoes, get peeling.

BUT without some sort of prep, there isn't much cooking you can get done.

While this course is really focused on keeping the effort that goes into cooking as MINIMAL as possible, you'll notice it's not called 'Zero Effort' cooking. And there's a very good reason for that.

But that being said, I'm a huge believer in the concept of 'no extra time' prep. There are plenty of ways to really get the most out of the time you are already spending in the kitchen. And that's what we're talking about here!

## 1. BULK IT.

Now I now cooking in bulk can sound a little off putting. But this idea is really my biggest go-to when I'm looking to get food prepped without extra time. It usually only takes a few more minutes to double or triple a recipe. And you end up with pretty much 'free time food'.

Yay!

So for example this week I made a double batch of chilli con carne. It took an extra minute to cut up an extra onion and a few seconds to open an extra can of tomatoes. And that's pretty much it. We ate the first serving for dinner the other night and now I have the leftovers stored in the fridge to have for lunches this week. Or if needed to be another dinner on another night.

That same night we had the chilli, I made some cauliflower 'rice' (raw grated cauli) to go with it.

### **So what types of meals are good to cook in 'bulk'?**

Basically anything slow cooked, most roasted dishes (sometimes you'll need an extra oven tray), soups and curries.

I tend to avoid bulk cooking things that won't reheat so well like steak or panfried chicken. I also avoid bulk cooking things where it's important to get lots of heat in the pan like stir fries because the extra food won't cook as quickly.

### **Remember it doesn't have to be a whole meal...**

It could be where you just prep extra of a side or component like grating my cauli 'rice' or cooking up an extra bunch of kale.

## 2. MULTI-TASK.

Normally in life I'm not a fan of multitasking because it tends to make us less efficient.

But there are times in the kitchen when it makes total sense.

For example, last night I put a tray of sweet potato in the oven to bake while I was cooking another meal on the stove top. I set the timer and when the sweet potato was tender just got it out. Let it cool then popped it in the fridge to have for dinner another night.

It literally took me a few seconds to turn on the oven, rinse the sweet potato, pop them in a baking tray and set the timer. And now I have it ready to use.

Another example might be cooking a pot of lentils or rice while you're making another meal. Just bring the pot to the boil. Add the lentils / rice. Set your timer and drain when the timer goes off.

See my 'prep hacks' later in this module for more examples.

### 3. OUTSOURCE!

This is an idea that I've shared previously but it's so helpful it's worth repeating. There aren't any prizes for preparing all your ingredients from scratch.

If using prewashed salad leaves (for example) makes your life easier (and makes you more likely to have a home cooked meal) then go for it!

### 4. START SMALL.

I'm a huge believer in the power of taking baby steps because one of the biggest reasons we fail when it comes to making changes in our lives is 'biting off more than we can chew'.

So remember to make it almost impossible for yourself to fail.

### 5. LOOK TO BUILD HABITS.

Building habits into your life is really the secret weapon to putting your prep on autopilot. Check out the next tab for more on this!

# GETTING ORGANIZED

## THE SECRET TO GETTING ORGANIZED EVEN WHEN YOU'RE SUPER SHORT ON TIME.

Getting organized in the kitchen (or anywhere else in life for that matter) can seem overwhelming at times. It happens to me too.

So what's the secret?

Focus on building habits.

As I alluded to earlier, this is my 'secret weapon' for putting prep on autopilot so everything runs almost without you having to give it a second thought.

4 steps to developing your prep habits...

### STEP 1. IDENTIFY WHICH PREP HABITS YOU WANT WANT TO FORM.

This is really a personal thing. If you're stuck for ideas check out my 15 Prep Hacks to give you some ideas. Then just brainstorm a list.

### STEP 2. CHOOSE ONE HABIT TO FOCUS ON FIRST.

Decide which habit you want to go after first.

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

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

Even though you might be tempted to do more, focus on one habit at a time. This is really important.

### STEP 3. DEVELOP A PLAN.

There are three parts to any habit:

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

In order to change your habit you need to identify the trigger and reward.

So for example if your target habit is to cook a batch of lentils or beans every week. Your trigger might be on monday night. The action is you soak the beans (and skip this for lentils). Then Tuesday night your action is to cook the beans that are sitting on the sink while you cook / eat Tuesday dinner.

And your reward is being able to use the beans / lentils for meals during the rest of the week. Or maybe you choose another reward... It just needs to be something you're excited about.

### STEP 4. IF YOU FAIL, KEEP TRYING.

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

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

# 15 PREP HACKS

## MY TOP 15 PREPARATION HACKS

### 1. DON'T PEEL VEG!

I know we've covered this before... but it's one of my biggest time savers. And not only that you get less waste. PLUS! Many of nutrients are in or super close to the skin so you're getting more from your veg as well!

### 2. A POT OF LENTILS.

At least once every 2 weeks I cook up a simple pot of [lovely lentils](#). I love them because they don't need soaking and only take about 20 minutes to cook. Plus they're higher in protein and fiber than other beans or grains so the best option nutritionally too!

### 3. COOKED GREENS.

I try and have eggs and some form of veg for breakkie 5 days a week. And I've really found if I cook up [a big batch of greens](#) like kale, spinach, chard (silverbeet) or collard greens I'm much more likely to have my veg.

### 4. ROAST WHOLE VEG.

Sweet potato is my favourite [veg to roast whole](#) at the moment because Fergal loves it. But don't feel limited. I also roast whole butternut squash, beets, carrots and parsips from time to time.

## 5. A POT OF BEANS OR CHICKPEAS.

If I don't have lentils cooked, my other go-to is [a big pot of beans](#) (or chickpeas) or these [8-hour baked beans](#).

## 6. RICE / QUINOA / PASTA.

I don't have these higher carb options very often. But when I do my method for cooking them is basically the same, boil in a big pot of water until tender then drain. See specific instructions for [rice](#) or [quinoa](#).

The beauty of cooking grains and cooling them before eating is that you actually reduce the amount of digestible carbohydrate so you make them a little healthier by cooking in advance.

## 7. GRATED RAW VEG.

I love using grated raw cauliflower in place of rice. I've found that while I'm getting my food processor dirty, it makes sense to [grate extra veg](#) like carrot, beetroot and broccoli to have for lunches, breakfasts and other dinners.

## 8. MAKE EXTRA GRILLED VEG.

Whenever we fire up our charcoal BBQ I try and have something extra to cook for another meal. It might be [grilled zucchini](#) or [peppers](#) or cooking onions in the coals.

## 9. KEEP SALAD DRESSING ON THE TABLE.

This is something I've started doing recently and it makes getting a salad ready to serve as a side super easy. I just mix up a big batch of salad dressing every few weeks (4-6 tablespoons vinegar, 2 tablespoons mustard and 1 cup extra virgin olive oil) and pop in in a dark glass bottle. It then lives on the dining table (all the ingredients are shelf stable). At dinner I just pop my salad leaves in a bowl and dress and toss at the table while we're eating.

## 10. DON'T BROWN OR SOFTEN BEFORE SLOW COOKING.

Slow cooked dishes take minimal prep if you skip the browning of the meat or softening any veg like onions etc. You will miss some extra flavour development but not much compared to how much effort you'll be saving. I can't remember the last time I made a slow cooked dish and actually browned anything first.

NOTE: I slow cook in the oven with allows browning to happen. If you're using an electric slow cooker you won't get this same browning.

## 11. PACK LUNCHES AS YOU'RE SERVING DINNER.

I have a stash of pyrex glass containers with plastic lids I use for storage and lunches. By serving up the lunches at the same time as dinner it means it's done then so in the morning I just need to grab something from the fridge to send to work with my Irishman.

The added bonus is if the food is already allocated to lunch we're less likely to eat the extras.

## 12. CHOP VEG FOR SNACKS.

Honesty time. I DON'T do this at the moment but I have in the past and getting into the habit of having carrot, capsicum (red bell pepper), snow peas and celery sticks ready to eat and munch can be a great way to snack on more veg.

At the moment I'm pregnant and happier to reach for a handful of almonds, cashews or brazil nuts.

## 13. FERMENTED VEG.

This is another one I've mentioned before but it's really changed my life. Having [sauerkraut](#) or other [fermented veg](#) in the fridge is brilliant for being able to just plonk them on the table and instantly add an extra serving of veg to a meal.

## 14. HARVEST AND STORE YOUR GARDEN PRODUCE.

This won't apply to everyone but if you do grow your own anything here's the thing I've found. If I pick my veg or salad on the weekend or evening when I'm out in the garden then wash and have stored in the fridge, I'm much more likely to eat them than if I leave the picking to as I'm cooking time.

## 15. SUNDAY BAKING SESSIONS.

I've always loved baking but since becoming a mother there have been two changes. First I've started baking most weekends on in what Fergal and I call the 'Sunday Baking Sessions'. Secondly, I've ditched the white sugar and flour and have moved to baking with real whole food ingredients. They're still sweet treats but I feel a bit less guilty about feeding them to my little one and to me!

See the recipes in our surprise bonus module for some ideas.

## WANT MORE IDEAS ?

Then checkout The Organized Cook program (when you're finished with Tired & Hungry Dinners of course!).



# A FLASH IN THE PAN

fried brown rice



If I'm just cooking for my Irishman and me, I hardly ever use rice because we both prefer the low carb higher 'veg' option of cauliflower 'rice'. But I've found 2 year olds are much keener on real rice. The good news is I've been able to transition Fergal to brown rice so at least there's a bit more fibre. I use brown basmati rice because it has the lowest GI of all rices.

# FRIED BROWN RICE

ENOUGH FOR: 2

TAKES: 15 minutes

3 eggs

2 cups cooked brown rice

1 red capsicum (bell pepper) chopped (optional)

2 handfuls frozen peas

1-2 tablespoons soy sauce

1. Heat a large frying pan on a medium high heat. Whisk eggs in a bowl.
2. Add a splash of oil to the pan and then the eggs. Cook for about 30 seconds and then stir. Cook for another 30 seconds and stir again. Keep cooking and stirring until the eggs are almost set. Put egg on a clean plate.
3. Return the pan to the heat and add more oil. Stir fry the rice, peppers (if using) and peas until everything is hot and the rice is just starting to brown a little.
4. Remove from the heat and add the soy sauce. Taste and add more soy if needed.
5. Stir in the egg and green onion (if using) and serve hot.

## VARIATIONS

**to cook the rice** – bring a large pot of water to the boil. Add rice and simmer for 10 minutes. Drain well then cool. Refrigerate or freeze until you're ready to use.

**hot** – add some chopped red or green chilli with the peas or serve with chilli oil or your favourite hot sauce at the table.

**more veg** – feel free to add chopped red peppers (capsicum), snow peas, sugar snap peas, carrots, corn kernels, green beans, grated cauli or asparagus. Anything that works in a stir fry is good.

**vegan** – replace egg with a few generous handful of roasted peanuts or cooked lentils or beans.

**carnivore** – brown some chopped bacon before adding the peas and rice. Or toss in a few handfuls of cooked chicken.

**paleo** – replace rice with grated raw cauliflower (about 1/2 cauli).

**herby** – serve with coriander (cilantro), mint or basil leaves on top.

**carb lovers / more substantial** – double the rice.



VIDEO

# FRIED BROWN RICE...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**rice clumping** – this is a sign that either your rice was overcooked in the first place OR your rice is too fresh and hasn't been rested for long enough for the starches to be in a frying frame of mind. Next time, try cooking your rice with the fast boil method and/ or making sure it cools down completely before attempting to make this dish.

**rice and eggs sticking to the pan** – if you're using a regular pan that isn't non-stick (like me) you may need to be more generous when oiling the pan to avoid sticking.

**eggs rubbery** – a sign that your eggs are overcooked. With the rice, they should still taste OK. Next time try to either use a lower temperature or cook the eggs for a shorter period of time.

**eggs watery** – when eggs are overcooked the protein breaks down and can no longer hold the moisture in. This results in 'synerisis' or weeping

**tastes bland** – this is a simple dish, so you're relying on the soy to pull it's weight. Feel free to up the level of soy. Also make sure you're using the best quality eggs you can afford. I notice a huge difference in free range eggs from my cousin's farm and free range from the supermarket with both colour & flavour.

**tastes too salty** – sounds like a soy overdose. Next time add a little at a time. For now, the only solution is to dilute it. Stir fry some extra eggs, or rice both and toss them through the salty dish

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**eggs** – will keep in the fridge for weeks or use for another meal.

**cooked brown rice** – freeze it.

**capsicum (bell pepper)** – keep in the fridge for a few weeks. For longer grill and store in an airtight jar under oil. Or freeze them.

**frozen peas** – will keep in the freezer for months.

**soy sauce** – keep it in the pantry.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great on its own or as part of an Asian meal.





broccoli 'couscous' & beef

I love using vegetables in place of grain based staples like rice, pasta and even couscous. The result is lighter, fresher and usually much quicker! While the broccoli here does make this dish look quite healthy, it is no slouch in the flavour department! If you're not familiar with harissa or tahini, just check out the variations below.

# BROCCOLI 'COUSCOUS' & BEEF

ENOUGH FOR: 2

TAKES: 20 minutes

1 large head broccoli

450g (1 lb) ground beef (mince)

4 tablespoons lemon juice

1 tablespoon harissa

4 tablespoons tahini (optional)

1. Chop the broccoli into large chunks and whizz in the food processor until you have super fine 'grains' that resemble couscous.
2. Heat a little oil on a high heat in a large frying pan. Add beef and cook, stirring every now and then or until the beef is well browned.
3. Add the broccoli couscous and continue to cook until everything is hot.
4. Remove pan from the heat and season with salt and lemon juice.
5. In a small bowl mix harissa and 3 tablespoons extra olive oil.
6. To serve, divide beef and broccoli between two plates. Drizzle over harissa oil and then drizzle over the tahini (if using).

## VARIATIONS

**no harissa?** – just replace with chopped red chilli or other chilli paste.

**no tahini** – tahini is a paste made from sesame seeds. You could just skip it all together or use almond or cashew butter instead. Mayo would also work.

**vegetarian** – replace beef with cooked lentils or beans.

**carb lovers / more substantial** – replace broccoli with couscous cooked according to the packet. Or serve with flat bread or warm tortillas.

**more veg** – toss in flat leaf parsley, coriander or mint leaves. Or serve with a green salad.

**different veg** – cauliflower can be used instead or try grated carrot or beets.

**no food processor** – try to chop the broccoli by hand as fine as you can get it.



VIDEO

# BROCCOLI 'COUSCOUS' & BEEF...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too dry** – use a little more olive oil and/or tahini. Next time consider using beef with a higher fat content.

**bland** – more salt and/or lemon juice.

**broccoli too crunchy** – pop it back in the pan and allow to cook for longer.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**broccoli** – will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for about 2 weeks or sometimes a little longer. Can be frozen (if you have time chop before freezing so it will defrost quickly in the pan).

**ground beef (mince)** – freeze it.

**lemon** – whole lemon will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.

**harissa** – keep it in the pantry.

**tahini** – I keep mine in the pantry but will keep longer in the fridge if open.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great on its own.





simple *fish with* lemon butter

This dish was inspired by my fave food writer, Nigel Slater. There's something to be said for classic flavour combinations like fish, lemon and butter! I love how it makes both a brilliant sauce for the fish and a tasty dressing for the salad leaves.

# SIMPLE FISH WITH LEMON BUTTER

ENOUGH FOR: 2

TAKES: 15 minutes

2 fish fillets

2 tablespoons butter

4 tablespoons lemon juice

salad leaves, to serve

1. Heat a frying pan on a medium high heat. Rub fish with a little oil. Season with salt.
2. Cook fish for 3-5 minutes on each side or until cooked to your liking.
3. Remove fish from the pan and divide between two plates.
4. Wipe out the pan with paper towel to remove any excess oil. Add butter and lemon to the pan and bring to a simmer.
5. Serve fish with lemon butter drizzled over and salad leaves on the side.

## VARIATIONS

**vegetarian** – serve the lemon butter with pan fried mushrooms or eggplant. Also good with cooked beans or lentils.

**dairy-free / paleo** – replace butter with extra virgin olive oil. No need to heat, just combine with the lemon juice.

**carnivore** – replace fish with lamb or pork chops.

**carb lovers / more substantial** – serve with home made fries or toss cooked pasta into the lemon butter.

**more veg** – add more exciting raw or pickled veg to the salad leaves like carrot, zucchini, red bell peppers (capsicum), snow peas.

**more wintery** – replace salad leaves with cooked greens.



VIDEO

# SIMPLE FISH WITH LEMON BUTTER...

## 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** – you may need a little more salt or lemon juice.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**fish fillets** – freeze them.

**butter** – will keep in the fridge for weeks.

**lemon** – whole lemon will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.

**salad leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Lovely as a simple meal on its' own.



pork larb



'Larb' is a spicy Thai dish usually made from minced (ground) chicken or pork. I love to use mince in stir fries because it cooks so quickly and stays nice and tender... so it's hard to mess up!

# PORK LARB

ENOUGH FOR: 2

TAKES: 15 minutes

450g (1lb) pork mince (ground pork)

2-6 small red chillies, chopped

2-3 tablespoons fish sauce

4 tablespoons lime juice + 2 lime halves to serve

2 bunches coriander (cilantro) or mint, leaves picked

1. Heat a large frying pan or wok on a very high heat. Add a little oil and cook the pork and chillies, stirring continuously until the pork is well browned.

2. Remove from the heat and toss in the fish sauce and lime juice. Taste and add more fish sauce (or salt) or lime juice as needed.

3. Serve hot with mint or coriander leaves on top.

## VARIATIONS

**no fish sauce** – use soy sauce or coconut amino instead.

**vegetarian** – replace pork with crumbled firm tofu or cooked lentils.

**more veg** – serve with cauliflower 'rice' (raw grated cauli). Feel free to add you fave stir fry veg like chopped carrot, corn, bok choy or red bell peppers (capsicum) to the pan.

**carb lovers / more substantial** – serve with steamed rice or toss cooked rice noodles in with the meat.

**different meat** – any ground (minced) meat is fine. Try chicken or beef. Note that beef may need a bit more lime juice.

**more flavour** – feel free to add finely chopped garlic and/or ginger to the pan.



VIDEO

# PORK LARB...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**dry** – next time use fattier pork mince. For now drizzle generously with extra virgin olive oil and/or more lime.

**bland** – more lime! and some salt will help. More chilli might help too.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**pork mince (ground pork)** – freeze it.

**red chillies** – will keep for months in the fridge. Can be frozen or left unwrapped in the fridge they will slowly turn into dried chillies and still be edible.

**fish sauce** – keep it in the pantry.

**lime** – will keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.

**coriander (cilantro) or mint** – best to use for another meal. Can be frozen but will wilt when defrosted.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great on its own or lovely with steamed rice or cauliflower 'rice'.





balsamic *glazed* chicken

One of the best ways to make a super quick sauce for pan fried meats is to deglaze the pan with some vinegar or wine and add a little butter. I love the sweetness of balsamic but if you'd prefer to keep it sugar-free check out the 'variations' below.

# BALSAMIC GLAZED CHICKEN



ENOUGH FOR: 2

TAKES: 20 minutes

2 medium zucchini

4 chicken thigh fillets

4 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

2 tablespoons salted butter

1. Make your zucchini 'noodles' using a spiralizer, mandoline OR a sharp vegetable peeler. If using the mandoline or veg peeler you'll need to make thick 'ribbons' first and then hand slice into thinner noodles. Season with salt and allow to stand at room temp to soften a little while you cook the chicken.

2. Place your chicken on a chopping board and bash using your fist or a heavy saucepan. The idea is to flatten the chicken so it's about 1cm (1/2in) thick. Season with salt and rub with a little oil.

3. Preheat a medium frying pan on a medium high heat. Cook the chicken for 3-4 minutes on each side or until cooked to your liking.

4. When the chicken is cooked, remove the pan from the heat.

5. Divide noodles between two plates. Top with cooked chicken. Add the vinegar and butter to the pan and allow to sizzle and bubble until the butter is melted.

6. Pour sauce over the chicken and serve asap.

## VARIATIONS

**sugar-free** – replace the balsamic with 2 tablespoons sherry or other wine vinegar. A lemon butter would also be lovely.

**carnivore** – balsamic glaze is lovely with steak or lamb chops.

**vegetarian** – pan fry large field mushrooms instead of the chicken.

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

**carb-lovers / more substantial** – toss cooked pasta in with the zucchini or serve everything on a bed of mashed potatoes.

**move veg** – serve with a green salad on the side. Feel free to use carrot noodles as well as the zucchini.

**short on time / no zucchini noodles** – skip the zucchini noodles and serve chicken with salad leaves or baby spinach instead.



VIDEO

# BALSAMIC GLAZED CHICKEN...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**chicken dry** – overcooked chicken! Next time get out of the pan earlier or use a lower heat.

**too sweet** – different balsamic vinegars vary in their level of sweetness. For now use more salt to balance but next time either use a different balsamic or decrease the amount.

**noodles too crunchy** – next time leave to stand with the salt for longer. This is key for getting the noodles to soften.

**noodles cold** – they're supposed to be room temperature-ish – if you prefer warmer noodles toss them in the pan with the glaze before serving.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**zucchini** – will keep for 2 weeks or longer in a plastic bag in the fridge. To keep it even longer, cook sliced zucchini in a little butter until just soft then store in an airtight container in the fridge.

**chicken thigh fillets** – freeze them.

**balsamic vinegar** – keep it in the pantry.

**butter** – will keep in the fridge for weeks.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great on its own.



marinated *kale* salad



This salad was inspired by the lovely Ella Woodward from her book 'Deliciously Ella' which is filled with plant based recipes. I hope she doesn't mind me 'bastardising' her recipe with some steak! When I first made this I was completely obsessed I think I had it three times in one week. I adore how the lime and tahini come together to make a super flavoursome dressing.

# MARINATED KALE SALAD



ENOUGH FOR: 2

TAKES: 15 minutes

1-2 steaks

1 large bunch kale

2 limes

4 tablespoons tahini

2 tablespoon soy sauce

1. Heat a frying pan on a high heat. Rub steaks with a little oil and sprinkle with salt. Sear the steaks until cooked to your liking, about 4 minutes on each side for rare.

2. Allow steaks to rest on a clean plate while you make the salad.

3. Remove tough stems from the kale and slice or tear into bite sized strips. Place kale in a large bowl. Squeeze over lime juice and drizzle with tahini and soy sauce. Toss salad with your hands massaging the kale as you go.

4. Slice beef into strips and toss through the salad and divide between two plates.

## VARIATIONS

**vegan / vegetarian** – skip the steak or replace with cooked chickpeas or beans. Or use a few handfuls of nuts to make it more substantial. Ella uses pomegranate seeds.

**no tahini** – replace with almond or cashew butter.

**soy-free** – use coconut aminos or fish sauce.

**more substantial / carb lovers** – toss in torn sourdough, cooked quinoa or cooked couscous.

**chicken** – replace steaks with cooked chicken.

**more veg** – toss in your fave raw salad veg like snow peas, grated carrot, avocado or red peppers (capsicum).

**different greens / no kale** – try collard greens or baby spinach. The dressing is also lovely on crisp iceberg or cos (romaine) lettuce.

**side salad** – skip the steak and serve anywhere you'd normally serve a green salad.



VIDEO

# MARINATED KALE SALAD...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too dry** – serve with a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil or extra lime juice.

**bland** – more soy sauce or some salt.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**steaks** – freeze it.

**kale** – will keep for a few weeks in a plastic bag in the fridge. Or for longer if cooked as per the recipe. Can be frozen.

**lime** – will keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.

**tahini** – I keep mine in the pantry but will keep longer in the fridge if open.

**soy sauce** – keep it in the pantry.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great in big bowls on its own.





parmesan *crusted* chicken

It's hard not to love a schnitzel. Especially when there's parmesan AND the crust is gluten-free. This is one of those meals that doesn't reheat well so enjoy asap! Although leftover can be nice on a sandwich with a little mayo.

# PARMESAN CRUSTED CHICKEN



**ENOUGH FOR:** 2

**TAKES:** 20 minutes

4 chicken thigh fillets

2 handful almond meal or bread crumbs

1 handful grated parmesan

lemon halves, to serve

baby spinach, to serve

1. Place your chicken on a chopping board and bash using your fist or a heavy saucepan. The idea is to flatten the chicken so it's about 1cm (1/2in) thick. You may prefer to chop each thigh into 2-3 pieces.
2. Combine almond meal or bread crumbs and parmesan in a flat bowl. Season with salt. Toss chicken in the coating.
3. Heat a large frying pan on a medium high heat and add enough oil to make a layer about 1cm (1/2in) deep.
4. When the oil starts to shimmer add the chicken to the pan and cook for 3-4 minutes on each side or until well browned and the chicken is just cooked through.
5. Place cooked chicken on paper towel to remove excess oil then divide between two plates. Serve hot chicken with lemon halves and baby spinach on the side.

## VARIATIONS

**vegetarian** – replace chicken with sliced eggplant. First dip eggplant slices in a whisked egg before dipping in the parmesan mixture to help the coating to stick.

**carb lovers / more substantial** – I love this crispy chicken served on a bed of mashed potatoes.

**paleo / dairy-free** – use the almond meal and replace the parmesan with extra almond meal.

**nut-free** – replace almond meal with bread crumbs.

**more veg** – lovely with cooked greens or pan fried asparagus. Or add more salad veg to the baby spinach.

**carnivore** – good with pork fillet or veal instead of the chicken.

**pescetarian** – replace chicken with fish fillets. No need to bash out the fish.



VIDEO

# PARMESAN CRUSTED CHICKEN...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**coating not sticking** – next time whisk an egg and dip the chicken in the egg before coating in the parmesan mixture.

**dry chicken** – overcooked chicken! Next time get out of the pan earlier or use a lower heat. For now serve with a little mayo to mask the dryness.

**bland** – serve with more grated parmesan or salt.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**chicken thigh fillets** – freeze them.

**almond meal or bread crumbs** - keep it in the pantry.

**parmesan** – wrap in waxed paper or baking paper and store in the fridge in a sealed paper bag or airtight container. Will keep for months. Can be frozen if you're going away.

**lemons** – will keep for a few weeks at room temp or for much longer in the fridge.

**baby spinach** – either pop them in the freezer or wilt down in a covered pot with a little olive oil. This way they'll keep in the fridge for a few weeks.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great on its own. Also brilliant with a little mayo as a sandwich filling.





*lovely* lentils

I've used French style 'Puy' lentils in the video but the recipe works equally well with all types of lentils so feel free to explore. Lentils are a brilliant source of protein and fiber so a much healthier choice than pasta or rice.

# LOVELY LENTILS

*MAKES: about 4 cups*

*TAKES: 30 minutes*

*500g (1lb) green or brown lentils, rinsed*

*2 brown onions, peeled & chopped*

*2 carrots, chopped, optional*

*2 sticks celery, chopped, optional*

*3 - 4 tablespoons soy sauce*

*3 - 4 tablespoons sherry or rice wine vinegar*

1. Place lentils in a large saucepan with enough cold water to cover generously.
2. Add onion, carrots & celery (if using), and bring to the boil.
3. Turn the heat down to medium high and simmer rapidly for 15-20 minutes or until the lentils are cooked. I like them al dente like pasta but its up to you. If the lentils look dry add more water.
4. Drain the lentils well and place in a mixing bowl or back into the saucepan.
5. Stir in 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil. Season with soy sauce, vinegar, and a little salt and pepper if you like.

## VARIATIONS

**gluten-free** – make sure you use a gluten-free soy sauce such as tamari.

**carnivore** – lentils love pork products so feel free to serve with prosciutto, jamon or even some cooked bacon.

**less veg** – the veg add flavour to the lentils but aren't critical. Feel free to boil lentils on their own if you're out of veg or short on time.

**herby** – I often add a couple of bay leaves from the garden to my lentils. A sprig of rosemary or thyme can also add lovely fragrance.



VIDEO

# LOVELY LENTILS...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**mushy lentils** – some lentils fall to mush very easily so you need to keep an eye on them. Next time only cook until they are al dente – so tender but still a little firm. The other option is to seek out French-style green lentils (also sometimes called puy lentils) or Italian castellecircco lentils. Both of these more expensive lentils have the advantage of not falling apart even when over cooked a little.

**lentils taking forever to cook** – the cooking time will vary greatly depending on the type of lentil and how long they've been sitting around for. I've also noticed that the less water you have available, the longer they take to cook so be generous with the water. You don't need as much as you would for pasta but make sure your lentils have space to swim freely.

**bland** – lentils need generous seasoning which is why we're using soy and vinegar. Feel free to add more. And don't forget the salt.

**no sherry vinegar?** – no problem. Any wine vinegar including balsamic will work here or even lemon juice.

**crunchy lentils** – just means your lentils are undercooked. You could pop them back in the saucepan with more water or just chalk it as a lesson for next time.

**burning on the bottom** – not enough water. Quick add some!

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**lentils / soy / vinegar / onions** – pantry.

**carrots / celery** – keep for months in a plastic bag in the fridge.

## USAGE SUGGESTIONS

**canned alternative** – anywhere that calls for canned lentils or beans. Note: 1 can drained = approx 240g / 9oz of cooked lentils.

**salads** – such as this [peas & lentil salad](#) or [tuna & lentil salad](#).

**breakfast** – as a 'slow carb' breakfast such as these [spinach & lentils](#). I also love them with a [poached egg](#).

**lasagne** – use as a vegetarian alternative to ground or minced beef such as in this [\(almost\) 15 minute veggie lasagne](#).

**chilli** – instead of canned lentils in this [vegetarian chilli](#).

**rice alternative** – in these [egg fried lentils](#).

**pasta alternative** – serve with your favourite pasta sauce.





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*

*TAKES: 20 minutes*

*approx 250g / 7oz quinoa*

1. Bring a medium pot of water to the boil.
2. Meanwhile, Place quinoa in a fine sieve and rinse well under running water. Drain.
3. When the water is boiling, add the quinoa and simmer for 10-12 minutes or until quinoa is almost tender.
4. Drain and allow to steam and cool.
5. Transfer to an airtight container and keep in the fridge until ready to use.

## VARIATIONS

**different colours** – quinoa comes in red, black and white. I've used a combo of all three in the picture. To be honest I can't taste much of a difference between the different varieties.

**savoury** – season the hot, drained quinoa with a few tablespoons each of extra virgin olive oil, sherry vinegar and soy sauce.

**sweet** – season the hot drained quinoa with a few pinches of brown sugar and a teaspoon or two of vanilla extract or vanilla bean paste. You could also simmer a cinnamon stick in with the quinoa.

**milky** – simmer in milk or half milk half water instead of just using straight water. A cinnamon stick or vanilla bean wouldn't go astray.

**can't find quinoa?** – you could do the same thing with brown rice or barley or even spelt. The cooking times will vary for larger grains, probably more like 30-45 minutes or even longer.



VIDEO

# COOKED QUINOA...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**hard / crunchy** – sounds like undercooked quinoa, pop back in the saucepan with some fresh water and simmer until tender.

**sticking together** – this hasn't ever happened to me, but I assume if you overcook quinoa it could turn mushy. Not much you can do at this stage. But next time set your timer and be more vigilant.

**bland** – it's important to season the quinoa before using. You can go either sweet or savoury.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**quinoa** – pantry.

## USAGE SUGGESTIONS

**breakfast** – serve either cold or warm with natural yoghurt, berries and possibly some roasted almonds.

**carb side** – serve anywhere you'd normally serve steamed rice such as curries, stir fries or slow cooked dishes.

**egg fried quinoa** – brilliant alternative to rice in [egg fried rice](#).

**salad** – use cooked quinoa in any salad that called for canned lentils or beans such as [salmon & butter beans](#) or this [brown rice salad](#).

Note: one can = 240g (9oz) cooked quinoa.

**broccoli salad** – one of my [all time favourites](#).





cooked greens

Pretty much any green leafy veg can be cooked this way. Pre-cooked greens will keep in the fridge twice as long as fresh. And they take up much less space!

# COOKED GREENS

*MAKES: 3-4 handfuls*

*TAKES: 10-15 minutes*

*3-4 tablespoons olive or coconut oil*

*1-2 cloves garlic, finely sliced, optional*

*1 large bunch greens, washed & finely sliced  
squeeze of lemon, optional*

1. Heat olive oil in a large frying pan on a medium high heat.
2. Add the garlic (if using) and the greens and a splash of water. Cover and allow to cook for about 2 minutes.
3. Stir, add more water if the greens are starting to burn then recover and cook for another few minutes. Continue to cook and stir every few minutes until the greens are just wilted.
4. Remove from the heat. Taste and season with salt, pepper and a little lemon juice, if you like.

## VARIATIONS

**different greens** – I've used beet tops in the photo. Other options include cavolo nero, or black Tuscan cabbage, silverbeet (chard) or rainbow chard, spinach, or curly kale. I've read that radish or turnip tops can also be used but haven't ever tried.

**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. I'm not a huge fan of this because you lose your water soluble vitamins.

**summer greens** – skip the whole cooking part and just slice the greens as finely as possible and dress with lemon juice and olive oil.



VIDEO

# COOKED GREENS...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**burning / crispy greens** – reduce the heat asap and add in a few splashes to 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.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**oil, garlic** – pantry.

**greens** – will keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for at least 2 weeks. Can be frozen if needed. If you get time to slice before freezing that will make it super easy to defrost in the pan.

**lemon** – will keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.

## USAGE SUGGESTIONS

**healthy meal** – one of my favourite 'single girl' meals is to cook up a huge plate of greens and serve with a generous topping of grated parmesan. Or if I need more protein I add a drained can of tuna or a poached egg.

**warming side** – use as a winter side anywhere you'd normally serve a green salad.

**curry** – use instead of frozen spinach in an Indian 'saag'.

**with lentils** – toss in a can of drained lentils or some cooked lentils.

**with roast veg** – serve scattered with roast root veg or pumpkin and possibly a handful of almonds and a squeeze of lemon for a quick veggie meal.



ready-to-eat veg



I've been a big fan of using raw grated cauliflower as a healthy alternative to steamed rice. Over time I started grating more than I needed for the meal ahead to save getting the food processor out a second time. The surprise bonus was that having the raw grated veg in the fridge, I found myself adding them to whatever I was making. I like to think of it as a little 'veg' injection.

# READY-TO-EAT VEG

*MAKES: how long is a piece of string?*

*TAKES: 10 minutes or so*

*raw vegetables such as cauliflower, broccoli, zucchini, carrot, cabbage, brussels sprouts, fennel, beetroot*

## VARIATIONS

**different veg** – cauliflower, broccoli, zucchini, carrot, cabbage, brussels sprouts, fennel, beetroot.

**mix it up!** – make a combo of any of the above.

1. Grate veg finely using your food processor. Or a coarse box grater or microplane grater. Serve ASAP or store in an airtight container in the fridge.



# READY-TO-EAT VEG...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**hard to eat** – it's important to grate the veg finely, so you end up with tiny pieces about the size of a grain of rice.

**bland** – it's meant to be used as an accompaniment to more fully flavoured dishes.

**don't have a food processor with a grater blade?** – you can grate by hand but it can be hard work! The alternative is to super finely chop the veg using a sharp knife.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**veg** – most whole veg will keep in the fridge in a plastic bag for 2 weeks or longer for carrots and beets. If you need to you can freeze but I generally don't because I don't like the texture of defrosted veg.

## USAGE SUGGESTIONS

**steamed rice alternative** – just serve cold grated cauli with your hot curry or stir fry. Sometimes I almost can't tell the difference.

**breakfast** – I love my raw veg with a [poached egg](#) and a little mayo and sometimes a sprinkling of nutritional yeast or grated parmesan.

**salads** – just toss a handful in with your favourite green salad to have a boost in the veg department.

**'slaw** – like this [brocco-slaw](#).





whole roast veg

I used to struggle with 'good intentions' when it came to roasting veg. Often the poor things would sit there for weeks waiting for me to chop and peel and pop them in the oven. Then one day I had the bright idea to just pop the veg in the oven and deal with them later. And I haven't looked back. This is a great thing to add to the oven when you already have it on the go. Just remember to set a timer so you don't forget about them like I have on the odd occasion!

# WHOLE ROAST VEG

*MAKES: as much as you cook!*

*TAKES: about an hour*

*whole root vegetables*

1. Place veg in a baking dish or oven proof tray. Pop in the oven and heat it to 180C (350F).
2. Bake until the veg are very soft. Usually somewhere from 45 minutes to an hour.
3. Eat warm or cool and see the 'storage best practices'.

## VARIATIONS

**short on time** – you could chop the veg into chunks (and peel too if you're into that) you'll save on cooking time but will spend extra in prep!

**different veg** – sweet potatoes are my favourite but you can also use whole butternut or other pumpkin, parsnip, swede (rutabaga), turnip, beets, carrots, regular potatoes or fennel (not technically a root veg but still delicious), onions and garlic are also great.

**flavourings** – I usually don't bother but feel free to play around with chilli, garlic, lemon zest, thyme, rosemary, sage, coriander seeds, cumin seeds or fennel seeds.



VIDEO

# WHOLE ROAST VEG...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**veg burning** – if they're browning too much before getting tender, just cover with foil and keep cooking. This is why I like to set my timer so I remember to check on them every 30 minutes or so.

**crunchy veg** – not cooked long enough! back to the oven.

## STORAGE BEST PRACTICES

Store with the skins still on in an airtight container or ziplock bag. Will keep in the fridge for 2-3 weeks or so. Can be frozen for up to 12 months.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**root veg** – will keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for months. For potatoes and onions I just keep them in the pantry.

## USAGE SUGGESTIONS

**mash** – just scoop the flesh out and use a fork to mash in some butter. Lovely as a side to BBQ meats or sausages.

**alternative to pasta** – serve chunks of your roast veg with your favourite pasta sauces – try it with bolognese or this [quick pork ragu](#).

**soup** – scoop the flesh out and use to make a soup like the [recipe over here](#). Note: the recipe linked to is a 'template' recipe so you'll need to read the variations for it to make sense.

**salads** – chop into bite sized pieces and toss in your favourite green salad.

**wraps / sandwiches** – mash and use as a filling.

**roast veg hummus** – whizz 250g of your cooked veg with 3 tablespoons each tahini, lemon juice and extra virgin olive oil. Taste and season and use as you would use hummus.

**baby food** – Fergal is a big fan!





*char grilled zucchini*

In the Summer time this is one of my favourite veg from the BBQ. Smoky and buttery and so good!

# CHAR GRILLED ZUCCHINI

*MAKES: as many as you cook!*

*TAKES: about 30 minutes*

*2-4 medium zucchini (courgettes)  
extra virgin olive oil, optional*

1. Preheat a char grill pan or BBQ until very hot.
2. Slice zucchini into thin ribbons using a knife or mandoline. Drizzle generously with olive oil.
3. Char zucchini until well marked on both sides, about 3-4 minutes a side. Season.
4. Pack into super clean glass jars while still hot and cover with a little olive oil if you prefer to keep them for longer.

## VARIATIONS

**mixed veg** – I sometimes cook red capsicum (bell peppers) and halved baby eggplant with the zucchini and toss them all together before serving.

**post-grill marinade** – lovely if warm zucchini are tossed in a dressing of 1-2 tablespoons each good quality balsamic and extra virgin olive oil + a crushed clove of garlic. Just don't forget to fish the garlic out before serving.

**don't have a BBQ? Try zucchini 'coins'** – if you don't have a char grill pan or BBQ, cut the zucchini into round coins and cook over a medium heat in a saucepan with plenty of olive oil until super soft and buttery.



VIDEO

# CHAR GRILLED ZUCCHINI...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**zucchini sticking to the BBQ** – sounds like you need more oil!

**crunchy in the middle but charred on the outside** – either your temperature is too high, or more likely, the zucchini aren't cut thinly enough. You could pop them in the oven to roast until they're tender if you like.

**too bland?** – add in a little more salt. And next time try using smaller, fresher zucchini.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**zucchini** – will keep for 2 weeks or so in a plastic bag in the fridge. For longer storage best to cook and store under oil as per the recipe.

## USAGE SUGGESTIONS

**as a side dish** – just drizzle with olive oil and a squeeze of lemon and tear over some mint leaves. So good!

**soup** – great as a [chunky veg soup](#) served with pesto.

**on sandwiches** – team up with grilled peppers and your favourite cheese for a killer veggie 'sanga' (that's Aussie for sandwich)

**veggie 'noodles'** – pile charred zucchini on a plate and top with your favourite pasta sauce. Especially great with ragus.

**smoky ratatouille** – combine with roast eggplant and charred peppers and simmer in tomato puree or passata until you have a lovely thick veggie 'stew'.

**on pizza** – great with lashings of mozzarella and fresh mint once it comes out of the oven.



a big pot of beans



It's not often that I bother to cook up a big pot of beans. But every time I do, I'm glad I went to the extra effort. Home cooked beans always have a much nicer flavour and texture than canned beans. The soaking does require a little pre-planning but I highly recommend taking the time because it reduces the presence of chemicals called 'phytates' which can cause problems with our digestion. It's also supposed to reduce any bean-related digestive issues or 'gassiness'.

# A BIG POT OF BEANS

*MAKES: heaps*

*TAKES: 6 hours soaking + 1.5 hours cooking*

*500g (1lb) dried beans*

*2 bay leaves, optional*

## VARIATIONS

**other herbs** – skip the bay leaf or replace with other flavourings such as thyme, rosemary or sage.

**chickpeas** – use dried chickpeas instead of the beans.

1. Cover beans with plenty of cold water and soak for at least 6 hours and up to 48 hours.
2. Drain beans and place in a large pot. Cover generously with clean cold water and add the bay leaf, if using.
3. Simmer, uncovered until beans are tender – anywhere from 45 minutes to 1 1/2 hours. Drain.



VIDEO

# A BIG POT OF BEANS...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too bland?** – add in a little more salt.

**beans still tough** – some beans just don't want to soften. Blame the beans! Adding a little bicarb soda to the cooking water can help.

**beans mushy** – means they've been overcooked. Not much you can do now except serve them as a puree. Next time watch more closely.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**beans** – pantry.

## USAGE SUGGESTIONS

**canned bean replacement** – use anywhere that calls for canned beans. As a rule of thumb, 1 drained can = 250g (9oz) cooked beans.

**braised beans** – [recipe over here](#) – NEW!

**soups** – brilliant in soups like this [roast eggplant and white bean soup](#).

**pasta alternative** – serve with your favourite pasta sauce or in your favourite pasta bake like this [white bean & onion bake](#).

**salads** – toss into your favourite salad for an extra protein hit.



charred *red* peppers



I often buy these in a jar from the supermarket or deli. But I'm always glad I took the extra time when I make my own. The flavour tends to be much fresher and more deeply smoky.

# SMOKY RED PEPPERS

*MAKES: as many as you cook!*

*TAKES: about 30 minutes*

*2 or more red capsicum (bell peppers)  
extra virgin olive oil, optional*

1. Preheat an overhead grill (broiler) on its highest setting.
2. Place whole capsicum (peppers) on a tray and cook until the skin is really black, about 5 minutes or so.
3. Rotate so the next side gets exposed to the heat. Repeat until all sides are well blackened.
4. Place hot peppers in a heatproof bowl and cover with the tray or cling wrap. Allow to cool so you can touch them.
5. Peel peppers, discarding the blackened skins and any seeds. Pack into super clean glass jars while still hot and cover with a little olive oil if you prefer to keep them for longer.

## VARIATIONS

**short on time?** – chop peppers into flat pieces and grill skin side up all at once.

**chilli peppers** – larger chillies can be lovely instead or as well as capsicum (bell peppers).

**yellow or green peppers** – can be cooked in the same manner but I find the flavour of red peppers to be the best.



VIDEO

# SMOKY RED PEPPERS...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**difficult to peel** – if the peppers aren't cooked and charred enough, the peels can be difficult to remove. In that case I just forget about peeling them. Allowing them to 'steam' in a covered container as they cool really makes a difference to the ease of peeling.

**hard peppers** – another sign of undercooking. It's important to leave them under the grill until really black everywhere.

**over-charred peppers** – it is possible to go too far. If the flesh under the skin also gets charred, you can either cut out the really burnt bits and discard. Or just start again.

**not smoky enough** – again, undercharring is to blame. A good quick fix-it is to add a teaspoon or two of Spanish smoked paprika to your dish to boost the 'smoky' flavours.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

peppers (capsicum) – will keep for 2 weeks or so in a plastic bag in the fridge. For longer storage best to cook and store under oil as per the recipe.

## USAGE SUGGESTIONS

**fiery harissa paste** – puree into a [superhot Moroccan sauce](#).

**salads** – tear or slice into strips and toss in a green salad.

**baked frittata** – lovely to give a spanish vibe to a baked frittata, some chopped chorizo wouldn't go astray.

**smoky soups** – makes a lovely [smooth soup](#).

**veggie alternative to cured meats or sausages** – makes a great veggie alternative to crispy bacon or chorizo.





8-hour baked beans

There's nothing like waking up to the smell of these beans. It's enough to make you almost want to leap out of bed on a lazy Sunday morning. Almost.

# 8-HOUR BAKED BEANS

ENOUGH FOR: 6

TAKES: 8 hours

400g (14oz) dried cannellini, haricot or northern beans

2 onions, peeled & chopped

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

3 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce

1 ham hock

1. Preheat oven to 120C (250F) fan forced. Or 140C (280F) for regular oven.

2. Place beans, onions, tomato, worcestershire sauce and ham hock in a large oven proof dish, preferably with a lid. Add 2 1/2 cups water and 2 tablespoons brown sugar if you prefer your beans a little sweet. Cover tightly with foil and the lid.

3. Bake beans for 8 hours, or until the beans are super tender and the ham is falling of the bone. If it looks a little dry, add some more water. If it looks too soupy, increase the oven temperature and cook uncovered until the sauce has reduced to your liking. Season well.

## VARIATIONS

**vegetarian** - I have made a vegetarian version of these beans. The secret is to replace the ham hock with a tablespoon of smoked paprika and season more generously at the end (a little soy sauce can help as well).



VIDEO

# 8-HOUR BAKED BEANS...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**no ham hock** - If you can't find a ham hock. You could use some speck, pancetta or even a little bacon.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

I like to just serve the beans on their own with a green salad. But they're also lovely as part of a more substantial brunch with some eggs and hot buttered toast.



simple sauerkraut



I was never a huge fan of sauerkraut until I started making my own. Being able to control how fermented or 'funky' your kraut gets makes a huge difference. If you're new to fermenting vegetables though I'd really recommend starting with [fermented carrots](#) which are much much easier!

This method is called dry brining and when you read through the method it's hard to imagine it working. I know I always thought that when looking at kraut recipes. It wasn't until I actually saw [Sandor Katz](#) make kraut that I 'got it'. So I recommend checking out the video as it's much easier to show you rather than write.

# SIMPLE SAUERKRAUT

*MAKES: 1 medium jar  
1/2 head cabbage  
salt*

1. Day 1. Cut cabbage in half lengthwise and trim the surfaces that were already cut. Remove outer leaves and discard. Finely slice the cabbage as well as you can. I use a knife because I like it rustic. But you could use a mandoline if you want really fine kraut.

2. Place sliced cabbage in a large bowl. Sprinkle with a few generous pinches of fine salt as you go. You want at least 0.5% salt. I just add and mix and taste as I go. When the cabbage tastes slightly salty but still really fresh I leave it at that. (See notes below for more detailed quantities).

3. Massage cabbage with your clean hands. Sandor recommends 10 minutes but I usually do it for a few minutes and then leave it to stand so the salt can work its magic. You want the moisture from the cabbage to come out.

4. Pack the cabbage into a clean glass or ceramic jar. Press down firmly as you go to really release the moisture and pack it as tightly as possible. I like to use the back of a spoon. You want enough liquid to just cover the cabbage. If it looks too dry add a little filtered or boiled and cooled water. But be sparing as water will dilute the final flavour.

5. Seal with the lid and leave on the kitchen bench.

6. Day 2. Open the jar to release any gas buildup. Push the cabbage down to re-submerge. Taste.

7. Day 3+. Repeat as per day 2 and taste again. If the cabbage tastes tangy enough for you, pop it in the fridge and start eating. If not leave it out of the fridge and continue to taste every day until you're happy. Depending on the temperature and how funky you like your kraut it can take from 3 days to months.



VIDEO

# SIMPLE SAUERKRAUT...

## VARIATIONS

**different veg** – I like savoy cabbage but recently made a mix of savoy and red cabbage that was really pretty. Turnips, carrots, apple and cooked spuds can all be added.

**flavourings** – I haven't tried any but celery seeds, curry spices, caraway seeds, or chilli can all be used.

**quantity rule of thumb** – 1kg veg will fill a 1L vessel and will need about 0.5% – 1% salt so about 5-10 grams.

**if in doubt when tasting** – pop it in the fridge because this will slow the fermentation down and you can always pull it back out if you decide later that it's not strong enough for you.

**different containers** – don't ferment in metal due to corrosion. Plastics can be OK but I prefer glass or ceramics so you can be certain there are no plastics leaching into the ferment.

**floating veg** – you can put a weight to hold down the veg as they tend to float. I usually don't bother.

**fill levels** – don't fill to the top due to expansion

**light** degrades some nutrients but generally light is OK. It doesn't need to be in a dark cellar and is better in the kitchen where you won't forget about them. Plus UV rays from the sun act as a mould inhibitor.

**whitemold** – just skim and discard, they're not toxic.

**bright coloured molds** – are toxic – discard the project. But don't stress about this too much. No one has died from eating fermented vegetables.





perfect *fluffy* rice

For years I struggled to make decent 'steamed' rice using the absorption method. Some days I'd get it OK but others would be soggy rice central. Then for some reason I decided to try the boiling method. Lets just say I haven't looked back. Not only is this way far more reliable, it's quicker and easier too!

I tend to prefer basmati because it is the lowest GI rice. Traditionally, however basmati rice is traditionally served with Indian food and jasmine rice with Thai.

# PERFECT FLUFFY RICE

*Makes: enough for 2-3 as a side*

*TAKES: 15 minutes*

*250g (9oz) basmati or jasmine rice*

1. Bring a medium saucepan of water to the boil.
2. Add rice and boil for exactly 10 minutes (set your timer).
3. Drain rice well then keep the colander or strainer for the excess steam to evaporate until you're ready to serve.

## VARIATIONS

**for fried rice to serve with curry** – cook rice as above then allow to cool on a tray. Heat a few tablespoons peanut oil in a frying pan and cook a couple of beaten eggs for 15 seconds or so. Add cooled rice and keep stir-frying until the rice is hot and the egg is cooked. Season with one or two tablespoons soy sauce.

**brown rice** – use brown rice and increase the cooking time to about 30 minutes. It may take up to 45 minutes.

**different grains** – this 'quick boil' method is my go-to for cooking most grains because it's much easier to get right than the 'absorption method'. You'll just need to adjust the cooking time, looking on the pack of your grain will give you a good starting place but I'd start testing about 5 minutes before the pack recommended time.



VIDEO

# PERFECT FLUFFY RICE...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**gluggy** – either the rice you've used was poor quality, or it's overcooked. Next time try another brand and be sure and only cook for 10 minutes.

**dry & hard centred** – If the rice has lots of chalky stuff in the middle it could have been cooked a little longer. Although I like my rice to have a little bite to it like a good al dente pasta so you may be surprised that it will taste fine.

**need cold rice in a hurry?** – If you're planning on making fried rice, don't make the mistake of trying to cool it down more quickly by running cold water over it. The cold water won't evaporate and you'll end up with very soggy rice. The best method is to spread it out on the biggest tray you have and fan it enthusiastically.

**can't find basmati rice?** – Basmati rice tends to have the most lovely flavour but jasmine rice can be used for Thai dishes. Or just plain long grain rice will work as well. Just don't try and use arborio rice or short grain rice – it won't end up fluffy.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**rice** – pantry.

## USAGE SUGGESTIONS

**as a side** – the traditional accompaniment to stir fries and curries.

**salad** – toss cooked rice into any salad to make it more substantial. I love it in [this 'tabbouleh'](#).

**rice & greens** – [recipe over here](#).

**with salmon** – and zucchini. [Recipe over here](#).

**in soups** – add a handful at the end of cooking to thicken up soups. Be careful as the bland rice can easily sap all the flavour and colour out of your soup!

**egg fried rice!** – my Irishman's favourite. [Recipe here](#).





fermented vegetables

If you're nervous about the whole fermentation thing, the good news is apparently no one has ever died from eating fermented veg. So it's safe!

This method is a great place to start because it's suitable for pretty much all vegetables. My favourites so far are carrots, zucchini (which turn out like pickles), red chillies and celery. I'm also keen to try onions. Will keep in the fridge for months.

# FERMENTED VEGETABLES



1 clean glass jar  
enough vegetables to fill jar  
50g (1 3/4 oz) salt  
1L (4 cups) water

1. Scrub veg. Trim or chop into bite sized pieces. Peel if you prefer (I don't bother).
2. Pack the veg into your jar.
3. Combine salt and water and stir until dissolved. Shouldn't take too long.
4. Pour salted water over the veg to cover them. You probably won't need all the liquid. If the veg aren't covered, make up more brine so they are covered.
5. Close jar and leave somewhere you will see it but not in direct sunlight.
6. Every day open jar to release any built up gas (CO2). Start tasting after about 3 days. When you're happy with the flavour (ie it tastes acidic or tangy enough for you) pop the jar in the fridge and start eating. Or if the veg start to soften, it's time to refrigerate. Generally 4-5 days is a good amount of time for fermentation but if you're living somewhere really warm it may not take that long. And really cold climates may take longer.

## VARIATIONS

**veg** – use your imagination. Cauliflower, carrots, zucchini, chillies, beets, celery, cucumber, watermelon rind, baby eggplant, capsicum (bell peppers), green tomatoes, chard stems. Sandor Katz did say that the only thing he doesn't like to ferment are veg with lots of chlorophyll. So anything too green like kale isn't great. And from my notes watermelon rind tastes like cucumber pickles.

**flavourings** – feel free to add in flavourings such as cumin seeds, fennel seeds, coriander seeds, bay leaves, preserved lemon, lemon zest, thyme, rosemary, sage.

**salt** – I use a finely ground sea salt but Sandor said it doesn't matter so much.

**lower salt** – it is possible to ferment without the salt or use lower quantities, the problem is that salt helps to keep the veg texture nice and crisp so unsalted or low salt veg can end up mushy. Which might be OK for you. Salt also helps flavour.

**water** – use filtered water if you can. But if using tap water, boil it and allow it to cool to get rid of any chlorine which may hinder the fermentation.

**brine** – after you've eaten the veg the brine can be discarded or used to season soups and stews. Or you can drink it.



VIDEO

# FERMENTED VEGETABLES...

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

**as a snack** – my favourite way to eat them is to pick them out of the jar and snack. Fergal and I often chomp on fermented carrots while I'm getting his dinner ready.

**in salads** – add a little crunch and zing. I wouldn't make a whole salad from them though as it might be too much of a good thing.

**with rich / hearty meals** – serve a little bowl of fermented veg with your next pork belly or lamb shank extravaganza. I love them with mashed potato too.

**with burgers** – it's a classic combo for a reason!





module  
FIVE

EASY REAL  
FOOD TREATS

SURPRISE BONUS 



quick *raw* brownies

This was inspired by the lovely Sarah Britton and her fab blog 'My New Roots'. Sarah uses medjool dates but I prefer to use much cheaper pitted dates soaked in boiling water. Apart from saving money this avoids the need to have medjool dates in the house which stops me snacking on them when I really shouldn't.

# QUICK RAW BROWNIES

ENOUGH FOR: 6 - 8

TAKES: 15 minutes + 30 minutes cooling

100g (3.5oz) pitted dates

100g (3.5oz) almond meal

50g (1.75oz) melted butter or coconut oil

20g (0.75oz) cocoa powder (1 1/2 tablespoons)

1. Place dates in a heat proof bowl and cover with boiling water. Stand for 5 minutes.
2. While the dates are standing, weigh out your remaining ingredients into your food processor.
3. Drain dates and add to the food processor. Whizz for a few minutes or until you have a smooth mixture that clumps together.
4. Dump your mixture into a loaf pan lined with baking paper and use your hands to smooth out until it's the height you prefer. Don't spread the mixture over the whole base. Only use half or less.
5. Refrigerate for 30 minutes or longer. Then chop into tiny squares.

## VARIATIONS

**blondies** – skip the cocoa powder

**fancy** – use pitted medjool dates and skip the boiling water and soaking steps.

**dairy-free** – use coconut oil instead of the butter.

**sugar-free** – replace dates with cooked sweet potato (no need to soak). Add a little vanilla extract for extra flavouring. I haven't tried this though so you might need to add a little stevia to sweeten.

**no food processor** – just chop the dates as finely as possible and stir everything together by hand. You might need more butter to bring it all together.

**nut-free** – tough one! you could try replacing the almond meal with tahini (sesame seed paste) but not sure how it will end up.

**different nuts** – use other ground or whole nuts such as pecans or walnuts. If using whole nuts, whizz in the food processor until you have a fine flour before using.



VIDEO

# QUICK RAW BROWNIES...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too dry / crumbly** – either not enough soaking for your dates or not enough whizzing time. Pop back in the food processor with a little more melted butter / coconut oil and whizz until you're happy it's nice and moist.

**too rich** – these are pretty intense! Try serving really small squares. Next time cut back on the butter / oil.

**too bitter** – different cocoa powders have different flavour profiles. For now, sprinkling with a little sea salt can mask the bitterness.

**gritty** – there may have been a pit in one of your dates! Not much you can do now but next time check the dates before soaking.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**pitted dates / almond meal / cocoa powder** – keep them all in the pantry.

**butter** – will keep in the fridge for weeks.

**coconut oil** – keep it on the pantry.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

I like them best with a glass of cold milk.



strawberry ripple cheesecake



It's hard to go past a good cheesecake. These little individual ones are super quick to make and best of all don't leave you with a heap of tempting leftovers. Marscarpone is a delicious Italian cream cheese. If you can't find it see the 'variations' for alternatives.

# STRAWBERRY RIPPLE CHEESECAKE

ENOUGH FOR: 2

TAKES: 10 minutes

250g (9oz) ripe strawberries

250g (9oz) mascarpone

1. Keep 2 good looking strawberries aside. Remove the stems of the rest and place them in a small bowl and smash with a fork or your hands until you have a chunky mess.

2. Stir in the mascarpone until the strawberries are 'rippled' through it.

3. Divide between two little glasses and top with the reserved strawberries. Eat now or refrigerate until you're ready to serve.

## VARIATIONS

**dairy-free / paleo** – replace mascarpone with 'cashew cheese' – soak 200g raw cashews in water for at least 6 hours. Drain and whizz in a food processor with a little water until smooth and creamy. Add more water if too thick.

**different fruit** – lovely with raspberries or blueberries. Or for a lemon version use a commercial lemon curd instead of the berries.

**no mascarpone?** – replace with other soft creamy cheese such as ricotta or even philadelphia cream cheese.

**crunchy** – line the base of your cups with roasted chopped nuts or your fave granola.



VIDEO

# STRAWBERRY RIPPLE CHEESECAKE...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**not sweet enough** – add a little powdered (icing) sugar or stevia to taste.

**too runny** – refrigerate for an hour or so to allow mascarpone to firm up.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**strawberries** – use for another meal or freeze them.

**mascarpone** – unopened tubs usually have a shelf life of a few weeks. Otherwise use for another meal. Can be frozen.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Lovely in little tea cups.



peanut *butter* fudge



If you're a peanut butter fan you're going to LOVE this fudge! It's seriously good. I've kept the recipe to smallish quantities because less is definitely more here. But feel free to double or triple if you have a crowd to feed.

# PEANUT BUTTER FUDGE

*ENOUGH FOR: for 6-8 small bites*  
*TAKES: 10 minutes + 30 minutes cooling*  
*100g (3.5oz) pitted dates*  
*100g (3.5oz) peanut butter*

1. Place dates in a heat proof bowl and cover with boiling water. Stand for 5 minutes.
2. Drain dates and pop in your food processor along with the peanut butter. Whizz for a few minutes or until you have a smooth mixture that clumps together.
4. Dump your mixture into a loaf pan lined with baking paper and use your hands to smooth out until it's the height you prefer. Don't spread the mixture over the whole base. Only use half or less.
5. Refrigerate for 30 minutes or longer. Then chop into tiny squares.

## VARIATIONS

**nut-free** – try tahini instead of the peanut butter.

**different nuts** – also lovely with cashew or almond butter.

**sugar-free** – replace dates with cooked sweet potato (no need to soak). Add a little vanilla extract for extra flavouring. I haven't tried this though so you might need to add a little stevia to sweeten.

**chocolate** – one set, spread with a thin layer of melted chocolate.



VIDEO

# PEANUT BUTTER FUDGE...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too dry / crumbly** – either not enough soaking for your dates or not enough whizzing time. Pop back in the food processor and whizz until you're happy it's nice and moist.

**too rich** – these are pretty intense! Try serving really small squares.

**gritty** – there may have been a pit in one of your dates! Not much you can do now but next time check the dates before soaking.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**pitted dates / peanut butter** – keep them in the pantry.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great with a cup of tea.



rasberry *cashew* mousse



When I had a month eating dairy-free, cashew butter and almond butter were my lifesaver when I was in the mood for something creamy that didn't taste like coconut. Be warned, they can be addictive!

# RASPBERRY CASHEW MOUSSE

ENOUGH FOR: 2

TAKES: 10 minutes

125g (5oz) raspberries

100g (3.5oz) cashew butter

1. Keep a few good looking raspberries aside. The place the rest in a small bowl and smash with a fork or your hands until you have a chunky mess.
2. Stir in the cashew butter until the raspberries are 'rippled' through it.
3. Divide between two little glasses and top with the reserved berries. Eat now or refrigerate until you're ready to serve.

## VARIATIONS

**almond** – replace cashew with almond butter.

**nut-free** – replace cashew butter with creamy cheese like ricotta or mascapone.

**different fruit** – any other berries, bananas or mangos are all good.



VIDEO

# RASPBERRY CASHEW MOUSSE...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**not sweet enough** – add a little powdered (icing) sugar or stevia to taste.

**too runny** – refrigerate for an hour or so to firm up.

**too salty** – next time use unsalted cashew butter! For now a little sugar may help to balance.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**raspberries** – use for another meal or freeze them.

**cashew butter** – keep it in the pantry.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Lovely in little tea cups.





mango ice cream

Since getting rid of my ice cream maker, my fave way to make guilt-free ice cream is to freeze some really ripe fruit in chunks and whizz in the food processor with a little cream. So creamy and so easy! It makes a more 'soft serve' consistency so if you prefer firmer, just pop back in the freezer for a few hours to harden before you eat.

# MANGO ICE CREAM

*ENOUGH FOR: 2*

*TAKES: 6 hours freezing + 10 minutes*

*2 small mangoes*

*4 tablespoons cream*

1. Method goes here 1. Peel and chop mango into large chunks. Place in a ziplock bag in a single layer and freeze until solid. At least 6 hours or longer.

2. Get mango out of the freezer about 10 mins before whizzing.

3. Place mango and cream in the food processor and whizz until you have a lovely soft serve ice cream. It might take a while to get going so be patient.

## VARIATIONS

**different fruit** – lovely with berries, bananas, pineapple, apricots or peaches.

**dairy-free / paleo** – replace cream with coconut milk, nut milk or water.

**short on time** – just serve the ripe fruit with cream.

**no food processor?** – you really need one here.... just serve the fresh fruit with cream instead.



VIDEO

# MANGO ICE CREAM...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too soft** – pop back in the freezer to firm up.

**not coming together** – keep whizzing! Adding a little more cream can help speed up the process.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**mangoes** – peel and chop them and then freeze them in a ziplock bag.

**cream** – freeze it or use for another meal.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Lovely in little bowls on its own. Or try mixing with other flavours.



peanut *butter* ice cream



Even though I'm not the hugest banana fan, I LOVE this healthy take on 'ice cream'. Feel free to play around with the flavourings or even pare it back to plain banana if you're in the mood for some simplicity.

# PEANUT BUTTER ICE CREAM

ENOUGH FOR: 1

TAKES: 6 hours freezing + 10 minutes

1 banana

2 tablespoons whipping cream

2 pitted dates

2 tablespoons peanut butter

1. Peel and chop banana into large chunks. Place in a ziplock bag and freeze until solid. At least 6 hours or longer.
2. Get banana out of the freezer about 10 mins before whizzing.
3. Place banana, cream, dates and peanut butter in the food processor and whizz until you have a lovely soft serve ice cream. It might take a while to get going so be patient.

## VARIATIONS

**nut-free** – just skip the peanut butter.

**caramel ice cream** – replace peanut butter with extra dates.

**choc chop** – stir chunks of chocolate in the ice cream.

**chocolate** – add a tablespoon of cocoa powder to the mixture.

**dairy-free** – replace cream with nut milk or coconut milk.

**sugar-free** – skip the dates or replace with a little stevia and some vanilla extract.

**vanilla** – skip the peanut butter and add a teaspoon of vanilla extract.



VIDEO

# PEANUT BUTTER ICE CREAM...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**too soft** – pop back in the freezer to firm up.

**not coming together** – keep whizzing! Adding a little more cream can help speed up the process.

**not sweet enough** – next time use riper bananas. For now add a little honey, maple syrup or stevia.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**banana** – use for another meal OR peel and freeze them in a ziplock bag.

**cream** – freeze it or use for another meal.

**dates / peanut butter** – keep them in the pantry.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Great on its own or use anywhere you'd normally serve vanilla ice cream.





blueberry *chia* pudding

Chia seeds are a brilliant healthy way to thicken dishes without using flour or heat. If you don't have chia just serve your fresh blueberries with lightly whipped cream.

# BLUEBERRY CHIA PUDDING

ENOUGH FOR: 2

TAKES: 10 minutes

4 tablespoons chia seeds

1 cup whipping cream

1 punnet blueberries (125g / 4oz)

small handful sliced almonds (optional)

1. Place chia, cream and blueberries in your food processor. Whizz until you have a smoothish pudding.

2. Divide mixture between two small glasses or tea cups. Top with almonds (if using).

## VARIATIONS

**nut-free** – keep a few blueberries whole and use these to decorate instead of the almond flakes.

**dairy-free / paleo** – use unsweetened coconut milk or cream.



VIDEO

# BLUEBERRY CHIA PUDDING...

## PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

**grainy** – the chia seeds will add little lumps – you could use ground chia if you prefer not to. The other cause of graininess is over whipping the cream. Next time whizz for less.

**not sweet enough** – add a little powdered (icing) sugar or stevia to taste.

**too runny** – refrigerate for an hour or so to allow the chia to thicken the pudding.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**chia seeds / sliced almonds** – keep them in the pantry.

**cream** – freeze it or use for another meal.

**blueberries** – use for another meal or freeze them.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Lovely in little glasses. Also good with crunchy granola for breakfast.



# ABOUT THE AUTHOR



The author of this program and e-cookbook is Jules Clancy.

I'm first and foremost a food lover who adores her veggies. The type of girl who plans her holidays around restaurant reservations.

I'm equally happy spending 6 hours dining at the best restaurant in the world as I am sitting on stools in a Brooklyn alleyway wolfing down Texas-style BBQ brisket.

I also love cooking and simplicity. 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'm not a nerd, really. In January 2010, I packed in my day job as a chocolate biscuit designer for Australia's largest biscuit company to become a full time blogger over at Stonesoup.

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 and red shoes.

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