



Central Coast  
Local Health District



# Back to Basics

Tips to help you feed the family for less





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## About this resource

The Back to Basics cookbook has been providing evidenced based tips and tricks on how to eat well on a tight budget for over 25 years.

In 2023/2024 the cookbook was revised, updated and some new resources and recipes were added. However, the book still provides the same helpful information:

- How to save money on food and still eat well.
- How to stock your pantry so you'll always have the ingredients to make a quick and nutritious meal.
- Easy cost-effective recipes.

This resource is designed to provide general information only and is not intended as individual nutrition or medical advice. For individually tailored advice, consult your doctor or health professional.

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# The five food groups

Eating foods from each of the five food groups everyday will help to keep you and your family healthy. Each food group provides different nutrients. We need all these nutrients to be well.

The foods that make up the five food groups are in the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating.

More of some food groups need to be eaten. These are the ones which are a larger part of the circle in the picture below. Different foods from within each food group also need to be eaten. This is because even foods within the same food group have different nutrients. Spend most of your food budget on a variety of foods from the five food groups.

The foods and drinks that are included in the “Only sometimes and in small amounts” section (outside the circle) are not nourishing. They don’t provide nutrients to help you be well and too much of them can make you unwell! They can also be expensive and use up valuable food money.

For more information on the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating, the five food groups, and how much to eat of each food group for good health, go to [www.eatforhealth.gov.au](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au)



Source:  
National Health  
and Medical  
Research Council

# Tips to save money on food



- 1 Plan your meals and make a shopping list.** This will save you time and money. See the *Meal planner and shopping list* template for more information.
- 2 Check the use-by date of foods you already have** and plan meals and snacks to use these items before they expire. If a food has a **use-by date**, you cannot eat the food after this date as it could make you sick. If a food has a **best-before date**, it means it is still safe to eat after this date although it might not taste as nice.
- 3 Shop around.** Consider shopping at different places to get the best deals. You can also check catalogues for specials on pantry staples (e.g. canned foods, dry foods) and stock up.
- 4 Compare prices.** Use the cost per 100g information to get the best value for your money on packaged products. Cost per 100g is usually found on the shelving labels under the food. Buy in bulk if it is cheaper, you can safely store the food before it expires, and it doesn't leave you short of money for other essentials.
- 5 Long life benefits.** Powdered milk, long life (UHT) milk and frozen or canned fruit and vegetables can be bought on special and stored for a long time. Supplement with fresh when you can, especially for fruit and vegetables.
- 6 Choose fruit and veg in season.** Fruit and vegetables in season are fresher, more nutritious and usually cheaper than those out of season. Store them well so that they last longer (see [page 13](#) for tips). You may find shopping twice a week for fruit and vegetables is best to reduce waste.
- 7 Spend less on 'sometimes' foods.** Foods like soft drinks, juice, chocolate, lollies, biscuits and potato chips can be expensive and use up valuable food money. Aim for less than \$10 for every \$100 of your food budget on these foods.
- 8 Eat more vegetarian meals.** Meals with non-meat protein such as legumes (e.g. butter beans, chickpeas, lentils), tofu, and eggs can be good money savers (see [page 13](#) for tips).
- 9 Store food well.** Follow storage instructions on packages, and store perishable foods such as meat, fruit and vegetables correctly (see [pages 12-13](#) for tips). Label food that needs to be used up.
- 10 Take your own snacks and water.** When going out, take a water bottle from home (filled with tap water!) and a piece of fresh fruit or a small container of healthy snack foods that don't need to be kept cold (e.g. dried fruit, wholegrain crackers or dry breakfast cereal).
- 11 Choose tap water!** It is cheap, easily available, safe to drink and good for you.
- 12 Pack lunches for school and work.** A canteen or café lunch will always cost more than a lunch you made at home. If time is an issue, plan your lunches when you do your weekly meal plan and get lunches ready the night before. You may find you can make lunches in bulk or use dinner leftovers to save on time too.

# Stock up the food cupboard

Try to have a good selection of basic ingredients and foods in the cupboard, fridge and freezer. This should mean that you are always able to make a meal, even if you have run out of money or can't get to the shops.

Take your time to stock up on the following basic ingredients and food items. Buying everything at once could be too much for your food budget. Also, there is no need to buy everything on the list. It is only a guide. Buy those things that you know you would use to make a meal or snack. There may be other foods you would like to include too.

Some items will need to be stored in the fridge or freezer.



## Pantry

Wholegrain breakfast cereals, e.g. Weetbix™, muesli	Baked beans
Wholegrain crackers and crispbreads	Canned tuna or other canned fish
Rice	Nuts and seeds
Couscous	Dried herbs, e.g. mixed herbs, parsley, basil
Noodles (dry, or long-life shelf varieties)	Dried spices, e.g. ginger, cumin, turmeric
Pasta (dry, not fresh)	Powdered garlic (not garlic salt)
Oats	Tomato paste ^
Popping corn	Canned or packet soup ^
Plain flour	Tomato sauce ^
Self-raising flour	BBQ sauce ^
Canned tomatoes ^	Canola, sunflower or olive oil
Canned corn kernels ^	Stock cubes or stock powder ^
Other canned vegetables ^	Gravy mix ^
Canned fruit in juice	Soy sauce ^
UHT (long life) milk* and UHT custard*	Salt & Pepper
Powdered milk	Curry powder
Evaporated milk	Curry pastes*
Processed (long life) cheese*	Sugar (white)
Legumes (dried) e.g. red lentils, chickpeas	Sugar (brown)
Canned legumes such as butter beans, soybeans, lentils	Red or white vinegar

## Fridge

Cheese  
Fresh eggs  
Margarine

## Freezer








Frozen vegetables  
Frozen fruit

^ Where possible buy 'salt reduced' or 'no added salt'.

\* Store in the fridge after opening.

# Quick meal ideas
















A meal you prepare at home will usually be cheaper and more nourishing than a takeaway meal or a meal from a café, club or restaurant. When you are short on time try these quick, budget friendly and nourishing meal ideas.

<p><b>Toast</b></p> 	<p><i>Toppings could include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cooked egg and tomatoes</li> <li>• baked beans and cheese</li> <li>• leftover mince with mushrooms</li> </ul>
<p><b>Toasties</b></p> 	<p><i>Fillings could include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• baked beans</li> <li>• cooked meat (beef, lamb, chicken or ham) with leftover baked vegetables</li> <li>• canned fish (tuna, salmon) with tomato, capsicum and/or spinach</li> </ul>
<p><b>Jacket potatoes (baked/microwaved)</b></p> 	<p><i>Toppings could include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• boiled egg</li> <li>• baked beans</li> <li>• grated cheese</li> <li>• coleslaw</li> <li>• canned fish</li> <li>• chopped tomato and/or capsicum</li> <li>• leftover cooked mince with vegetables</li> </ul>
<p><b>Soup (canned, ready-to-eat soup)</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add extra vegetables</li> <li>• Canned or frozen are quick and easy</li> <li>• Serve with wholemeal roll, toast or bread</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sandwiches, pita pockets or wraps</b></p> 	<p><i>Fillings could include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cooked meat (beef, lamb, chicken or ham) with salad vegetables</li> <li>• canned fish (tuna, salmon) with onion or shallots, capsicum, cucumber, and lettuce</li> <li>• chopped boiled egg with lettuce</li> </ul>
<p><b>Homemade pizza</b> using a bread base e.g. English muffin, scone dough base, Lebanese bread or a commercial base.</p> <p>Spread base with passata or pizza sauce, add toppings and grated cheese. Cook at 200°C for 5–10 minutes.</p>	<p><i>Toppings could include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cooked minced meat</li> <li>• cooked sliced chicken</li> <li>• chopped lean ham</li> <li>• sliced/chopped vegetables such as onion, capsicum, mushrooms, and tomato</li> <li>• dried or fresh herbs</li> </ul> 
<p><b>Poke bowl</b></p> 	<p>Combine ingredients you like and have available in a bowl.</p> <p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cooked brown rice or noodles</li> <li>• a protein food – tuna, salmon, chicken, pulled pork, any leftover cooked meat, boiled egg, tofu, chickpeas, kidney beans</li> <li>• raw vegies – diced cucumber, grated carrot, edamame beans, broccoli, diced tomatoes, avocado, onions</li> <li>• add a small amount of flavour of choice – ginger, chilli, soy sauce, mayo, salad dressing</li> </ul>

# Snack ideas

Snacks can provide an opportunity to boost your intake of nourishing foods. Plan your snacks to include:

- more fruit and vegetables
- dairy food for calcium and protein
- high fibre breads and cereals

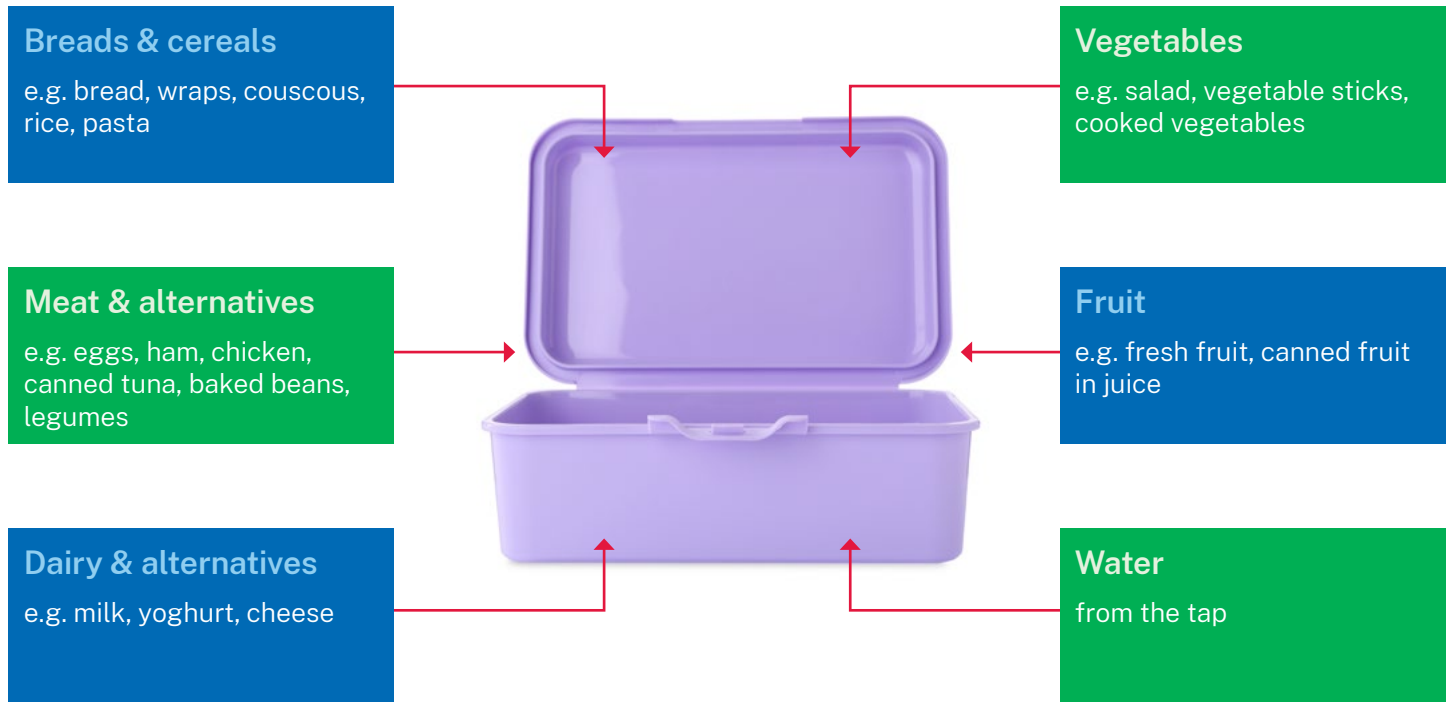
<p>Wholegrain crackers and cheese</p> 	<p>Canned fruit and yoghurt</p> 	<p>Vegetable sticks and hummus</p> 
<p>Vegetable fritters</p> 	<p>Pikelets, pancakes or scones with fresh fruit</p> 	<p>Baked beans and toast</p> 
<p>Fresh fruit</p> 	<p>Breakfast cereal, dry or with milk</p> 	<p>A glass of milk</p> 
<p>Canned legumes</p> 	<p>Leftover cooked vegetables</p> 	<p>A piece of toast with cheese, hummus or peanut butter</p> 
<p>Fruit smoothie</p> 	<p>Cob of corn</p> 	<p>Boiled egg</p> 



# School and work lunches

Packing your own school and work lunches will save money! Plan lunches so they include foods from the five food groups and use up leftovers to reduce food waste. Plan your lunches when planning meals.

**Include at least one food from each food group plus water to drink.**



## Keeping lunches safe

Always keep high risk foods cold (e.g. egg, meat, cheese, yoghurt). Use an insulated lunch bag and ice brick, frozen milk drink or frozen water. If including hot food in an insulated thermos, make sure the food is heated well before placing in the thermos. For more information on food safety go to [www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/consumer/food-at-home](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/consumer/food-at-home).

## Making it quick

Make lunches the night before or prepare in bulk.

Some great lunch options such as fritters, frittatas and vegetable slices can be cooked and then frozen in ready to go lunch size servings.

Plan your meals to allow for extra serves that can be used for lunches.

Sandwiches with fillings such as meat, chicken, ham, fish (e.g. canned tuna or salmon), egg, cheese, and peanut butter\* (or other nut butters\*) can be pre-made in bulk and frozen. Place them in the fridge the night before so that they will be defrosted by lunchtime.

Try this online lunchbox builder to help involve the family in planning their own lunches.

<https://healthylunchbox.com.au/builder/>

\*Be aware of nut restrictions at childcare and schools.

# How to cook, store and make meals go further

## How to cook rice

### Boiling method

1. Choose a saucepan large enough to hold about six cups of water for every cup of uncooked rice. Bring water to the boil, add rice. Stir until water comes back to boil.
2. Boil with the lid off until rice is tender. Drain and use.



### Absorption method

1. Place rice into large saucepan. Add 1 ½ cups of water for every 1 cup of rice.
2. Lid off, bring to the boil over medium heat. Then turn heat down to low so that the water is just simmering. Place lid on.
3. Cook until rice is tender (about 15 minutes, brown rice will take a little longer).
4. Take off the heat and leave to rest with the lid on for 10 minutes. Fluff the rice and serve.

### Tips

- One cup of uncooked rice makes about three cups when cooked.
- Put cooked rice in the fridge if not eating it soon after it is cooked.

## How to cook pasta

### Stove top

1. Choose a saucepan large enough to hold about four cups of water for every 1 ½ cups of uncooked pasta.
2. Bring water to the boil, then add the pasta. Stir until water comes back to the boil.
3. Boil for the amount of time stated on the packet.
4. Drain off the cooking water and serve.

### Microwave

1. Place pasta in a microwave safe bowl. Choose a bowl big enough to cover the pasta with water and allow extra room for boiling.
2. Cover with water.
3. Microwave for the amount of time stated on the packet plus an extra 3 minutes.
4. Carefully take the bowl out of the microwave (it will be hot) and drain off the cooking water.

### Tips

- One cup of uncooked pasta makes about two cups of cooked pasta.
- Put cooked pasta in the fridge if it will not be eaten soon after it is cooked.
- Cooked pasta can be frozen. Mix with a little oil, margarine or pasta sauce before freezing to help prevent pasta being 'gluggy' when thawed.



## How to cook potato

This method will cook about 4 medium sized potatoes.

1. Wash the skin of the potatoes, removing any dirt. Pat dry with clean paper towel or cloth.
2. Pierce the skin of each potato a few times with a fork. Place on a microwave safe plate or bowl.
3. Cook on full power for 6 minutes. Use tongs to turn them over and microwave for a further 6 minutes or until a skewer or fork can easily pass through.
4. Let the potato rest for 1 to 2 minutes.
5. Cut a cross in the top of the potato and add your topping.

## How to cook dried legumes

Legumes include red kidney beans, haricot beans, soybeans, cannellini beans, chickpeas, brown and red lentils. Legumes double in size when cooked. Cooked legumes can be frozen until needed.

1. Soak legumes (except red lentils) in water for at least four hours. Cover and place in the fridge while soaking.
2. Drain off the water and cover the legumes with fresh water.
3. Bring to the boil and boil with lid off until tender (about 45 minutes). Drain and use.

Note: Red lentils do not have to be soaked but allow 20 minutes of cooking time in your recipe.



## How to cook eggs

### Boiled eggs

1. Place eggs in a saucepan and cover with cold water.
2. Heat water over a medium heat.
3. Once water is simmering start your timer.  
**4 minutes = runny eggs**  
**5 minutes = hard whites and semi-firm yolks**  
**8 minutes = hard boiled eggs**
4. Remove the eggs and run under cold water for at least 30 seconds.
5. Once the eggs are cool enough to handle, tap the shells on hard surface to crack and then peel.



### Scrambled eggs (for 2 eggs)

1. Break eggs into a small bowl, then add 1-2 tablespoons milk.
2. Beat with a fork or whisk until mixed together.
3. Melt ½ teaspoon margarine in a frypan over medium heat and allow it to coat the bottom.
4. Add egg mixture.
5. Once the eggs have started to cook, use a spatula or wooden spoon to gently move the egg around as it cooks.
6. Continue until all the egg is cooked.



## How to make tough meats tender

- Soak in a marinade for 2-3 hours to help tenderise and add flavour. Make your own marinade (see [page 39](#) for ideas) or buy 'ready to use' marinades from the supermarket. Coat the meat in the marinade, then cover the dish and put in the fridge. When you use the meat, throw away any leftover marinade as it will contain raw meat juices. These make marinade unsafe to use again.
- Cook slowly by moist cooking methods, such as casserole, stew, or use a slow cooker or pressure cooker. 'Cross cut' blade steak can usually be barbequed.



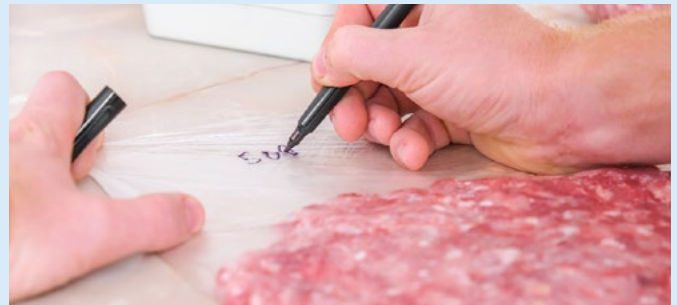
## How to store raw meat in the fridge

- Cover and place on the bottom shelf so that no raw meat juices drip onto other food.
- Keep raw chicken, fish or minced meat in the fridge no longer than two days before cooking or freezing.
- Other raw meats like steak and chops, can be kept in the fridge for up to three days before cooking.



## How to freeze raw meat

- Freeze meat in meal size amounts.
- Wrap tightly (to squeeze air out) in plastic wrap or freezer bags. Write date and name of meat on each package.
- Meat can be kept in freezer for about 3 months.



## How to defrost frozen meat

Do not defrost frozen food at room temperature. To safely defrost frozen meat you can:

- Place in the fridge overnight.
- Microwave on a defrost setting. Use immediately as parts of the meat may have warmed.
- If the meat is in an airtight or sealed packaging it can be defrosted in cold water. Change the water every 30 minutes until defrosted.



## How to store leftovers or cooked food in the fridge

- Cool food quickly by placing in flat containers. As soon as the food has stopped steaming, cover it and place in the fridge. This will allow cold air to circulate around the food.
- Leftover cooked food should not be left out of the fridge for more than two hours.
- Use refrigerated leftovers **within 3 days**. If eating cold, keep them well chilled until they are to be eaten. If eating hot, make sure they are heated until steaming hot. Re-heat only what you are going to eat. Discard any leftover food that has already been re-heated.

## How to store fresh vegetables and fruit

- Store potatoes, sweet potatoes, onions, garlic and ginger in a dark space in your pantry.
- Keep bananas and tomatoes on your kitchen bench until ready to eat.
- Some fruit and vegetables need to ripen before being stored in the fridge, e.g. stone fruits (e.g. peaches and plums), melons, kiwifruit and avocado.
- Most other fruit and vegetables will last longer if kept in the fridge.
- Fruit and vegetables that are getting old can be frozen and used in cooking later. Chop, grate or cook the fruit or vegetable before freezing.



## How to make meals go further

You can make your meals go further by adding extra vegetables, wholegrains or legumes (e.g. butter beans, chickpeas, lentils) to the recipe. These foods are filling and nutritious.

### Choose better value cuts of meat

- 500g of meat is enough to feed 4 to 5 people.
- Choose chicken without skin so you are buying more meat and less fat.
- Choose lean mince and reduced fat sausages.
- Make tougher meat cuts more tender with a marinade before cooking or by slow cooking.
- Consider how much you are paying for the bone for meat or chicken on the bone.



### For stews, soups or casseroles you could add any of these:

- Extra vegetables.
- Uncooked pasta (any type).
- Canned beans or lentils.
- Cooked dried legumes. See [page 11](#) for how to cook dried legumes.

### For burger patties, meatballs or meat loaf you could add any of these ideas:

- Mashed or chopped up cooked vegetables.
- Grated raw vegetables such as potato, pumpkin, sweet potato, carrot, zucchini.
- Mashed, cooked or canned legumes such as kidney beans, soybeans, butter beans or lentils.
- Cooked rice or breadcrumbs.

# Keeping food safe



Store meat, dairy foods, cooked foods including rice, pasta, vegetables and egg based foods, in the fridge or freezer.



Thaw frozen meat and other frozen foods in the fridge.



Wash hands in warm soapy water before cooking and eating.



Chop vegies before meat, or away from meat to stop germs on the meat getting to the vegies.



Wash dishes, utensils and cutting boards with detergent and hot water.



Use clean dishcloths and tea towels.



Clean work areas before preparing food.



Always cook chicken well. Juices should be clear.



Keep food hot or keep food cold. If in doubt – throw it out!

# Back to Basics recipes

The recipes in this book have been carefully chosen so that they are:

- easy to make with minimal cooking skills and equipment
- nourishing and contain multiple food groups
- suitable for a tight food budget.

Each recipe provides a guide to the cooking equipment needed.



Electric frypan



Stove



Oven



Microwave



Slow cooker

Each recipe provides a guide to which food groups the recipe contains. This includes the food groups in the serving suggestions. The more food groups, the more nourishing the recipe!



Fruit



Vegetables



Breads & cereals



Meat & alternatives



Dairy

Each recipe provides a guide to the cost of the ingredients per serve.



Less than \$2.00



\$2.00 to \$4.00



More than \$4.00

The cost is based on the amount of the ingredient in the recipe. Sometimes you might need to buy an ingredient and will not use it all, e.g. sauces, dried herbs and spices. These ingredients can become part of your food cupboard and used in other recipes. If it is a perishable food, e.g. fresh fruit, vegetables or meat, carefully store the excess so it can be used in the future. Then, when planning your meals, see what perishable foods from previous recipes need to be used up.

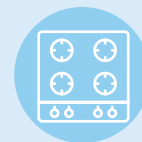
# Hearty Soups

*These soups are quick to prepare and can make a nourishing meal.*

## Minestrone Soup

**Recipe serves: 6**

**Preparation time: 45 minutes**



### Ingredients

- 2 teaspoons oil
- 2 carrots, peeled and chopped or sliced thinly
- 2 onions or 4 shallots, chopped finely
- 1 potato, peeled and chopped into small pieces
- 1 zucchini, chopped into small pieces
- 400g can diced or crushed tomatoes with added herbs\* (or add 1 teaspoon dried Italian herbs)
- 1 teaspoon dried garlic granules (optional)
- 1 cup uncooked pearl barley
- 1 cup macaroni, preferably wholemeal pasta
- 400g can red kidney beans or lima beans\*, drained and rinsed
- 6 cups water
- 1 vegetable stock cube or 2 teaspoons stock powder\*

### Method

1. Place oil and carrot, onion, potato and zucchini in a large saucepan. Cook over medium heat, stirring around for about 5 minutes, until the onion starts to turn light brown.
2. Add all other ingredients. Turn up the heat and bring to the boil.
3. Turn heat down and simmer gently for 20 minutes or until the pasta is cooked and the barley is soft. Add more water if soup gets too thick.

### Helpful hints

- Use other vegetables e.g. sweet potato, pumpkin, frozen corn and peas. Add shredded or frozen spinach in the last few minutes of cooking.
- You can use baked beans instead of the red kidney beans or lima beans. No need to drain these.

### Food groups:



\* Where possible buy 'salt reduced' or 'no added salt' options.



# Hearty Soups

## Tomato and Bean Soup

Recipe serves: 4

Preparation time: 15 minutes



### Ingredients

420g can condensed tomato soup\*  
(not 'ready to heat and eat' type)

400g can tomatoes\* (chopped or crushed)

420g can baked beans\*

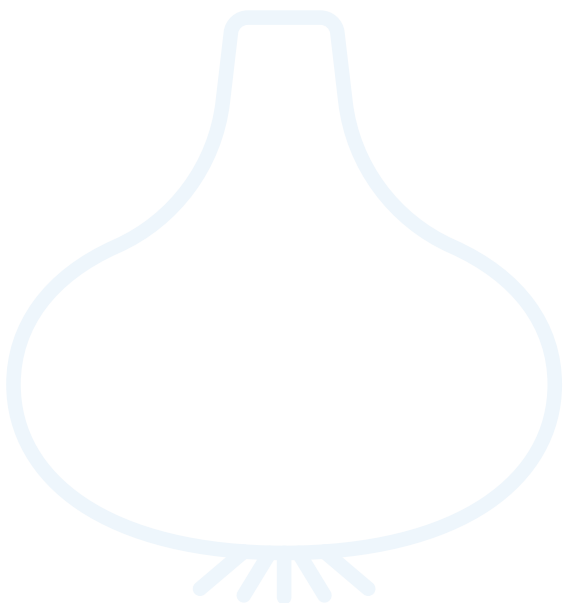
1½ cups water

1 small onion, chopped finely or grated (optional)

¼ cup chopped parsley (if you have it)

### Method

1. Combine all ingredients in a large saucepan, bring to the boil.
2. Turn heat down and simmer gently for 5 minutes.
3. Serve with bread or toast.



### Helpful hints

- Left-over cooked macaroni, cooked rice or cooked barley could be added.
- An extra can of legumes such as red kidney beans, butter beans or soybeans could be added.
- ½ teaspoon of dry mixed herbs could be added for extra flavour.
- In summer, this soup could be served cold.

### Food groups:



\* Where possible buy 'salt reduced' or 'no added salt' options.

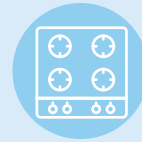
# Main Meals

These main meals have been chosen as they are relatively easy to make, require minimal cooking equipment and aim to be cost-effective. Meals containing meat do tend to be more expensive but are still important. Include these in between cheaper non-meat meals.

## Baked Chicken Breast Fillets

**Recipe serves: 4**

**Preparation time: 30 minutes**



or



### Ingredients

2 raw chicken breasts (about 600–700g)

2 heaped tablespoons of plain yoghurt  
(such as natural Greek yoghurt)

2 teaspoons of minced garlic (add to your liking)

2 teaspoons lemon juice (optional)

½ teaspoon of mixed herbs

### Method

1. Cut each chicken breast in half lengthways, so that you have four large pieces, half as thick as the original pieces.
2. Add the yoghurt, garlic, lemon juice and herbs to a large bowl. Mix together with a spoon.
3. Add the chicken pieces to the bowl and stir well to coat the chicken.
4. Put baking paper on an oven tray. Place the chicken on top.
5. Cook in a moderate oven (180°C) for 20-25 minutes until cooked through. Use tongs to turn the chicken over halfway through cooking time.
6. Serve chicken pieces with baked vegetables or salad.

### Helpful hints

- For a different flavour, you could use 2 teaspoons of curry powder in place of the garlic, lemon juice and herbs.
- Could be cooked in a frypan. Add a little oil to the pan, then the chicken pieces. Cook over medium heat for 6-8 minutes. Use tongs to turn over and cook for another 6-8 minutes until chicken is cooked through.

### Food groups:

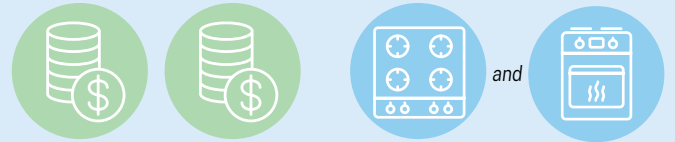


# Main Meals

## Cheesy Noodle Bake

**Recipe serves:** 6

**Preparation time:** 50 minutes



### Ingredients

- 125g egg noodles
- 4 slices of lean ham, chopped
- 1 ½ cups (180g) cheese, grated
- 1 ½ cups milk
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 3 cups of vegetables (e.g. frozen peas, corn, grated carrot, grated zucchini)
- 1 small onion or 1 shallot, chopped

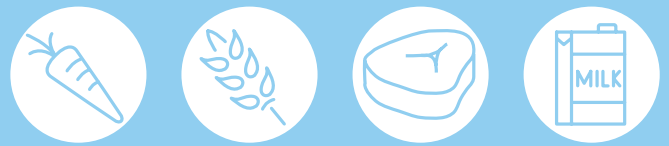
### Method

1. Cook noodles in lots of boiling water until just tender, drain.
2. Combine noodles, 1 cup grated cheese and all other ingredients.
3. Pour into greased baking dish and sprinkle the remaining ½ cup grated cheese on top.
4. Cook in a moderate (180°C) oven for 30-35 minutes or until set.
5. Serve with vegetables or salad.

### Helpful hints

- Any type of pasta can be used instead of egg noodles (spaghetti, macaroni, or pasta shells).
- Serve hot or cold. Good for lunch box but will need to be kept cold, so pack with an ice brick or frozen drink.
- You could leave out the ham and replace it with legumes to make a non-meat meal. Suitable legumes include butter beans, red kidney beans and chickpeas. Use a 400g can of legumes and drain and rinse before adding.

### Food groups:



# Main Meals

## Chicken Salad with Noodles

**Recipe serves:** 6

**Preparation time:** 40 minutes



### Ingredients

- 2 small raw chicken breasts (about 600g)
- 6 cups of cabbage (combination of Chinese and red cabbage)
- 6 shallots, sliced thinly (or ½ red onion, diced)
- 2 carrots, cut into thin strips or grated
- 1 small capsicum, cut into thin strips (optional)
- 250–330g uncooked noodles (e.g. ramen noodles, egg noodles)
- 1 quantity (½ cup) of Classic Salad Dressing (refer to [page 38](#))

### Method

1. Place chicken breast in a medium saucepan and cover with water.
2. Bring to the boil then reduce heat to low and simmer with the lid off for 10–20 minutes (depends on size of chicken breasts), until the chicken is cooked through.
3. While the chicken is boiling, start preparing the salad vegetables (cabbage, shallots, carrots and capsicum) and place in a large mixing bowl.
4. Once the chicken is cooked, use tongs to remove from the water and leave to cool on a clean plate.
5. While the chicken is cooling, cook the noodles, follow packet instructions.
6. Once the chicken has cooled, slice into thin pieces and add to the bowl of salad vegetables.
7. Drain the noodles and cut into smaller lengths before adding to the bowl with chicken and salad vegetables.
8. Pour salad dressing over all ingredients and toss using two large spoons or tongs.
9. Serve salad into individual bowls or onto plates.

### Helpful hints

- A BBQ chicken could be used instead of cooked chicken breast. Remove all skin and bones and shred.
- Pasta can be used instead of noodles.
- Any salad vegetables that you have available could be used.
- Other types of salad dressings could be used. Try the Yoghurt Dressing on [page 38](#).
- The noodles or pasta will become easier to mix through the salad once the dressing is added.

### Food groups:



# Main Meals

## Curried Vegetables and Rice

**Recipe serves: 4**

**Preparation time: 30 minutes**



or



### Ingredients

6 cups chopped vegetables (fresh, frozen, canned or leftovers)

400g can lentils\* (drained and rinsed)

3 teaspoons curry powder

2 tablespoons gravy mix\*

1½ cups rice, preferably brown

1½ cups water

### Method

1. Cook rice.
2. While rice is cooking cut vegetables into chunks or slices. Potato is best if chunked.
3. Put all vegetables into a saucepan or frypan. Sprinkle with gravy mix and curry powder.
4. Add 1½ cups of water and stir.
5. Bring to the boil. Then turn the heat down, place lid on and cook gently for 5-10 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Stir occasionally.
6. Add canned lentils and heat through.
7. Do a taste test and add more curry if needed. Only add one extra teaspoon of curry powder at a time. If liquid is not thick enough add extra gravy mix. Blend the gravy powder with a little cold water before adding. If curry is too thick, add more water.
8. Serve with the rice.

### Helpful hints

- Any cooked meat, chicken or fish could be added.
- If serving more than four people add extra vegetables, more lentils and cook more rice.
- Add extra curry powder and gravy mix if necessary.
- If you don't like curry, leave it out.
- You could serve with pasta (wholemeal if possible) instead of rice.

### Food groups:



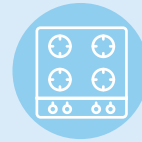
\* Where possible buy 'salt reduced' or 'no added salt' options.

# Main Meals

## Family Mince

**Recipe serves: 4**

**Preparation time: 30 minutes**



or



### Ingredients

500g lean mince (any type – chicken, beef, pork, lamb or kangaroo)

1 onion or 1 shallot, chopped

½ cup celery or green beans, cut into chunks or thin slices

2 medium carrots or 1 large carrot, chopped, grated or cut into thin slices

¼ small cabbage, sliced finely or shredded

1 tablespoon oil

2 teaspoons curry powder

2 teaspoons dried garlic granules

1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce\* or soy sauce\* or barbeque sauce\*

### Method

1. Heat oil in a large frypan or saucepan. Add meat, curry powder, garlic granules and chopped onion. Cook over a moderate heat until meat is browned.
2. Add all other ingredients (except cabbage). Simmer gently for 15 minutes.
3. Add cabbage. Reduce heat and cook gently for another 5 minutes.
4. Serve with cooked rice, pasta, noodles, mashed potatoes or toast.

### Helpful hints



- Any vegetables can be used. Fresh, frozen, canned or cooked leftovers.
- Choose wholemeal bread, brown rice and wholemeal pasta or noodles if possible.
- Use outside leaves of lettuce instead of cabbage. Wash well, shred and add just before serving.

### Food groups:



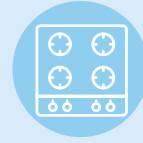
\* Where possible buy 'salt reduced' or 'no added salt' options.

# Main Meals

## Fish Cakes

Recipe serves: 4

Preparation time: 40 minutes



or



### Ingredients

5 medium potatoes, cooked and mashed

400g can tuna, drained and flaked

2 eggs, beaten

1 onion or 2 shallots, chopped finely

1 cup dry breadcrumbs or two crushed breakfast biscuits  
e.g. Weetbix™

1 tablespoon oil

### Method

1. Mix potato, tuna, onion, and eggs together.
2. For each fish cake, roll about two tablespoons of the mix in breadcrumbs or crushed breakfast biscuit. Flatten slightly.
3. Heat oil in a frypan. Using moderate heat, cook fish cakes for about five minutes on each side.
4. Serve with vegetables or salad.

### Helpful hints

- For a flavour change, add about 2 teaspoons of curry powder or a mild curry paste (e.g. yellow or green curry paste).
- Can be served with yoghurt dressing (see [page 38](#)).
- Canned salmon can be used instead of canned tuna.
- Cold fish cakes make a tasty sandwich filling.

### Food groups:

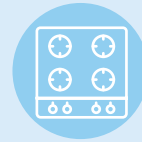


# Main Meals

## Fried Rice

**Recipe serves: 4**

**Preparation time: 45 minutes**



or



### Ingredients

2 cups rice (brown or white)

2 tablespoons oil

2 medium onions or 4 shallots, chopped finely

4 eggs, hard boiled and peeled, then chopped in chunks or cut into slices

1 cup corn kernels, frozen or canned\*

1 cup frozen peas

1 large carrot, sliced thinly or chopped or grated

1 tablespoon soy sauce\*

### Method

1. Cook rice.
2. While rice is cooking, heat oil in a frypan. Partly cook onion then add all other vegetables. Place lid on and cook gently until vegetables are just tender.
3. Add drained rice to the vegetables and mix through. Add the soy sauce. Reheat if necessary.
4. Serve topped with the sliced or chopped egg.

### Helpful hints

- Leftover rice can be used for this recipe.
- If you have extra people cook an extra  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup rice per person and add  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup vegetables per person. You could also cook more eggs.
- You may like to use different or more vegetables. Chop or grate vegetables so that they stir fry quickly and easily.
- Add canned salmon or tuna or chopped up left-over cooked meat or chicken. This will add extra protein.
- Instead of mixing rice and vegetables together, the rice could be served separately.
- If using canned vegetables, buy reduced salt or no added salt varieties. Drain before adding.

### Food groups:



\* Where possible buy 'salt reduced' or 'no added salt' options.



# Main Meals

## Frypan Noodles

**Recipe serves: 5–6**

**Preparation time: 30 minutes**



and



### Ingredients

500g lean chicken mince

1 teaspoon oil

1 tablespoon minced garlic

1 tablespoon crushed ginger

2 carrots, grated coarsely

1 zucchini, grated coarsely

1 head of broccoli, grate the stem and cut the dark green top into small pieces

¼ cabbage, sliced into thin strips

1 packet uncooked egg noodles  
(about 300g, or 5-6 small nests)

#### For noodles:

½ teaspoon garlic powder

2 teaspoons soy sauce, salt-reduced if possible

2 teaspoons oyster sauce (optional)

1 tablespoon honey

### Method

1. In an electric frypan or large saucepan, add oil and chicken mince. Put the garlic and ginger on top of the mince and spread all over the mince with a spoon. Cook over medium heat until cooked through. Use a spatula to break up the mince during cooking and move it around the pan.
2. Add carrots, zucchini and grated broccoli stem and cook for about 5 minutes, stirring it around the pan.
3. Add the rest of the broccoli and the cabbage and cook for another 3-4 minutes, stirring it around the pan.
4. Cook the noodles, follow the instructions on the packet.
5. Drain the water off the noodles. Add the garlic powder, honey, oyster sauce and soy sauce and mix through with 2 spoons or forks to coat all of the noodles.
6. Add noodles to the pan and mix through the chicken and vegetables.
7. Serve on plates or in bowls.

### Helpful hints

- Sprinkle finely chopped spring onion over the top to serve (optional).
- You could use cooked rice instead of noodles.
- You could use lean pork mince instead of chicken mince.

### Food groups:

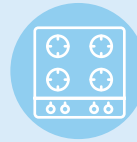


# Main Meals

## Lasagne

Recipe serves: 6–8

Preparation time: 1 hour 30 minutes



or



and



### Ingredients

500g lean beef mince

1 onion, chopped finely

2 cloves garlic, chopped finely (or 2 teaspoons minced garlic or dried garlic granules)

1 medium carrot and 1 medium zucchini, grated finely (about 3 cups in total)

700g bottle of passata (Italian tomato cooking sauce)

400g can brown lentils\*, drained and rinsed

1 ½ cups of water

1 ½ cups grated cheese, preferably reduced fat (½ cup for the middle layers and 1 cup on top)

1 tablespoon oil

2 teaspoons dried Italian herbs

1 x beef stock cube\*

250g packet of dry lasagne sheets (also called lasagna sheets)

### Method

1. Preheat oven to 180°C (moderate oven).
2. Heat oil in a frypan or large saucepan over medium to high heat. Add mince, onion and garlic and cook until the mince is browned all over, breaking up any big lumps as it cooks.
3. Add carrot and zucchini and cook for about 5 minutes, stirring it around the pan.
4. Add passata, lentils, water, stock cube and herbs and mix through. Bring to the boil, then reduce heat and gently simmer for 5–10 minutes.

### Helpful hints



- You can use a 400g can of tomatoes in place of the lentils. Reduce to 1 cup water in the recipe.

### Food groups:



5. Layer the lasagne in a large rectangle oven-proof dish or tray (about 32 x 23 cm works well). Start with a thin layer of the meat sauce, then cover with a layer of the dry pasta lasagne sheets and sprinkle a little cheese on top. Repeat 3 times. You will have about 4 layers at the end. Finish with a little meat sauce on top and sprinkle over the rest of the cheese.
6. Bake in the oven for 45 minutes, until the top is browned and the pasta is soft.
7. Serve with salad or cooked vegetables.

\* Where possible buy 'salt reduced' or 'no added salt' options.

# Main Meals

## Mexican Mince

Recipe serves: 4–6

Preparation time: 40 minutes



### Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon oil
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed or 2 teaspoons minced garlic or ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 500g lean mince (any type – chicken, beef, pork, lamb or kangaroo)
- 2 large carrots, grated
- 1 small capsicum, diced (optional)
- 200g canned chopped tomatoes\* (about 1 cup)
- 1 cup corn kernels (frozen or well drained canned)\*
- 1 cup peas (frozen or well drained canned)
- 400g can red kidney beans\*, drained and rinsed
- 1 packet taco spice mix

### Method

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan or frypan.
2. Add onion and garlic and cook until soft.
3. Add mince and cook over medium to high heat until the mince is browned all over.
4. Add carrots, capsicum, tomatoes and taco spice mix.
5. Bring to the boil, turn heat down and simmer gently for 10 minutes.
6. Add kidney beans and heat through.
7. Serve with rice or as a topping on a jacket potato (see [page 7](#)).

### Helpful hints

- Serve in a wrap or on toast. You may need to drain off a little of the liquid.
- Any vegetables can be used. Try to have 3–4 cups of vegetables in addition to the tomato and kidney beans.
- 1 large tomato plus 3 tablespoons of tomato paste could replace the canned tomatoes.
- Buy reduced salt taco spice mix if available. You could also use 2 tablespoons of taco spice blend from a 140g jar instead of the packet of taco spice mix.

### Food groups:



\* Where possible buy 'salt reduced' or 'no added salt' options.

# Main Meals

## Microwave Risotto

**Recipe serves:** 4

**Preparation time:** about 30 minutes



### Ingredients

1 cup Arborio rice

2 ½ cups salt reduced chicken stock

3 cups mixed vegetables

⅓ cup parmesan cheese or grated tasty cheese

### Method

1. Place rice, stock and mixed vegetables into a microwave safe container.
2. Cover and microwave on HIGH (100% power) for 10 minutes.
3. Stir, cover again and microwave on HIGH for a further 10 minutes or until cooked.
4. Let sit for 5 minutes, then add cheese and stir through the rice.
5. Serve with extra vegetables or salad.

### Helpful hints

- Chicken stock could be made from stock powder or cubes (follow directions on package). Ready-made liquid stock is another option.
- 1 cup of chopped, cooked chicken or mashed canned salmon or tuna could be added in the last 5 minutes of cooking.
- Suitable vegetables include:
  - fresh vegetables, chopped into small chunks (about one centimeter) or grated: e.g. sweet potato, zucchini, pumpkin, mushrooms
  - frozen vegetables
  - any left-over cooked vegetables
  - finely chopped leek
  - canned vegetables such as corn, asparagus, canned beans or chickpeas. Drain before adding.

### Food groups:

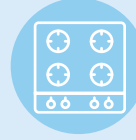


# Main Meals

## Pork Rissoles

**Recipe serves: 4**

**Preparation time: 40 minutes**



or



or



### Ingredients

500g lean pork mince

1 onion, chopped

1 egg, beaten

2 cloves of garlic, chopped finely or 1 tsp garlic powder

1 teaspoon crushed ginger (optional)

1 apple, grated

½ cup of breadcrumbs or rolled oats or crushed breakfast wheat biscuits

1 tablespoon oil

### Method

1. Mix all the ingredients together (except oil).
2. Make rissoles using about 2 tablespoons of mixture for each rissole, roll into a ball then, flatten slightly.
3. Heat oil in a frypan. Add rissoles and cook over medium heat for about eight minutes on each side (depending on thickness).
4. Serve with vegetables or salad.

### Helpful hints

- You could use other types of mince – chicken, beef, lamb or kangaroo.
- Rissoles can be cooked on a BBQ or baked. To bake, place them in a lightly greased baking dish and place in a moderate (180°C) oven for about 30 minutes. They could be turned over halfway through the cooking time if you like.
- Make into meat loaf. Lightly grease and line the bottom of a loaf tin or casserole dish. Put meat mixture into baking tin or casserole dish. Bake in moderate oven for 45 – 60 minutes. The length of cooking time will depend on the thickness of the meat loaf.
- Mince meat dishes should be well cooked. The meat should not be served rare.
- Make hamburgers by flattening rissoles before cooking. Serve on warmed or toasted wholemeal buns or thickly sliced toasted bread.

### Food groups:



# Main Meals

## Slow Cooked Pulled Pork

Recipe serves: 10–15

Preparation time: 6 ½ hours



### Ingredients

Pork shoulder roast boneless (approximately 2kg)

1 tablespoon smoked paprika

1 tablespoon ground cumin

½ cup chicken stock\*

1 ½ cups smokey barbecue sauce\*

2 tablespoon Dijon mustard

### Method

1. Remove any netting and cut the rind from the pork shoulder (see helpful hints).
2. Combine smoked paprika and cumin in a small bowl. Rub this spice mix all over the pork.
3. Place pork into a slow cooker.
4. Whisk together the stock, barbecue sauce and mustard in a bowl. Pour mixture evenly over pork.
5. Cover and cook for 6 hours on high or until pork is tender when tested with a fork. Turn the pork in the slow cook during this time if possible.
6. Turn off heat and allow pork to cool slightly. Transfer to a baking dish and pull apart (shred) with two forks.
7. Add 2 cups of cooking juices and stir through the pork.
8. Serve pulled pork with vegetables or salad.

### Helpful hints

- To remove the rind, turn the shoulder on its side and cut along the edge of the skin, pulling away the rind as you go.
- Serve pulled pork on a burger bun with coleslaw or in a wrap with salad.
- Left over pork can be stored in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 3 days or in the freezer for about 3 months.
- To cook the pork over a longer period of time, reduce the time you cook on high and increase the time you cook on low heat. For example, if cooking over 8 hours, then cook on high for 4 hours and then cook on low for 4 hours. If cooking over 10 hours, then cook on high for 2 hours and on low for 8 hours.

### Food groups:



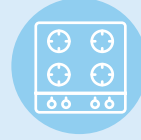
\* Where possible buy 'salt reduced' or 'no added salt' options.

# Main Meals

## Spinach Frittata

**Recipe serves: 4**

**Preparation time: 45 minutes**



or



and



### Ingredients

4 cups tightly packed fresh spinach or silverbeet (250g), washed well then chopped. Slice stalks thinly

1 onion, or 2 shallots, chopped finely

2 cloves garlic, crushed or 2 teaspoons minced garlic or ½ teaspoon garlic powder (optional)

8 eggs, beaten

1 cup grated tasty cheese

2 tablespoons oil

### Method

1. Preheat oven to 180°C (moderate oven).
2. Grease baking dish (approximately 20 cm square with sides about 4 cm high).
3. Heat oil in frypan or saucepan and lightly fry onion and garlic.
4. Add chopped spinach to onion. Turn heat down, place lid on and cook gently for about 5 minutes. Stir occasionally.
5. Put about half the spinach into baking dish then sprinkle with half the cheese. Add remainder of spinach.
6. Pour beaten egg over spinach, and then sprinkle with the rest of the cheese.
7. Bake until firm and lightly brown on top (about 30 minutes). Serve with bread and a salad.

### Helpful hints

- Use frozen spinach. Allow about 250g. Defrost and squeeze out the water before using.
- Other vegetables can be used. E.g. any mixture of broccoli, zucchini, grated sweet potato, frozen mixed vegetables. Allow about ½ cup vegetables per person. Try canned legumes such as butter beans, cannellini beans or borlotti beans. Drain and rinse before using.
- If serving more than four people, use more eggs. Allow 1-2 eggs per person.

### Food groups:

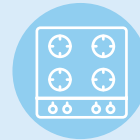


# Main Meals

## Stir Fry

**Recipe serves: 4**

**Preparation time: 45 minutes**



or



### Ingredients

2 cloves garlic, crushed or 2 teaspoons minced garlic or ½ teaspoon garlic powder

2 teaspoons minced ginger (5cm piece of ginger) or ¼ teaspoon ginger powder

¼ cup oyster sauce

¼ cup soy sauce, preferably salt-reduced

2 tablespoons oil

500g meat fillet (beef, kangaroo, pork, chicken), cut into thin strips

5 cups of a variety of vegetables (fresh, frozen, canned), cut into thin strips

### Method

1. Mix the garlic, ginger, oyster sauce and soy sauce together.
2. Heat the oil in a large frypan, add meat. Cook, using moderate to high heat, for 5-10 minutes (depending on the size of meat pieces). Stir all the time.
3. Add vegetables and sauce mix to the meat and cook for another 5 minutes or until vegetables are just tender. Stir all the time.
4. Serve with rice or noodles.

### Helpful hints

- Cook in a frypan, wok or a large saucepan.
- If serving more people, increase the ingredient amounts and cook the meat in batches.
- Some of the meat could be replaced with firm tofu.

### Food groups:





# Main Meals

## Tuna Mornay

**Recipe serves: 4**

**Preparation time: 40 minutes**



### Ingredients

1½ cups rice

425g can tuna, drained

420g can condensed asparagus soup or condensed chicken soup (not 'ready to heat and eat')

1 large tomato, chopped

1 onion or 2 shallots, chopped finely

1 cup grated cheese

Oil or margarine for greasing oven dish

### Method

1. Mix the tuna, soup, tomato and onion and half of the cheese together.
2. Pour into a greased oven dish and sprinkle with the remainder of the grated cheese.
3. Place in a moderate oven (180°C) for about 20 minutes to heat through.
4. Cook rice.
5. Serve the mornay with the rice and extra vegetables or salad.

### Helpful hints



- If you don't want to heat the mornay in the oven it can be heated in a saucepan. Put into a large saucepan and heat through using low heat. Stir from time to time. The cheese can be mixed through or sprinkled on the top of the mornay once it is served.
- You could use 3 cups of chopped cooked meat or chicken instead of tuna.
- If you like curry, mix about 2 teaspoons of curry powder in with the tuna and other ingredients.
- You could turn this into a pasta bake by cooking 2 cups of pasta. Drain the cooking water and add the cooked pasta to the mixture in step 1.
- Mornay could be served with pasta instead of rice.

### Food groups:

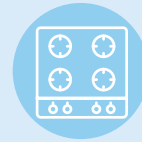


# Main Meals

## Vegie Burgers

**Recipe serves: 4**

**Preparation time: 40 minutes**



or

or

### Ingredients

1 cup cooked roast sweet potato

400g can black beans, drained and rinsed

1 teaspoon dried garlic granules or 1 clove garlic, chopped finely

1 egg, beaten

½ cup breadcrumbs or ½ cup rolled oats

2 tablespoons plain flour

### Method

1. Put the beans, cooked sweet potato, breadcrumbs, garlic and eggs in a large bowl. Mash well with a fork to combine the mix.
2. Put flour in a shallow bowl or plate. Divide bean mixture into 4. Roll each quarter into a ball, roll in flour and press down into a burger shape.
3. Place burgers onto greased oven trays. Baking paper can be used instead of greasing.
4. Bake in a moderate oven for about 30 minutes.
5. Serve on hamburger buns with salad.

### Helpful hints

- Burgers can also be cooked in a lightly greased frypan. They will need to be turned over after about 5 minutes.
- You could use other firm roast vegetables like potato or carrot.
- Bean burgers can be served with extra vegetables or salad for a non-meat meal.

### Food groups:



# Main Meals

## Vegetable Slice

**Recipe serves: 4**

**Preparation time: 40 minutes**



### Ingredients

- 6 eggs
- ½ cup milk
- 1 onion or 2 shallots, chopped finely
- 2 carrots, grated
- 2 medium size zucchinis, grated
- 1 capsicum, chopped finely
- 1 cup grated cheese
- 1 cup corn kernels (canned or frozen)
- 2 cups self-raising flour, sifted

### Method

1. Preheat oven to 180°C (moderate oven).
2. Beat eggs and milk together then mix with all other ingredients.
3. Pour mixture into a greased baking dish or muffin tins.
4. Bake for about 30 minutes or until firm. Muffins will take about 15 minutes depending on their size.

### Helpful hints

- Use half wholemeal flour for extra fibre.
- Two cups of cooked rice can be used instead of the self-raising flour.
- Use any vegetables, e.g. cooked or canned legumes such as butter beans and haricot beans, or grated potato, sweet potato or pumpkin. Leftover cooked vegetables could also be used. You will need about three cups of vegetables in total.
- Great for packing in lunchboxes but it will need to be kept cold.

### Food groups:



# Vegetable Side Dishes

Less than 10% of Australians eat enough vegetables. Vegetables are packed with goodness including fibre, and a range of vitamins and minerals. Add a vegetable side dish to help your family eat more of this important food group.

## Baked Vegetables

**Recipe serves: 4-6**

**Preparation time: 60 minutes**



### Ingredients

- 5 medium potatoes
- 1 large or 2 medium sweet potatoes
- 1/4 of a pumpkin
- 1 parsnip
- 4 tablespoons oil

### Method

1. Preheat oven to 180°C (moderate oven).
2. Prepare vegetables by scrubbing and peeling. The skin can be left on the potato and sweet potato if they are clean. Cut vegetables into serve size pieces or chunks.
3. Place vegetables into a large bowl and add oil. If you are using spices or herbs add them now. Mix together until vegetables are coated in oil and herbs and spices.
4. Bake until tender (30-45 minutes). Vegetables can be turned over while baking if you like.
5. For a main meal, serve these vegetables with meat or eggs.
6. For a light meal, serve on toast and sprinkle with grated cheese or parmesan cheese.

### Helpful hints

- Other vegetables can be used such as capsicum, zucchini, carrot. Look at what is in season or is cheaper. Soft vegetables such as zucchini, small yellow squash, onion, or mushrooms only need about 20 minutes to cook. Add them to harder vegetables about halfway through the cooking time.

*Optional flavouring ideas - use these alone or in any combination:*

- 2 cloves garlic, crushed or 2 teaspoons minced garlic or 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 tablespoon fresh rosemary, chopped or 1 teaspoon dried rosemary
- 2 teaspoons turmeric
- 2 teaspoons curry powder

## Steamed Vegetables

You can cook fresh or frozen vegetables in the microwave. Place chopped up chunks (about the size of a 20 cent piece as a guide) into a microwave safe container with 2 tablespoons of water. Put a lid on the container with the vent open for steam to escape. Cook on high for 3-5 minutes until soft.



# Vegetable Side Dishes

## Garden Salad

Recipe serves: 4-6

Preparation time: 10 minutes



### Ingredients

4 cups lettuce  
2-3 tomatoes  
1-2 cucumbers

### Method

1. Break up or chop lettuce if needed.
2. Chop tomato and cucumber into pieces.
3. Toss with salad dressing (optional).

### Helpful hints



- Use a garden salad as the 'base' to make a:
  - **Greek Salad:** add Feta cheese and olives, chopped parsley and lemon juice
  - **Bean Salad:** add drained and rinsed canned bean mix and some thinly sliced fresh green beans if you have them
  - **Waldorf Salad:** add chopped walnuts, chopped celery and apple chunks (skin on). Dip apple in orange or lemon juice to help prevent going brown
  - **Caesar Salad:** add chopped ham, chopped boiled egg and toasted bread croutons.

## Coleslaw

Recipe serves: 4-6

Preparation time: 15-20 minutes



### Ingredients:

2-3 cups shredded cabbage  
1 apple, sliced thinly  
2 carrots, grated  
2 celery sticks, sliced thinly  
1 small onion or 2 shallots, chopped finely  
½-1 capsicum, sliced thinly (optional)

### Method:

1. Mix all ingredients together.
2. Add salad dressing (optional).

## Rainbow Plate

Recipe serves: 2

Preparation time: 20 minutes



### Ingredients:

3 cups vegetables, (fresh, cooked or frozen), try to include different colours of vegetables

### Method:

1. Cut vegetables into sticks or small pieces so that they can be eaten with fingers.
2. Steam any vegetables that need to be cooked (see instructions above).
3. Serve on a large plate in colour groups.
4. Can be served drizzled with salad dressing or yoghurt dressing or with the yoghurt dressing as a dip.

# Salad Dressings

*Making your own dressings will save you money.*

## Classic salad dressing

**Recipe makes:** ½ cup

**Preparation time:** 5 minutes

### Ingredients

1 clove garlic, crushed or 1 teaspoon minced garlic or ¼ teaspoon garlic powder

2 tablespoons vinegar, or lemon juice or lime juice

4 tablespoons olive oil

¼ teaspoon pepper (optional)

½ teaspoon mustard (optional)

### Method

1. Place all ingredients in a jar and shake well.

Use about 1 tablespoon of dressing for each person's serve of salad.

## Yoghurt dressing

**Recipe makes:** ½ cup

**Preparation time:** 5 minutes

### Ingredients

1 cup plain reduced fat yoghurt, e.g. Greek yoghurt or natural yoghurt

1 tablespoon lemon juice or other citrus juice

*Optional* –Garlic (1 clove garlic crushed or ¼ teaspoon garlic powder)

*Optional* –Herbs such as basil, mint, parsley or tarragon (¼ cup finely chopped fresh herbs or ½ to 1 tablespoon dried herbs)

### Method

1. Mix all ingredients together until smooth.
2. Place in a covered container and store in the fridge for up to 3 days.

### Helpful hints

- This dressing can also be used on fish or cold meat or with salad.
- For a Middle Eastern flavour you could also add ¼ teaspoon of dried spices such as sumac, cumin or turmeric.



# Marinades

Marinades are used to flavour and tenderise meat. Plan ahead and leave tough meat in the marinade for at least four hours or overnight. Meat, chicken or fish soaking in marinade should be covered and placed in the refrigerator.

These recipes make enough marinade for the amount of meat needed to serve four people (approximately 500g of meat).

## Lemon and olive oil marinade

**Preparation time: 10 minutes**

### Ingredients

2 tablespoons olive oil  
2 tablespoons lemon juice  
1 teaspoon dried oregano or rosemary  
2 teaspoons minced garlic

## Soy marinade

**Preparation time: 10 minutes**

### Ingredients

Juice of 1 orange  
2 teaspoons soy sauce\*  
A little honey

## Vinegar and mustard marinade

**Preparation time: 10 minutes**

### Ingredients

½ cup tomato sauce\*  
1 teaspoon red wine vinegar  
2-3 teaspoons Dijon mustard

### Method for marinades

1. Mix the marinade ingredients together in a small bowl.
2. Place your chosen food (meat, chicken or fish) in a glass or ceramic dish that is large enough to hold the food and the marinade.
3. Pour over the marinade and mix through.
4. Cover with cling wrap and store in the fridge until needed.
5. Once you have finished marinating the food, drain the excess marinade off and throw it away.
6. Cook your food in a frypan, on the BBQ or in the oven (on a baking tray lined with baking paper).

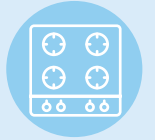
\* Where possible buy 'salt reduced' or 'no added salt' options.

# Desserts and Baking

## Creamed Rice

**Recipe serves:** 4

**Preparation time:** 45 minutes



### Ingredients

½ cup rice (medium grain or arborio)

3 cups milk

¼ cup sugar

### Method

1. Place rice and milk into saucepan. Bring slowly to boil with lid off, stir from time to time.
2. Simmer gently over low heat with lid off. Stir from time to time to help prevent burning.
3. Cook until rice is soft (about 30 minutes). Add sugar and stir through.
4. Serve with chopped fresh, frozen or canned fruit.

### Helpful hints

- Creamed rice makes a great snack. Serve hot or cold.
- All types of milk are suitable (fresh, long life, powdered, evaporated, skim or full cream).

### Food groups:





# Desserts and Baking

## Fruit Crumble

**Recipe serves: 6–8**

**Preparation time: 30 minutes**



### Ingredients

- 800g can pie (solid pack) apples
- 1 cup flour (plain or self-raising)
- ½ cup sugar (white or brown)
- ½ cup desiccated coconut
- ½ cup rolled oats (traditional or quick cooking)
- 5 tablespoons (100g) margarine

### Method

1. Preheat oven to 180°C (moderate oven).
2. Place apple into an oven proof dish.
3. Place flour, sugar, coconut, and oats into a bowl and rub in the margarine.
4. Sprinkle crumble mix over apple and place in oven.
5. Bake for about 20 minutes or until the crumble is lightly browned.
6. Serve with reduced fat yoghurt or custard.

### Helpful hints

- Use any fruit. If fruit is canned in juice, drain off the juice. You may need more than one can.
- Stewed fruit can be used.
- Coconut can be replaced with extra rolled oats or chopped walnuts.
- Make twice as much crumble mix and freeze half for next time.

### Food groups:



# Desserts and Baking

## Lunchbox Muffins

**Recipe serves: 12 muffins**

**Preparation time: 45 minutes**



### Ingredients

Ingredients:

1 cup milk

2 eggs

½ cup canola oil

1 teaspoon vanilla essence (optional)

1 cup self-raising flour

1 cup wholemeal self-raising flour

½ cup sugar

2 cups chopped fruit. Use any combination of: chopped canned fruit, frozen fruit pieces or berries, mashed banana or soft fresh fruit like pears, apple, peaches (grated or chopped into small pieces)

### Method

1. Preheat oven to 180°C (moderate oven).
2. Grease a 12-cup muffin pan.
3. Combine milk, oil, eggs and vanilla in a bowl. Mix together with a whisk or fork.
4. Combine flours and sugar in a bowl. Add the milk mix to the bowl and gently stir through to combine.
5. Add the fruit and stir through the mix.
6. Fill each muffin cup to about three-quarters full.
7. Bake for 20–25 minutes or until the top is golden brown.

### Helpful hints

- To make a savoury muffin:
  - Leave out the sugar and vanilla essence.
  - Add in 2 cups of frozen, canned, grated or finely chopped vegetables in place of the fruit.
  - Optional extras include ½ cup grated cheese, 1-2 tablespoons fresh chopped herbs or 1-2 teaspoons dried herbs (e.g. parsley, chives, basil, thyme).

### Food groups:



# Meal planner and shopping list

**Plan your meals** for a week or for just a few days. Check your pantry, fridge and freezer for foods that need to be used up.

Sunday	
B	
L	
D	
Monday	
B	
L	
D	
Tuesday	
B	
L	
D	
Wednesday	
B	
L	
D	
Thursday	
B	
L	
D	
Friday	
B	
L	
D	
Saturday	
B	
L	
D	

B = breakfast L = lunch D = dinner

**Write a shopping list** based on your meal plan. Check what foods you already have when writing your shopping list. Take this list when you go shopping.

Fruit and vegetables		Breads & cereals	
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Dairy		Meat & alternatives	
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