



video edition

THE WEEKEND COOK

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE BUSY WEEK AHEAD



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For GB
with love xx

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+ INTRODUCTION

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

Well you've seen 'mise en place' in action.

Mise en place is a French term that roughly translates as 'put in place'. It's used to describe the practice of chefs preparing food up to a point where it is ready to be used in a dish during food service.

It may be as simple as washing and picking herbs into individual leaves or chopping vegetables. Or more complicated like caramelising onions, cooking dried beans or slow cooking meats.

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

In 'The Weekend Cook' we're delving deep into building block recipes to help you get some 'Mise en Place' action happening in YOUR kitchen.

Enjoy!
Jules x

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LEGUMES + GRAINS

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LEGUMES + GRAINS
BUILDING BLOCKS

home made sprouts



SPROUTS!

Sprouting is something I've only recently gotten into. But it's heaps of fun. A brilliant way to have access to super 'fresh' food if you don't happen to have space for a veggie garden. I can imagine it would be a really fun project to do with kids.

And the best thing is home made sprouts taste wonderfully fresh and sweet with none of the 'dirty' flavours you often find in commercially produced sprouts.

a few handfuls dried legumes

Day 1. Rinse legumes and place in a bowl. Cover generously with clean cold water and stand for anywhere from 8-36 hours.

Day 2 AM. Drain sprouts. Place a clean tea towel inside a strainer or colander. Add sprouts and place on top of a bowl to collect any water that drains out. Cover with one end of the cloth and leave somewhere out of direct sunlight.

Day 2 PM. Rinse sprouts under cold running water. Place back on top of the bowl and recover.

Day 3 AM. You should have some legumes sprouting. If so they can be eaten now or refrigerated. Or if you want more sprouting action continue to rinse and stand every morning and evening until you're happy.

VARIATIONS

lentil sprouts – pretty much any lentil can be sprouted.

chickpea sprouts – I can't believe I haven't tried these yet! Make sure you soak for long enough to fully rehydrate the chickpeas.

alfalfa sprouts – same principle. Just need some alfalfa seeds to start.

bean sprouts – pretty much all dried beans can be sprouted, but I'd avoid red kidney beans because they can be toxic unless cooked sufficiently.

split pea sprouts – both green and yellow should sprout fine.



SPROUTS...

USAGE SUGGESTIONS

salad – like this [sprout & roast pumpkin salad]

canned legume substitute – A wonderful fresh alternative to canned beans, lentils and chickpeas. Can be used in warm and cold dishes.

soup – Toss a few handfuls into your favourite veggie soup for a protein boost.

nut-substitute – add for extra crunch and protein anywhere you'd normally add nuts.

stir fry – use as a protein source in your favourite [stir fry].

PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

no sprouting action – It's more than likely that your legumes were too old. I've had a problem with old green split peas that were in the pantry for longer than I could remember. Buy some new legumes from a busy shop and try again. Also remember that different legumes will sprout at different rates, so it may just be you've chosen slower legumes. Another cause could be that the legumes weren't hydrated enough during the initial soaking. If you suspect this is the case, soak for another 8 hours or so and see if that makes a difference.

legumes 'smelly' – Sounds like you haven't been rinsing often enough. Try giving a good rinse and then rinse every few hours for a while. It could also be that the legumes aren't draining properly. If they're too wet they will start to rot. If this happens, time to start again from scratch. Another cause is if the temperature is too hot. If you're trying to sprout in a very warm climate or it's the middle of summer, try and find a cool place for sprouting. The fridge will be too cold.

legumes going mouldy – I haven't come across this but throw them out and start again with fresh new legumes. Mould indicates things are too warm and /or too moist so make sure the legumes are well drained between rinses.

STORAGE SUGGESTIONS

Keep in an airtight container in the fridge. Best when fresh but will last for about 5 days.

Texture will go watery if frozen.

sprout & pumpkin salad



SPROUT + PUMPKIN SALAD

I just adore sprouts in salads. But if you're not a big fan, by all means substitute in cooked lentils or quinoa or canned beans instead.

serves 2

1 tablespoon sherry vinegar

1 tablespoon soy sauce

200g (7oz) sprouts

large handful rocket (arugula) leaves

4-6 large pieces roast pumpkin, warm or cold

1. Combine vinegar, soy and 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil.
2. Toss in sprouts and leaves. Divide between 2 plates.
3. Arrange pumpkin over the top. Season.

VARIATIONS

no pumpkin – just serve the sprout salad without or replace pumpkin with a handful of roasted cashews or almonds.

different leaves – any salad leaves or parsley or mint can be used instead of the rocket (arugula).

soy free – skip the soy and season the dressing well with salt.

carnivore – lovely with some finely sliced prosciutto or cooked chicken.

warm salad – just warm the pumpkin in a little oil before serving.

spice – sprinkle over a little dried chilli or chilli oil.

no sprouts? – replace with a drained can of lentils or your favourite beans.



SPROUT + PUMPKIN SALAD...

PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

too bland? Add in a little more salt.

sprouts taste 'dirty' – commercial sprouts that aren't super fresh can taste not so great. Try rinsing them well in cold water and spinning dry in a salad spinner before using.

too dry – drizzle with a little extra virgin olive oil or chilli oil.

STORAGE SUGGESTIONS

Will keep in the fridge for a few days but like most salads, best when fresh.

a big *pot* of beans



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 and bean-related gassiness.

makes heaps
500g (1lb) dried beans
2 bay leaves, optional

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.

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.



A BIG POT OF BEANS...

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]

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 to this [white bean & onion bake].

salads – toss into your favourite salad for an extra protein hit.

hummus – use instead of chickpeas for a different take on hummus.

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.

STORAGE SUGGESTIONS

Will keep in the refrigerator for 1-2 weeks.

Can be frozen either in the cooking liquid or drained.

braised beans



BRAISED BEANS

These beans have been on high rotation in our house lately for breakfasts, lunches AND dinners. For such a simple recipe they have a serious depth of flavour.

serves 3

2 red onions, diced

10 sage leaves, chopped

500g (1lb) cooked beans

1 1/2 cups bean cooking liquid or vegetable stock

parmesan cheese, to serve

1. Soften onions in a little oil for about 15 minutes. It's ok if they brown a little.
2. Add sage and beans and stir fry for a few seconds.
3. Add cooking liquid or stock and simmer, uncovered for 15-20 minutes or until the liquid has reduced and everything has come together.
4. Taste. Season. Serve with parmesan and possibly a drizzle of peppery extra virgin olive oil.

VARIATIONS

dairy-free – just skip the parmesan or serve with finely grated brazil nuts.

canned beans – use 2 drained cans of any white beans or chickpeas.

tomatoey – replace the liquid with tomato puree or passata or a bottled pasta sauce.

different herbs – sage is my all time favourite with these beans but thyme or rosemary would also work.

fresh beans – if you have fresh borlotti or broad beans they're an extra special treat. May need to simmer a little longer until the beans are cooked. Add a little water if it dries out.

carnivore – brown some chopped bacon or chorizo or both and add to the onion.

VIDEO

BRAISED BEANS...

USAGE SUGGESTIONS

simple meal – wonderful on their own.

breakfast – great topped with poached eggs and a few handfuls of baby spinach.

bangers & beans – serve with your favourite pork sausages.

soup – just double the stock or cooking liquid. You may like to puree some or all of the soup.

side dish - serve as a side to stews or ragus.

PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

too bland? Add in a little more salt. Or try adding some powdered vegetable or chicken stock.

beans falling apart – be careful when simmering, depending on how well cooked the beans were to begin with, they may start to break down. If you're worried about your beans, halve the liquid you add and only simmer for 5-10 minutes.

too watery – keep simmering, uncovered until you're happy. Next time use less liquid. If the beans are starting to overcook, remove them and just simmer the liquid until you're happy.

STORAGE SUGGESTIONS

Will keep in the refrigerator for 1-2 weeks.
Can be frozen.

lovely lentils



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.

makes heaps

500g (1lb) 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 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.

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...

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 [pea & lentil salad].

breakfast – As a ‘slow carb’ breakfast such as these [spinach & lentils].

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].

STORAGE SUGGESTIONS

Will keep in the refrigerator for 1-2 weeks.

Can be frozen either in the cooking liquid or drained.

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!

green split peas



SPLIT PEAS

Green split peas were a completely new ingredient to me until I made this dish for the \$25 challenge. Like large lentils, it wasn't really surprising that I was instantly addicted. The secret to loving these legumes is to not over cook them down to a greenish good, often associated with pea & ham soup.

makes heaps

*500g dried green split peas
3 ribs celery, diced, optional
1 onion, diced
1 sprig rosemary, optional*

1. Rinse split peas and place in a large pot. Cover generously with water and bring to a boil.
2. Add onion, rosemary & celery, if using and simmer for 25-35 minutes or until lentils are al dente like cooked pasta . Tender but still with some bite.
3. Drain well and return to the pot. Season generously with salt and a few tablespoons olive oil.

VARIATIONS

other lentils – feel free to use pretty much any other lentil such as red lentils, green lentils, yellow split peas, or brown lentils. Some may take slightly less or more time.

onion-free – just boil the lentils with rosemary.

carnivore – if you happen to have a ham hock or some soup bones floating around. By all means add them in to simmer with the lentils.

super-budget – just boil the lentils on their own and season with salt – skip the olive oil at the end.



SPLIT PEAS...

USAGE SUGGESTIONS

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

stew – Skip the cooking first and just use dried split peas in this [yellow split pea stew].

salads – such as this [double green salad] or [crunchy, creamy salad].

veggie ragu – As an alternative to meat in this [veggie ragu].

PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

too bland? season with more salt.

mushy - oh no! You've over cooked the lentils. Next time keep a closer eye on them and start checking for doneness earlier. For now, invite some friends over for a lentil 'soup' party.

short on time – soaking the lentils overnight can reduce the cooking time by 10 minutes or so.

crunchy split peas – this means they're undercooked. A little bight might be OK but if it's too much, just return to the pan with a little water and simmer until you're happy.

STORAGE SUGGESTIONS

Will keep in the refrigerator for 1-2 weeks.

Can be frozen either in the cooking liquid or drained.

cooked quinoa



COOKED QUINOA

Quinoa is actually a seed from South America. It's super high in protein and has a lovely 'chewy' texture. It only takes about 15 minutes to cook but I like to make a batch on the weekends to use for breakfasts and lunches during the week. It's great both with sweet and savoury seasonings.

makes about double the dried weight

approx 250g / 7oz quinoa

1. Place quinoa in a fine sieve and rinse well under running water. Transfer to a medium saucepan and cover generously with clean cold water.
2. Bring to the boil with the lid on. Remove lid & simmer 12-15 minutes or until quinoa is tender.
3. Drain and allow to steam and cool.
4. Transfer to an airtight container and keep in the fridge until ready to use.

VARIATIONS

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

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

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

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

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

VIDEO

COOKED QUINOA...

USAGE SUGGESTIONS

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

carby side – serve with 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.

broccolini salad - one of my [all time favourites.]

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..

STORAGE SUGGESTIONS

Will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or so.
Can be frozen if you'd like.



VEGETABLE
BUILDING BLOCKS

roast eggplant



ROAST EGGPLANT

I love roast eggplant. Such a lovely comforting texture. But I rarely think to cook it during the week. Roasting a batch of eggplant like this is perfect to have on hand for super quick veggie dinners.

2 or more medium eggplant, halved

1. Preheat oven to 200C (400F).
2. Score eggplant flesh in a diamond pattern. Drizzle with olive oil and place on a roasting tray. Season generously.
3. Bake for 30-45 minute or until eggplant is browned & super tender.

VARIATIONS

chilli – feel free to sprinkle eggplant liberally with finely chopped chilli or dried chilli.

spices – sprinkle eggplant with cumin or coriander seeds or both. Sumac is also really lovely with eggplant.

herbs – scatter over some rosemary or thyme.

BBQ – for a more smoky eggplant. Char whole eggplant on all sides on the BBQ until well blackened and soft. Remove charred skin before using.

VIDEO

ROAST EGGPLANT...

USAGE SUGGESTIONS

pasta sauce – chop eggplant and simmer for 5-10 minutes in your favourite commercial tomato pasta sauce or a can of tomatoes. Also lovely with tuna in [this recipe].

main event – serve half an eggplant per person with a sauce such as pesto or [this miso dressing].

curry – replace the protein with chopped cooked eggplant in this [hot & fiery curry] or even this [mild & creamy curry].

sauce – scoop flesh from the skins, finely chop and stir in 1-2 finely chopped garlic cloves, some lemon juice and a few tablespoons tahini for a less smoky version of babaganoush.

with legumes – great stirred through these [braised beans] or some [cooked lentils].

soup – wonderful in a [white bean and eggplant soup].

PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

bland? Add in a little more salt and pepper.

eggplant burning – Reduce the heat or cook for a shorter time.

eggplant hard – make sure you leave the eggplant until the flesh is super soft. There's nothing worse than undercooked eggplant.

STORAGE SUGGESTIONS

Will keep in the fridge for a few weeks.

OK to freeze but the texture will change.

slow cooked softio



SLOW COOKED SOFRITO

Sofrito is the Italian name for onion, carrot and celery that has been sweated until tender. It's the base for so many wonderful dishes from stews to soups and sauces. Having a jar of this in the fridge can save you a good 15-20 minutes prep time for mid week dinners.

The star anise is an unusual ingredients. It's totally optional but as I learned from Heston Blumenthal, chef at the 2nd best restaurant in the world, it really enhances the 'meaty' flavours in the onions, rather than adding any actual anise flavours.

2 large onions, diced
2 carrots, diced
2 sticks celery, diced
1/2 star anise, optional

1. Heat a few generous glugs of olive oil in a large saucepan. Add veg and the star anise, if using.
2. Cook, covered over a low-medium heat, stirring every 10 minutes or so until the veg are super soft and lightly golden. Will take about 30-45 minutes.
3. Cool and refrigerate until needed.

VARIATIONS

just onion – skip the carrot and celery and cook up a big batch of onion to have on hand.

onion-free – replace the onion with extra celery.

garlicky – feel free to add in a few cloves of finely chopped garlic.



SLOW COOKED SOFRITO...

USAGE SUGGESTIONS

head start – use anywhere that you'd normally soften and onion to begin a dish like risotto, soups, stews, curries or pasta sauces.

soup – try it in this [chunky veg soup].

stews – great in a [slow cooked meat ragu] or this [vegetarian ragu].

PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

too bland? Make sure you keep cooking until everything is super soft.

too sweet? – the carrots tend to add loads of sweetness, you may prefer next time to skip the carrot or reduce the carrot by half.

burning – reduce the heat and add a little more olive oil or a splash of water. Remember to stir regularly and keep the pot covered.

STORAGE SUGGESTIONS

Will keep in the fridge for a few weeks. If packed into sterilised jars while still hot and sealed, will keep in the fridge for months. OK to freeze.

roast diced veg



ROAST DICED VEG

Chopping veg into a smaller dice allows them to cook more quickly. AND increases the surface area so you get lots of lovely roasted flavour.

serves 2-3 as a side

3 parsnips

1 turnip / swede / rutabaga

1 head garlic

small bunch thyme, leaves picked

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

VARIATIONS

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

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

sweet potato – a lovely addition.

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

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

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

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

VIDEO

ROAST DICED VEG...

USAGE SUGGESTIONS

risotto – stir into your favorite risotto or for something different (and slow carb!) try this [lentil 'risotto'].

baked frittata – just lovely with eggs and a little parmesan like the [frittata over here].

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

hummus - use instead of or as well as chickpeas in a different take on [hummus].

soup – delicious in both [chunky] and [smooth veggie soups].

pizza – especially good on [pizza] with blue cheese and mozzarella.

PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

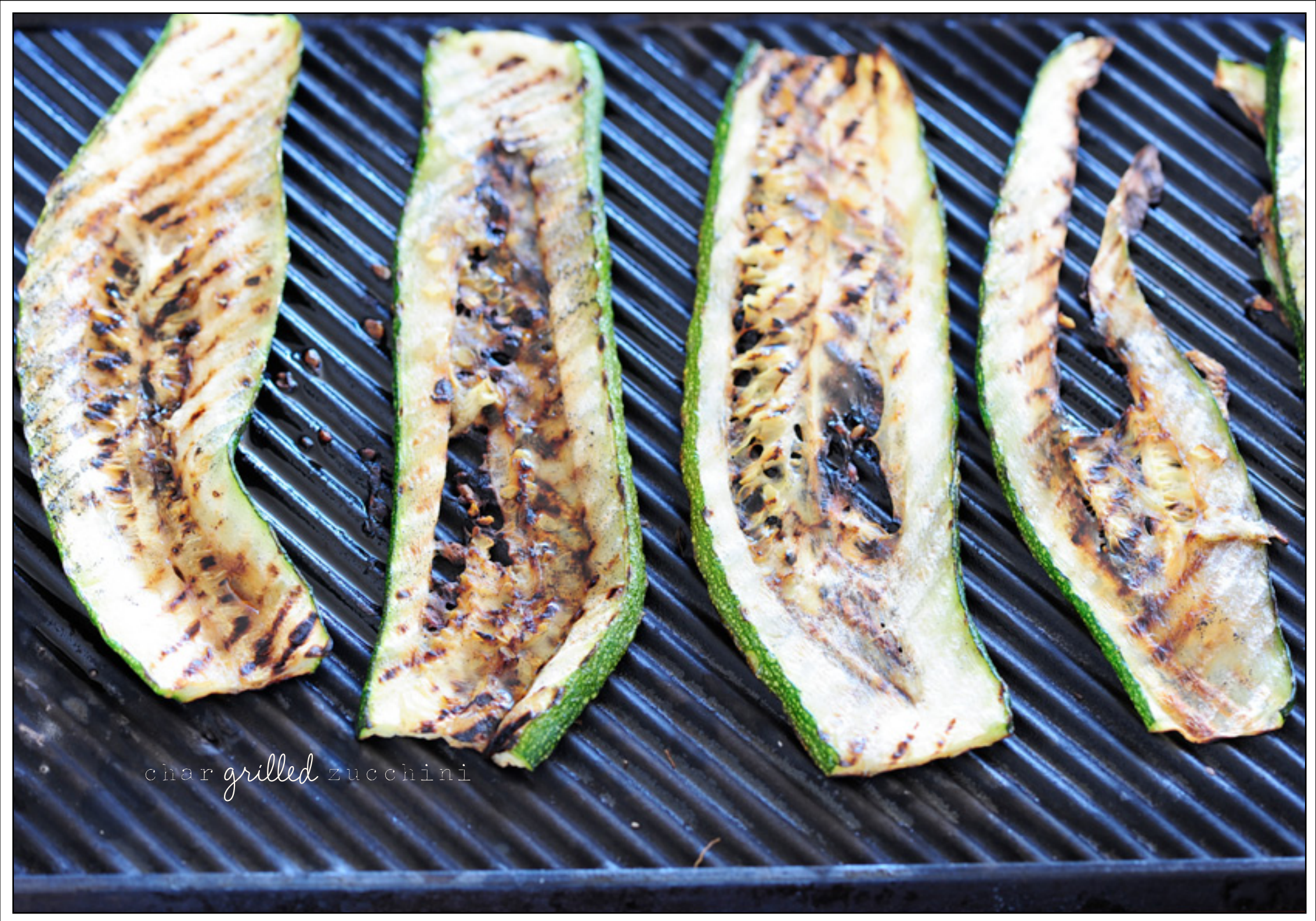
burning – reduce the heat and turn the veg more frequently. Make sure your foil is well sealed to prevent drying out. A splash of water can retard the burning process.

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

too bland? Add in a little more salt.

STORAGE SUGGESTIONS

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



char grilled zucchini

CHAR GRILLED ZUCCHINI

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

2-4 medium zucchini (courgettes)

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.

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...

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.

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.

STORAGE SUGGESTIONS

Drizzle with olive oil. Will keep in the fridge for a few weeks. OK to freeze but the texture will change.

charred red peppers



SMOKY 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.

2 or more red capsicum (bell peppers)

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.
5. Peel peppers, discarding the blackened skins and any seeds.

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 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.



SMOKY RED PEPPERS...

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.

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.

STORAGE SUGGESTIONS

Cover with olive oil. Will keep in the fridge for a few weeks, longer if using sterilised jars (hot from the dishwasher).
OK to freeze.



caramelised onion

CARAMELISED ONION

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

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

1.5kg (3lb) onions

6 tablespoons cheap balsamic vinegar

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

VARIATIONS

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

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

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

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



CARAMELISED ONION...

USAGE SUGGESTIONS

with burgers – brilliant instead of or as well as ketchup with a [salt crusted burger].

as a spread - on sandwiches, especially grilled cheese. on a cheeseboard - a different alternative to pickled onions or quince paste.

in salads – just lovely with [beets and lentils] or in a green salad with goats cheese or with [lentils and walnuts].

with bangers & mash – an oldie but a goodie! Also great as a [slow carb alternative].

soups & stews – stir in a few tablespoons to add richness and instant depth of flavour.

PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

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

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

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

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

STORAGE SUGGESTIONS

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

Can be frozen.

roast beets



ROAST BEETS

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

serves 6-8

4-6 root vegetables

1-2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar, optional

2-3 tablespoons olive oil

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

VARIATIONS

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

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

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

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

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



ROAST BEETS...

USAGE SUGGESTIONS

salads – wonderful with [soft goats cheese].

with greens – use the beet tops to make wilted greens and toss the beets in.

charred beet salad – BBQ cooked beets until charred on the outside and [toss in a salad] with rocket and balsamic dressing.

beet hummus – replace the chickpeas in a classic hummus with roast beets.

beet pesto – replace the basil in pesto for a heavenly coloured sauce – tastes much better than you'd think.

beet curry – a Sri Lankan classic. Use roast beets instead of protein in this [lovely creamy curry.]

soup – replace the canned beets with roast beets in this [unusual soup].

PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

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

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

STORAGE SUGGESTIONS

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

roast butternut pumpkin



ROAST BUTTERNUT PUMPKIN

I adore roast pumpkin, sweet potato or butternut squash. But I used to hardly make it because it always felt like a huge hassle to peel the damn things. So one day I thought I'd cook them peel and all and take the peel off once they were done. The good news is the roast skins actually taste really lovely. Since then I haven't ever peeled. So much quicker.

I also leave the seeds in partly to save time, but mostly because I love to eat roast pumpkin seeds. Will keep in the fridge for a few weeks.

- 1/2 butternut squash*
- 1-2 teaspoons cumin or coriander seeds, optional*
- 1-2 teaspoons chilli flakes or powder, optional*

1. Preheat oven to 200C (400F).
2. Chop butternut squash (pumpkin) in half, crosswise. Then chop each half into 6-8 wedges.
3. Place wedges on a baking tray. Drizzle generously with oil and sprinkle over spices, if using. Scatter liberally with sea salt flakes.
4. Bake for 30 – 45 mins or until wedges are deeply browned on the edges and tender in the middle.

VARIATIONS

different veg – any pumpkin such as Jap or Queensland blue. Sweet potato or yams are also lovely like this.

short on time? - chop into cubes about 2cm (1in). Should only take about 20 minutes to roast.



ROAST BUTTERNUT PUMPKIN...

USAGE SUGGESTIONS

salads – lovely with tossed into a green salad with a [nutty tahini dressing]. Super delicious with sprouts.

soup – use as a base for a [smooth veggie soup].

hummus – use instead of chickpeas in a different take on the [lebanese classic].

curry – the most divine [veggie curry].

PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

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

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

STORAGE SUGGESTIONS

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

wilted greens



WILTED GREENS

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

per person

1-2 tablespoons olive oil

1 teaspoon – 1 tablespoon flavouring

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

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

VARIATIONS

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

different flavourings – finely sliced garlic, chilli, ginger, sliced preserved lemons,

add protein – A fried or poached egg can be a lovely accompaniment. Or serve as a side to roast meats. Or toss in a can of drained beans or lentils to heat through at the end.

change the cooking method – Simmer the greens in boiling water until tender. Drain and toss in some extra virgin olive oil.

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



WILTED GREENS...

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 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.

PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

burning / crispy greens – reduce the heat asap and add in a few splashes of water to generate some steam which will help the cooking process.

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

bland – don’t forget to season!

too acidic – I’ve ruined a few batches of greens by overdoing the lemon juice, A little goes a long way. Extra olive oil can help calm the situation.

STORAGE SUGGESTIONS

Will keep in the fridge for a week or two.

Can be frozen no problems. Think about freezing in ice cube trays then transferring to a plastic bag for quick and easy defrosting. Frozen cubes can be tossed straight into soups, stews or curries



PROTEIN BUILDING BLOCKS



poached *chicken* breast

POACHED CHICKEN BREAST

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

2 or more chicken breasts

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

VARIATIONS

vegetarian - try boiled or poached eggs instead.

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

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

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

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

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



POACHED CHICKEN BREAST...

USAGE SUGGESTIONS

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

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

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

soups – finely slice and add to soups just before serving. Like this [Thai chicken soup with lime].

PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

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

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

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

STORAGE SUGGESTIONS

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

Freezes well.

home 'canned' salmon



HOME 'CANNED' SALMON

This is a great way to keep fish 'fresh' for longer than a few days. If you don't over cook it you'll be rewarded with the 'Rolls Royce' of 'canned' fish. Use anywhere you'd normally use canned tuna or salmon. Can also be pan fried to brown the outside and serve anywhere you'd normally use a fresh fish fillet - just be careful not to overcook when browning.

*2 or more fish fillets
inexpensive olive oil, to cover
few sprigs thyme, optional*

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

VARIATIONS

different fish – salmon & tuna are the obvious choices. White fish such as snapper, blue eye or swordfish can also be used.

chicken – chicken breasts or thighs can also be poached in this manner. May take a little longer than 10 minutes.

budget – simmer fish in water instead of olive oil. Or use a cheaper unflavoured oil.

VIDEO

HOME 'CANNED' SALMON...

USAGE SUGGESTIONS

canned fish substitute – use anywhere you'd normally use canned salmon or tuna like this [salmon with brown rice & zucchini].

salads – like this [tuna & bok choy salad] or [tuna & lentil salad].

fish burgers – use as a replacement to canned tuna in these ['tuna burgers'].

main course – lightly pan fry to reheat and serve with a wedge of lemon or some good aioli or mayo

PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

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


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

too bland – season with a little more salt & pepper. Consider using a different fish next time.

STORAGE SUGGESTIONS

Will keep in the fridge in oil for a week.

Can be frozen but the texture may dry out a little.



boiled eggs

BOILED EGGS

If you have more time, you can also bring the eggs to a simmer. Cover the pot and remove from the heat and stand for 20 minutes.

as many eggs as you need

1. Place eggs in a small saucepan. Cover with cold water. Bring to a simmer.
2. When the eggs start simmering, set your timer for 8 minutes.
3. As soon as your timer rings, drain the eggs and transfer to a bowl. Run cold water over the eggs for a minute and then let the eggs sit in the water until cool.
4. Bash the eggs on the side of your sink to crack the shells all over.
5. Roll the egg between your hands to help loosen the membrane. Gently peel the membrane and shell from the eggs.



BOILED EGGS...

USAGE SUGGESTIONS

protein boost – serve with pretty much any legume or vegetable dish that needs an extra boost of veggie protein.

breakfast – great as a high protein breakfast on the run. Better if served with some salt & pepper.

egg salad – chop a couple of cooled boiled eggs and stir in some mayo or cheat's hollandaise. Lovely as a sandwich filling or wrap in iceberg lettuce leaves.

potato salad – chop and combine with mayo to dress steamed salad potatoes.

PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

eggs difficult to peel - make sure your eggs are well cooled. Then crack & roll. Cracking the shell all over and rolling between your hands separates the membrane from the egg and really makes a difference to the peeling experience.

eggs rubbery - the first sign that eggs are overcooked is the texture goes all rubbery. Next time make sure you start the timer as soon as the water starts to simmer.

eggs discoloured - a greenish-grey colour on the outside of the yolks is due to sulfides in the eggs. Cooling quickly is the best way to avoid this happening.

bland - season with salt & pepper. Also make sure you're using the best quality free range eggs you can afford.

STORAGE SUGGESTIONS

Will keep in the fridge for about a week. Best to store in the shell for longer life, but can be peeled and stored in an airtight container. Can be frozen but it makes the texture a little 'grainy'.

roast or BBQ chicken



ROAST OR BBQ CHICKEN

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

serves 4

80g (2.5oz) salt

1 medium chicken

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

VARIATIONS

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

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

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

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



ROAST OR BBQ CHICKEN...

VARIATIONS [CONTINUED]

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

USAGE SUGGESTIONS

whole meal – serve with a salad and possibly some [cheat's hollandaise].

salads – remove meat from the bone and toss into salads like this [chicken & broccolini salad]

soups – one of my favourite ways to use up leftover chicken is a [simple chicken & veg soup].

canned fish replacer – use shredded chicken anywhere you'd normally use a can of tuna or salmon.

PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

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

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

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

too dry – Some chickens are naturally less moist. Next time try another supplier. It could also mean your chicken is over cooked.

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

STORAGE SUGGESTIONS

Will keep in the fridge for about a week, make sure you refrigerate asap. Can be frozen, again best to freeze asap rather than waiting a few days.



SAUCES + FLAVOURINGS
BUILDING BLOCKS

A glass bottle of homemade ketchup is shown on a wooden surface. The bottle is partially filled with a dark red liquid, and the top portion is covered with a thick, yellowish-orange sauce. The bottle has a white cap. The background is a wooden surface with a light-colored, textured pattern.

home made ketchup

HOMEMADE KETCHUP

Here we're using roast tomatoes and red wine to make a ketchup with a difference!

makes about 8 cups

2kg (4lb) tomatoes

1.5kg (3lb) tomato passata or puree

2 cups rice wine vinegar

2 cups red wine

750g (1 1/2lb) brown sugar

1. Pop 4 bottles and a funnel in the dishwasher to sterilise.
2. Preheat oven to 180C (350F). Halve tomatoes and place on 2 baking trays. Roast for 90 minutes or until browned on the edges.
3. Place passata or puree, vinegar, wine and sugar in a large pot and bring to the boil.
4. Transfer roasted tomatoes to the pot. Simmer for 90minutes or until you're happy with the consistency. Taste & season with 1 tablespoon salt.
5. Puree with a stick blender. Bring back to a simmer.
6. Divide hot ketchup between warm bottles straight from the dishwasher. Seal immediately.

VARIATIONS

kid-friendly- skip the red wine.

rosemary ketchup – add a few sprigs of rosemary in to simmer with the tomatoes. Remember to remove the stalks before pureeing.

tomato & onion ketchup – roast 3-4 red onions until super tender and add to the sauce.

different quantities – feel free to either halve or double or quadruple this recipe, the cooking time may need adjusting slightly with more or less in the pot.



HOMEMADE KETCHUP...

USAGE SUGGESTIONS

baked' beans – The 'secret' ingredient in these [ketchup 'baked' legumes].

burgers – classic accompaniment to a [salt crusted burger].

fries / chips – a home made version of the [fast food classic] combo.

PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

burning – remember to stir the ketchup every 10-15 minutes to avoid burning.

too runny / not setting – we're just looking at removing the water to make the ketchup thicken. So keep cooking until you're happy.

too chunky – if you prefer a super smooth sauce, like commercial ketchup, sieve to remove any seeds or lumps after pureeing. Return to a boil before bottling,

mould growing – this is a sign that something is wrong with your preserving system. It could be the jars weren't cleaned enough in the dishwasher, the temperature wasn't high enough when you bottled. Or the lids weren't sealed properly. Another problem can be if the jars aren't filled completely. For now, best not to eat the mouldy jar. Next time be more careful or just store in the fridge.

STORAGE SUGGESTIONS

Unopened, it will keep in the pantry for months. Once opened best if kept in the fridge use within a month or so.

Can be frozen.

cheat's hollondaise

*cheats
hollondaise*

CHEAT'S HOLLONDAISE

Hollandaise sauce may seem a little 'fancy' for a cooking budget. But the thing is it doesn't take very long AND is so much more cost effective than buying premade hollandaise or mayonnaise.

makes almost 2 cups

100g (3.5 oz) butter

2 eggs

2-3 tablespoons rice wine vinegar

1 1/2 cups neutral flavoured oil, such as rice bran, vegetable or peanut

1. Melt butter in a small saucepan.
2. Place eggs and vinegar in a food processor or large bowl. Whizz (or whisk) for a few seconds.
3. Very carefully and slowly add hot butter to the egg mixture, whizzing (or whisking) as you go.
4. Add the oil in a gradual stream, continuing to whizz or whisk.
5. Taste & season with salt and a little more vinegar, if needed.

VARIATIONS

dairy-free – skip the butter and replace with an extra half cup of oil. MAke sure your eggs are super fresh, though because they won't be getting any cooking.

lemon juice – replace the vinegar with lemon juice. For a more lemony sauce add the grated zest of a lemon as well.

decadent – replace most or all of the oil with butter.

vegan - I'm afraid the egg is critical here. You'll have to substitute in a commercial vegan mayonnaise.

VIDEO

CHEAT'S HOLLONDAISE...

USAGE SUGGESTIONS

eggs – a ‘must’ to serve with [poached eggs].

almond ‘cream’ – combine with equal parts almond meal to make [‘almond cream’].

mayonnaise – use pretty much anywhere you’d use mayonnaise.

‘slaw – essential for a lovely [classic ‘slaw] or [brocco-‘slaw].

creamy dressing – just replace some or all of the olive oil in your salad dressing with cheat’s hollandaise.

PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

too bland? Add a little more salt and possibly some more vinegar.

too sharp – if you’re using a regular white vinegar the flavour can be a lot harsher than wine vinegars. If you’re finding it too much add in a little more oil.

mixture separating or splitting – the trick to making egg based sauces like this is to add the oil very gradually in the beginning. If you find it curdling or separating out (ie not being smooth and creamy). Start again with another egg and gradually add the split mixture on little spoon at a time.

oil flavour too strong – I find olive oils to be too intense in flavour for delicate sauces like this (and too expensive). I’ve used a rice bran oil here but any neutral flavoured oil like peanut or vegetable oil will work.

STORAGE SUGGESTIONS

Refrigerate asap. Will keep for a week or so if you’ve used super fresh eggs. Avoid freezing as it will cause the emulsion to split.



preserved lemons

PRESERVED LEMONS

This is not the time to be squandering your precious Maldon or other fancy sea salt flakes. Any fine sea salt or kosher salt will do. Once you open the jar, I tend to keep the lemons in the fridge so they last as long as possible.

3 - 4 thick skinned lemons
extra lemon juice
6 - 8 tablespoons fine sea salt
1-2 bay leaves, optional

1. Sterilise a medium jar (with a good lid or seal) by popping in the dishwasher on the hottest cycle, or using your favourite sterilisation method.
2. Place the thick skinned lemons in a strainer and pour boiling water over the lemons to get rid of any dirt or bugs. Drain.
3. Chop a lemon into quarters, lengthwise.
4. Place a tablespoon salt in the bottom of the jar and pack in the lemon quarters, squashing them in to release as much juice as possible. Scatter with another tablespoon salt.
5. Repeat with the other 2 - 3 lemons, until the jar is full. If using the bay leaves, poke them in along the sides of the jar while layering.
6. Finish with a final tablespoon or two of salt. Cover with lemon juice. Seal jar and store at room temperature for 4 weeks before using.

VARIATIONS

limes – replace lemons and lemon juice with limes and lime juice.

spiced – add a few teaspoons of cumin seeds and peppercorns.



PRESERVED LEMONS...

USAGE SUGGESTIONS

to use – remove one quarter from the jar. Discard the flesh and finely slice or dice the skins. They're quite salty so go easy with the seasoning.

in general – use the anywhere you'd normally use lemon zest for a more intense, lemon kick.

in salads – finely chopped and tossed in with your salad dressing for a fragrant surprise.

sauce for fish – combine 2 tablespoons lemon juice with 4 tablespoons olive oil and 1/4 preserved lemon finely chopped.

chicken tajine – toss 1/2 preserved lemon, finely sliced in a chicken stew with tomatoes & olives.

wilted greens – finely slice and toss through greens such as [a simple plate of greens].

preserved lemon & yoghurt sauce – finely mince and stir a little into some natural yoghurt – great with fish, chicken or vegetables.

couscous, lentils or rice – finely chop 1/4 lemon and stir through cooked couscous or lentils or steamed rice.

PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

mould growing on the lemons – if the lemons aren't covered with the salty lemon juice they can get a white mould growing on them. Discard these lemons but the ones on the bottom should be fine.

short on time – soak whole lemons in boiling water for an hour before draining and preserving as above. Should shorten the curing time by about 2 weeks.

STORAGE SUGGESTIONS

Will keep in the pantry unopened for a year or so. But once opened they need to be refrigerated.

chilli oil

chilli oil

CHILLI OIL

This oil has a million uses. It's lovely with pretty much everything and anything from the BBQ and makes an instant sauce for meat and fish. My Irishman even loves it on his fried eggs with a little avocado on the side.

makes 2 cups

200g (7 oz) long red chillies

3 cloves garlic

2 cups extra virgin olive oil

1. Remove stems and roughly chop chillies. Peel and smash garlic.
2. Place chilli, garlic and oil in a medium saucepan and bring to a simmer over a medium heat.
3. Simmer for 5-10 minutes or until garlic is golden brown. Remove from the heat and allow to cool a little.
4. Remove half the oil and puree the chilli and garlic with a stick blender or food processor. Return solids to the oil and store in an airtight container.

VARIATIONS

budget – replace some, half or all the olive oil with a cheaper oil such as vegetable, rice bran, or peanut oil.

milder – deseed the chillies before adding to the pan

hotter – toss in a handful or small red birds eye or other super hot chillies

smooth – allow the oil to cool completely with the chilli and garlic then strain and discard the solids.

VIDEO

CHILLI OIL...

USAGE SUGGESTIONS

drizzle – drizzle the cooled oil and solids over everything from grilled halloumi, to soups to BBQ vegetables to roast chicken. Pretty much anything that will benefit from some chilli warmth.

pasta – combine with lemon juice and stir through hot cooked pasta. Great with a handful of fresh rocket (arugula) and a little parmesan.

eggs – use the oil to fry eggs and serve with some of the chilli solids spooned over the top.

dressings – make a warming salad dressing with 1 tablespoon lemon juice and 3-4 tablespoons chilli oil. Season well and toss through salad leaves or boiled spuds or both.

sauce – Stir some lemon zest through a little chilli oil and use as a sauce for steamed, grilled or pan fried protein. Especially good with fish.

PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

too hot – dilute with more olive oil.

don't have a food processor? – finely chop the cooled chilli and garlic by hand and add back to the oil

STORAGE SUGGESTIONS

Keeps for a month or so in the fridge. Not recommended to store at room temp because the garlic brings a tiny risk of botulism. If you'd prefer an oil to store in the pantry, just use chilli and skip the garlic component. Can be frozen too, although not sure why you'd want to – will keep indefinitely in the freezer.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



The author of this e-cookbook is Jules Clancy.

I'm a qualified Food Scientist, and the creator of the simple food blog [Stonesoup](#) and the Stonesoup Virtual Cookery School.

I've been writing my blog since 2005 because I believe that the ability to cook simple, healthy, delicious food is a basic skill, like reading, that everyone should and can have.

When I'm not cooking, writing about food or taking photographs [of food], I can be found indulging my passions for long boozy lunches, travel, running, cookbooks, growing my own veggies, cheese, red shoes and Irishmen [OK one Irishman in particular].

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